

Table of Contents

Life PERSPECTIVES

<i>1.</i>	Digging into the Bible	1
<i>2.</i>	Knowing God's Will	17
<i>3.</i>	Becoming a Person of Character	33
<i>4.</i>	Relationships	53
<i>5.</i>	Kingdom Perspectives	67
<i>6.</i>	Your Calling as an Insider	85
<i>7.</i>	Multiplying Your Life	103

DIGGING *chapter 1* INTO THE BIBLE

That's What They Say

"The Bible is the place where God comes from above and beyond the world to show Himself to His people." *T.H.L. Parker, author*

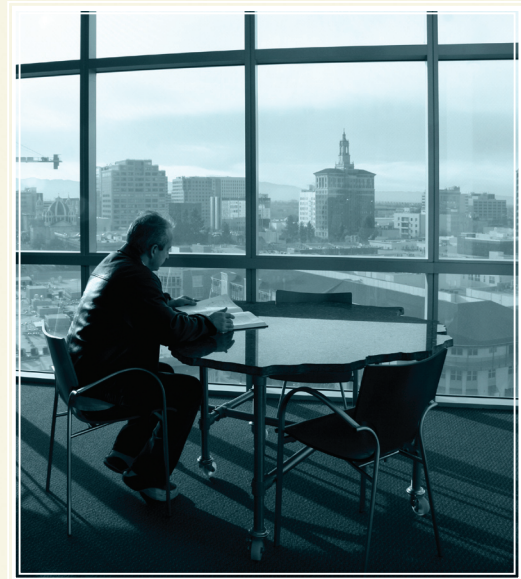
"Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them." *E. Paul Hovey, pastor*

"Above all, the pure light of revelation has had an influence on mankind, and increased the blessings of society. It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."
George Washington, first president of the USA

Empty Words

Deep in the bowels of the National Cathedral in Washington, DC is an exhibit that's easy to miss. There, under glass, lies a collection of miniature Bibles. Visitors squint in futility to read the pages of a Bible purported to be the world's smallest. The only clue that the little book is indeed the Holy Scripture is the much larger card posted on the glass case.

That tiny tome speaks metaphorically for a common approach to Scripture in our culture: Put the Bible away in a place of reverence, but don't consider it relevant. Talk about our constitutional right to display the Ten Commandments, but don't study them in depth to find out what they really mean. Be in awe of the Holy Bible, but don't ask it for answers. Not about real, daily stuff.



Is the Bible nothing more than a mythical relic? If so, then it belongs in the same class as the shroud of Turin or the elusive holy grail. But if it's more than that, it deserves to be examined a little more closely.

The Big Picture

- I. What is the purpose of the Bible?
- II. How does the Bible help me?
- III. What will I do with the Bible?

“The Bible is a book in comparison with which all others are of minor importance, and which in all my perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me light and strength.”

Robert E. Lee, army general

I. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE?

More than words, the Bible is many things. You probably know it is the most widely authenticated historical record in existence. Scholars agree that no other account of ancient history is so intact or indisputable. The Bible is also the most prolific collection of practical wisdom and life training. No wonder it has long been the most printed book in the world.

But in a profound way, the Bible is more than a book or a collection of writings. When read for depth, the concepts and thoughts it contains seem to come alive, forming a mysterious bridge to the realm of the spiritual. In fact, when studied carefully, these writings—from different authors and vast generations—speak with surprising coordination and unity. As if just behind the pages themselves, one can almost hear the voice of God, carefully crafting His message and personally opening the eyes of each reader with penetrating intimacy. The advice seems personalized for each unique moment. The counsel proves solid, always several moves ahead of our own understanding.

In this way, the Scriptures emanate from the authority of God Himself. Therefore our faith in Christ hinges on our faith in these written words. Because our very ability to know and understand God is found in them.

READ JOHN 1:1, 14. THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE WORD AS GOD AND THE WORD BEING CHRIST WHO DWELT AMONG US. IN SHORT, THE WORD IS A PERSON. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?

READ II TIMOTHY 3:16. IN WHAT WAYS HAVE YOU EMBRACED OR NEGLECTED THIS VIEW OF SCRIPTURE IN YOUR LIFE?

DESCRIBE IN YOUR OWN WORDS EACH OF THE FOUR PURPOSES OF SCRIPTURE ASSIGNED IN THIS VERSE:

DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF INSPIRATION FROM GOD GIVEN IN II PETER 1:20-21.



digging into the Bible

*Our faith in Christ hinges on
our faith in these written words.*

The Bible is Unique

The Bible is the most remarkable book ever written. About 40 different people from several different countries and many occupations did the writing. They wrote over a period of some 1,500 years, (1,400 B.C.–90 A.D.) and in three languages—Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. Yet the Bible is a well-organized unity with one great theme and central figure—the Lord Jesus Christ. All of this would be impossible unless the Bible had one Supreme Author behind the writers.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HOW THE SCRIPTURE IS DESCRIBED IN HEBREWS 4:12?



II. HOW DOES THE BIBLE HELP ME?

USING PSALM 19:7-11, COMPLETE THIS CHART.

VERSE	BIBLE IS CALLED...	CHARACTERISTICS	WHAT IT DOES FOR ME
7	Law	Perfect	Refreshes me spiritually
7	Statutes	Trustworthy	Gives me wisdom
8			
8			
9			
10			
11			

Word Pictures

LOOK UP EACH SCRIPTURE AND COMMENT ON THE VALUE OF HOW THE WORD FUNCTIONS.

> JEREMIAH 23:29



> MATTHEW 4:4

> HEBREWS 4:12

> JAMES 1:23-25

> PSALM 119:105

“THIS (PSALM 119) IS BOTH THE LONGEST PSALM AND THE LONGEST CHAPTER IN THE BIBLE. IT MAY HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY EZRA AFTER THE TEMPLE WAS REBUILT...AS A REPETITIVE MEDITATION ON THE BEAUTY OF GOD’S WORD AND HOW IT HELPS US TO STAY PURE AND GROW IN FAITH. THIS PSALM HAS 22 CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED SECTIONS, AND EACH CORRESPONDING TO A DIFFERENT LETTER IN THE HEBREW ALPHABET AND EACH VERSE BEGINNING WITH THE LETTER OF ITS SECTION. ALMOST EVERY VERSE MENTIONS GOD’S WORD. SUCH REPETITION WAS COMMON IN THE HEBREW CULTURE. PEOPLE DID NOT HAVE PERSONAL COPIES OF THE SCRIPTURES TO READ AS WE DO, SO GOD’S PEOPLE MEMORIZED HIS WORD AND PASSED IT ALONG ORALLY. THE STRUCTURE OF THIS PSALM ALLOWED FOR EASY MEMORIZATION. REMEMBER, GOD’S WORD, THE BIBLE, IS THE ONLY SURE GUIDE FOR LIVING A PURE LIFE.”

The Life Application Bible, KJV,
Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL p. 1052

Digging for the Treasure

The following chart comes from Psalm 119. This Psalm deals with our attitudes and actions concerning Scripture. There are 176 verses in this chapter. All but six verses refer to Scripture, using the terms “law,” “statutes,” “precepts,” “decrees,” “commands,” etc. Fill in the blanks, using verses 9 – 16.

VERSE	ATTITUDE	ACTION
9		Living by His Word
10	Seeking God with all our heart	Prayer for faithfulness
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		

The Bible is a means to an end. As we read and study God’s word, it helps us learn about and draw closer to God. We discover His character, power, wisdom and purposes.

Hidden in a Safe Place

Psalm 119:11 presents the concept of “hiding” God’s Word in your heart. Scripture memorization is an essential tool for any Christian.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A MESSAGE OR VERSE WHEN WE MEMORIZE IT?

The following verses give further understanding of the value and treasure of God’s Word:

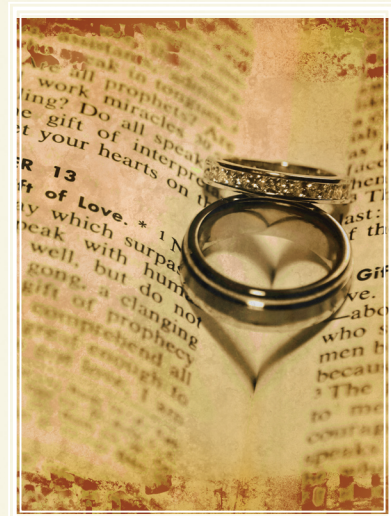
- > Jeremiah 15:16 Is a joy to consume
- > John 5:39 Helps us grasp eternal life
- > II Peter 1:4 Gives God’s promises
- > I John 2:1 Keeps us from sin



AT THIS STAGE OF YOUR WALK, WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE BIBLE TO YOU?

HOW COULD IT BE OF MORE VALUE?

BASED ON EZRA 7:10, WHAT THREE ACTIONS DID EZRA TAKE CONCERNING SCRIPTURE? WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT ABOUT THE SEQUENCE OF THE THREE?



Just “Brew” It

Read Colossians 3:16, in which Paul describes the process of being steeped in God’s word, letting it “dwell in you richly.”

NAME AT LEAST TWO SPECIFIC IDEAS HE GIVES TO LET THE WORD “BREW” WITHIN YOU.

CAN YOU ADD ANY IDEAS TO PAUL'S LIST?

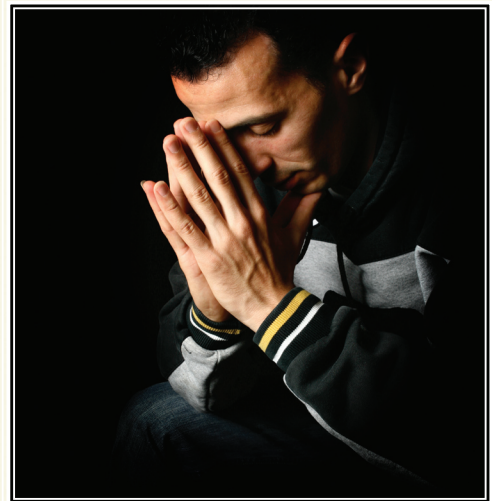
Get a Grip

Here's a "hands on" approach to living and working with the Word of God.

- > Hear Romans 10:17
- > Read Revelation 1:3
- > Study Acts 17:11
- > Memorize Psalm 119:9-11
- > Meditate Psalm 1:2-3

(Used by permission of The Navigators)

WHICH OF THESE DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST? WHY?



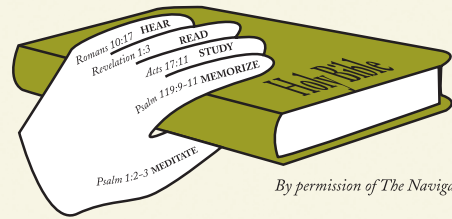
WHICH DO YOU TEND TO NEGLECT THE MOST?



The Holy Spirit, who dwells within the believer, loves to use Scripture. When we memorize a verse or passage, it's available to Him at a second's notice to guide us on the right path.

Get a grip. Here's a "hands on" approach to living and working with the Word of God.

Do you have
a strong grasp on
God's Word?



By permission of The Navigators

Deep Thoughts

When we meditate on Scripture, we reflect on the verses in a prayerful spirit. We're seeking a deeper understanding, as well as the application of the verses to our lives. Our goal is to bring our lives closer to God's will by meditating on His Word.

JOSHUA 1:8. WHAT DOES MEDITATION HELP US DO?

WHAT IS AN EXAMPLE OF A VERSE THAT YOU MEDITATED ON, AND SAW GOD BRING SUCCESS AND WELL-BEING?

III. WHAT WILL I DO WITH THE BIBLE?

Psalm 1 describes the notion of "dwelling in" God's Word. It provides an opportunity to meditate on and apply Scripture. There are several ways that you can do so with this or any passage in the Bible.

Read the psalm carefully, exploring each verse. Read once for understanding, and read the verses a second time for application to your life.

Meditate on Psalm 1 or any verse or passage by asking yourself three questions :

1. WHAT?

Observation

What does it say?

v.1 Man is blessed by not
walking, standing, sitting
with evil or evil-doers.

v.2 _____

v.3 _____

v.4 _____

v.5 _____

v.6 _____

2. So WHAT?

Personalization

What does it say to me?

I need to choose carefully
whom I will follow and spend
time with and where I go.

3. Now WHAT?

Application

What will I do?

I'll examine who I'm following
and where I spend time to see
if the influence is good or evil.

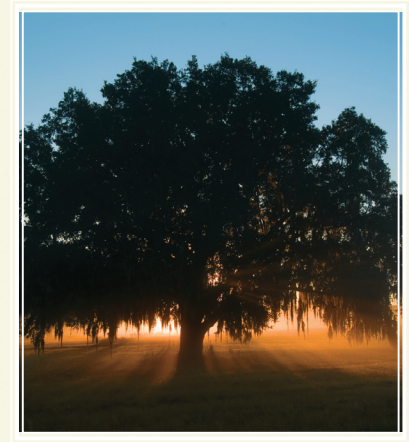
Use these questions as a guide for further meditation on Psalm 1.

HOW IS THE CHRISTIAN LIKE A TREE?

COMPARE GODLY AND UNGODLY PEOPLE IN TERMS OF HABITS, STABILITY, AND FUTURE.

WHAT CAN YOU TAKE FROM THIS PSALM TO HELP YOU BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS?

HOW DO YOU SEE GOD THROUGH THIS PSALM?



A Track to Run on: ABC Bible Study Method

It is important to know about the Bible and know various verses, but it is a whole new thing when you study passages or chapters to understand the flow and the context of what is happening. The following is a simple approach known as the ABC Bible Study Method which was developed by the Navigators. This is a proven and effective track for experiencing the person of God by reading and studying the Bible.

The framework is as follows:

- A. **A Title** – craft a title for the passage or chapter. This helps you crystallize the key thought.
- B. **Best Passage** – this is the verse or verses that you think best summarize or highlight the key thought for the passage.
- C. **Challenges** – as you work through the passage, ask God to challenge you to some key of your walk with Him. This will be the basis for which you put down your specific application. This is a truth or action item that God has put on your heart. Answer: How is God speaking to you?
- D. **Difficulties** – in this section write down the questions or difficulties which come to mind.
- E. **Essence** – this is a short summary or outline of the passage which captures the heart of God.

EXAMPLE:

Book: Colossians Study Passage: 3:1-11

A. **A Title:** The Christian's new life

B. **Best Passage:** Colossians 3:3-4

C. **Challenge:**

Challenge of the Verse – Colossians 3:3

Truth of the Verse – Christ is my life. Life does not come from myself or from circumstances.

Personal Application – It is easy to look at life as to how I feel, what is happening around me and what others think of me. I must reorient my thinking to know that Christ lives in me and through me. My application is to seek to have a greater understanding of Christ, His love for me and how I can appropriate this into daily living. The next steps are to step out in faith in what I know to be true and identify areas that I am holding onto and not allowing Christ to be in charge.

D. **Difficulties:**

Vs 1: How has the Christian been raised with Christ?

What are the things above that I am to seek?

Vs 2: How do I “set” my mind?

Vs 5: How can I “put to death” my earthly nature?

Do I do this actively, or does God bring this about?

Vs 10: Why is it necessary to have my new nature “renewed in knowledge”?

E. **Essence:** The Christian's New Life

1. Centered in Christ (1 – 4)

a. Raised with Christ

i. Seek things above

ii. Set my mind on things above

b. Appearing with Christ

i. I have died—my life is hidden with Christ

ii. I will appear with Christ

2. Contrast of Old and New (5 – 11)

a. Old

i. The old character—put it to death

ii. Old practices—put them away

b. New

i. The new self—in God's image

ii. No partiality in Christ



HAS YOUR VIEW OF THE BIBLE CHANGED AS A RESULT OF THIS SESSION? EXPLAIN.

Memory Verse 1: The Word of God

II Timothy 3:16 (NIV)

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

Additional Resources

- > *How to Study the Bible*, John MacArthur
- > *Conformed to His Image*, Ken Boa



The Gift that Keeps Giving

The Bible is an amazing, powerful gift from God. We have permanently at our fingertips the wisdom and perspective of the Creator of the universe. There is no area or crisis of life about which we can't draw guidance from the Bible. We need to be steeped in it—studying, meditating, applying—every day for the rest of our lives. For the Christian, it's necessary and instinctive as breathing.

[OPTIONAL APPLICATION]

THINK: JOHN 16:17 RECORDS THIS RESPONSE TO JESUS' WORDS: "THAT STIRRED UP A HORNET'S NEST OF QUESTIONS AMONG THE DISCIPLES." HOW IS THIS AN APT DESCRIPTION OF BIBLE STUDY? WHAT ARE SOME PASSAGES IN SCRIPTURE THAT HAVE STIRRED UP MORE QUESTIONS IN YOU THAN THEY HAVE ANSWERED? ARE YOU UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE THOUGHT OF JESUS' WORDS STIRRING UP CONTROVERSY—AMONG HIS DISCIPLES? HOW DOES THIS VERSE FREE YOU TO APPROACH GOD MORE HONESTLY WITH YOUR QUESTIONS?

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO FOR LIFE PERSPECTIVES, CHAPTER 1, OR VISIT WWW.OPERATIONTIMOTHY.COM AND LISTEN TO SELECTIONS FOR THIS CHAPTER.

OBSERVE: THE BIBLE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR DEVELOPING AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD. HOW SIGNIFICANT A ROLE HAS THE BIBLE PLAYED IN YOUR CURRENT PICTURE OF GOD?

CONSIDER: SELECT A BIBLE PASSAGE OR CHAPTER AND TRY OUT THE ABC BIBLE STUDY METHOD.



NOTES



KNOWING ^{chapter 2} GOD'S WILL

That's What They Say

"What is God's will for my life?" is not the right question. I think the right question is: What is God's will? Once I know God's will, then I can adjust my life to Him. In other words, what is it that God is purposing where I am? Once I know what God is doing, then I know what I need to do. The focus needs to be on God, not my life!" *Henry Blackaby, missionary and author of Experiencing God*

"Not my will, but Thy will be done."
Jesus Christ

"Jesus tapped me on the shoulder and said, 'Bob, why are you resisting me?' I said, 'I'm not resisting you!' He said, 'You gonna follow me?' I said, 'I've never thought about that before!' He said, 'When you're not following me, you're resisting me.'" *Bob Dylan, folk singer*

"Men give advice; GOD gives guidance"
Leonard Ravenhill, pastor

The Greatest Question

Brain teasers. Some of us find them fascinating. Others find them frustrating. Here's one: You are in a room with two doors. One leads to safety and life. The other to certain death. Neither is marked. There are also two men in the room. One always tells the truth and one always lies. You don't know which man is which. You may only open one door. Just one chance to get out of that room alive. What one question can you ask either man to determine which door leads to safety? (The answer appears at the end of this chapter.)



Is that what discovering God's will is like? A lesson in frustration? Or an unsolvable conundrum that makes us feel stupid? Or even a silly question with an easy answer at the end of the chapter? Once a person decides to follow God daily, an obvious question arises. Where is God leading? And if I don't know, how do I find out? What if I don't ask the right question? What if I don't open the right door?

Again, is that what discovering God's will is like? A pursuit encased by fear and tinged with doom? Or could it be it's more like this: a day at Disneyland. Every where you turn is potential. The day is packed with it. Someone has designed a variety of choices for you to make and there's even a brochure that lays them out in glossy color. You choose wisely based on the environment and guidance from the brochure or online information. And then you enjoy the day.

It's all about anticipation. Of course, you wouldn't want to spend the day in a broom closet. (Where are those at Disney?) You want to make the most of your day, so you consult with your fellow travelers and you study the literature.

“You earnestly seek God’s will for your life, not His seal of approval for what you plan to do anyway.”

Gordon Jackson, writer

Surely God has designed a life for His followers with more creative genius than Walt Disney. His design is flawless. And it isn’t just about entertainment—His design is all about life. Discovering God’s will is a dynamic, ongoing pursuit within that design. God didn’t just design our created earth; He is continually up to something creative. Every believer needs to understand what God is up to in the world, as well as what He’s up to with us individually. Once again, our instructions for discerning God’s will are found in the Bible.

The Big Picture

- I. Does God have a plan?
- II. Knowing God’s will for everyone
- III. Discerning God’s will
- IV. Keeping the channels clear

I. DOES GOD HAVE A PLAN?

There are two ways to interpret the events of the world. Either they are random and meaningless. Or they are carefully designed and profound. For mankind, it’s tempting to conclude the former. After all, our minds don’t always see the purpose in our circumstances. Many world events seem pointless, tragic or senseless. How could God be in them? But the Bible speaks very clearly to the contrary. Not only is God involved in every innocuous detail, but there is a purpose for everything. And that purpose serves Him.

READ EPHESIANS 1:10-11. SUMMARIZE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HISTORY DESCRIBED HERE.

WHAT PLACE DO PEOPLE PLAY IN GOD'S SCHEME, ACCORDING TO THIS PASSAGE?

READ MATTHEW 6:25-34. ACCORDING TO THIS PASSAGE, WHERE IS GOD WHEN SEEMINGLY UNIMPORTANT THINGS HAPPEN?

WHEN IS IT MOST DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS A PLAN FOR USING OUR CIRCUMSTANCES?

In summary, God works out His purpose through history. This includes events great and small, and certainly the issues of our lives. Note that whenever His purposes are discussed in Scripture, His love is generally mentioned. The two are inseparable.



II. GOD'S WILL FOR EVERYONE

Many aspects of God's will seem shrouded in mystery. But others are easy to discern. In fact, the Bible addresses many issues directly. The more familiar we are with the instructions it contains, the better we can anticipate God's intentions for us in the situations it doesn't mention.

Always Do This

In the situations where the Bible addresses something directly, we have no need to question. For example, it is always God's will that you:

- > I Thessalonians 4:3-5..... _____
- > I Thessalonians 5:18..... _____
- > I Peter 2:15 _____

Some other of God's objectives for you are clearly stated in the following verses. God wants you to...

- > Matthew 6:33 Seek God's kingdom and His righteousness first.
- > Matthew 7:12..... Treat others like you would like to be treated.
- > Matthew 28:19-20..... Win and disciple others for Christ.
- > Romans 12:17 Be honest.
- > I Peter 1:15 Be holy in the way you live.

"Earnest Christians seeking guidance often go wrong. Why is this? Often the reason is that their notion of the nature and method of divine guidance is distorted. They overlook the guidance that is already at hand and lay themselves open to all sorts of delusions. Their basic mistake is to think of guidance as essentially inward prompting by the Holy Spirit, apart from the written Word." *J.I. Packer, Knowing God*



WHAT ASPECTS OF GOD'S WILL DO YOU WONDER ABOUT THE MOST?



knowing God's will

Have you ever asked God to guide you in an area?

Did it seem like you heard from Him?



READ PSALM 25:4-5. WRITE YOUR OWN VERSION OF DAVID'S PRAYER, MAKING REFERENCE TO A QUESTION YOU HAVE IN YOUR OWN LIFE AT PRESENT. OFFER WHAT YOU WRITE AS A PRAYER TO GOD.

Often we confuse seeking God's will with wanting Him to bless our will.

Cross-Examination

As you seek God's will in a decision, it is natural to ask yourself a few questions about the options. Here are some principles from Scripture that will guide you.

- > I Corinthians 6:12 Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial.
- > I Corinthians 6:18-20 Stay away from sexual sins; this sin is against my own body.
- > I Corinthians 8:9 My exercise of freedom can injure weaker people.
- > I Corinthians 10:31 Whatever you eat or drink, do to God's glory.

HOW COULD ANY OF THESE PRINCIPLES BE HELPFUL TO YOU?



On One Condition

ROMANS 12:2 SETS A CONDITION FOR OUR BEING ABLE TO “TEST AND APPROVE WHAT GOD’S WILL IS.” EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS WHAT THIS CONDITION IS.

WHO WILL PERSONALLY HELP YOU MAKE YOUR DECISION ABOUT GOD’S WILL? SEE JOHN 16:13.

WHAT DIFFICULT PRINCIPLE IS DEALT WITH IN PSALM 27:14? DO YOU FIND THIS CHALLENGING?

THE WILL OF GOD IS NOT LIKE A MAGIC PACKAGE LET DOWN FROM HEAVEN BY A STRING... THE WILL OF GOD IS FAR MORE LIKE A SCROLL THAT UNROLLS EVERY DAY... THE WILL OF GOD IS SOMETHING TO BE DISCERNED AND TO BE LIVED OUT EACH DAY OF OUR LIVES. IT IS NOT SOMETHING TO BE GRASPED AS A PACKAGE ONCE FOR ALL. OUR CALL, THEREFORE, IS TO FOLLOW A PLAN OR A BLUEPRINT, OR TO GO TO A PLACE OR TAKE UP A WORK, BUT RATHER TO FOLLOW THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND SEEK TO FOLLOW HIM DAILY.

Paul Little, *Affirming the Will of God*

WHAT FURTHER STRATEGY IS FOUND IN PROVERBS 19:20?

God certainly uses Christians to help in the guidance of other Christians. Through your experiences, you will be given insight to pass on to younger Christians.

LIST THE NAME OF TWO OR THREE WISE, MATURE CHRISTIANS WHO KNOW YOU WELL ENOUGH TO GIVE GOOD ADVICE.

WHAT PROMISE, FOUND IN PSALM 32:8, SHOULD WE REMEMBER?

George Mueller, a 19th century English pastor well-known for his walk of faith, wrote how he maintained a “heart” relationship with God and how he learned to discern God’s voice. These principles sum up what we have studied in this lesson.

- “1. I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people generally is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the knowledge of what His will is.
2. Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If so, I make myself liable to great delusions.
3. I seek the Will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions. If the Holy Spirit guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.
4. Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God’s Will in connection with His Word and Spirit.



5. I ask God in prayer to reveal His Will to me aright.

6. Thus, (1) through prayer to God, (2) the study of the Word, and (3) reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly."

George Mueller's *Answers to Prayer*, from *George Mueller's Narratives*, Brooks, A.E.C., Moody Press.

WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO GEORGE MUELLER'S APPROACH TO DISCERNING GOD'S VOICE?



WHAT SIGNIFICANCE FOR YOUR OWN LIFE DOES THIS HAVE?

WHAT PERSONAL SITUATION ARE YOU FACING WHERE YOU COULD APPLY THIS?

IV. KEEPING THE CHANNELS CLEAR

We study God's Word; we pray and seek the leadership of the Spirit, as well as that of wise Christians. We can then be certain God will guide us in His time and way. But to keep in close touch with God and discern His will properly, we must keep the channels of communication clear.

HOW DOES THE PSALMIST KEEP THE CHANNELS CLEAR, IN PSALM 143:8?

WHY DO YOU THINK A REGULAR DAILY TIME WITH GOD MIGHT BE HELPFUL?

WHAT DO YOU FEEL IS THE IMPORTANCE OF I JOHN 1:9 IN KEEPING CLEAR COMMUNICATION WITH GOD?

HOW CAN THE WARNING OF HEBREWS 10:25 BE AN APPROPRIATE SAFEGUARD?

Preventative Maintenance

We all know the frustration of working on a computer at home when the power goes out... before saving a document or backing up our work. In our fast-paced business world, this kind of interruption is more than a headache. In the realm of big business, telecommunications equipment and computers can't afford to lose power. Even a nanosecond blip of disconnection could cost a company serious disruptions in income or data. And so these industries rely on some sort of UPS: uninterruptible power source.

Seeking God daily, dealing immediately with sin, and staying accountable to other Christians—this is a way to stay “on-line” with God’s will. It isn’t a formula, but it is a wise way to keep your connection to Him open and functional. Remember that He never seeks to hide His will from you; He’s eager to be a part of your life and reveal Himself to you.

The following chart gives you some questions that might help you in making a particular decision.

SCRIPTURAL GUIDELINES	YES	NO
Is my heart’s desire “Not my will, but Yours be done?”	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Will I love God and others more as a result of this?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Am I waiting patiently on God to teach me and reveal Himself to me through His Word?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Am I being completely honest with myself (and others I have sought for counsel)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Will this increase my desire to win and disciple others for Christ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Will it help me “be holy as He is holy”?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Will it help me grow in my relationship to Christ and in my training to become more effective for Him?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Am I obeying the verses that clearly state God’s will, i.e. “In everything give thanks...” “Avoid sexual immorality...” “By doing good, silencing the ignorance of foolish men	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has God shown me His will in some other area that I need to obey before deciding this?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has God shown me recently in His Word something that relates to this? What?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have I prayed about it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have I sought counsel from other mature Christians?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do I have inner spiritual peace about making this decision?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Caution: Do not use this as a “checklist” to find God’s will. These are only principles to help you examine your heart and evaluate where you are in the process of seeking Him first and foremost in every area of your life, not just in trying to make a decision.

ARE YOU FACING A SIGNIFICANT DECISION? IF SO WHAT?

Other Helpful Exercises

Make a list of the pros and cons of this decision; then make a list of alternative choices and the pros and cons for each.

DECISION:

PROS

CONS

ALTERNATIVE:

PROS

CONS

WHAT HAS IMPACTED YOUR LIFE FROM THIS LESSON?

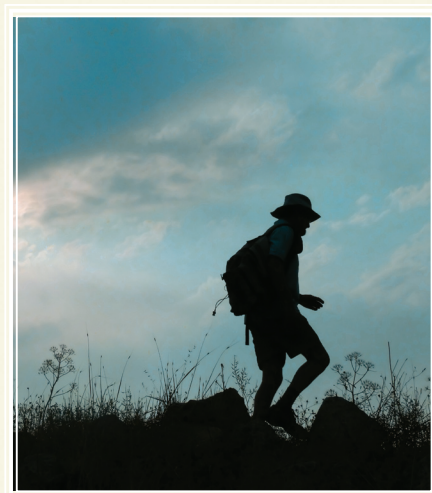
Memory Verse 2: Assurance of Guidance

Proverbs 3:5, 6 (NIV)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Additional Resources

- > *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer
- > *Absolute Surrender*, Andrew Murray



Answer to the Brain Teaser

To escape the room, turn to either man and point to the other. Ask, “If I ask him which door leads to safety, what would he say?” Then do the opposite! (The man who tells the truth will tell you the lie the other man would say. The man who lies will lie about the truth.)

[OPTIONAL APPLICATION]

THINK: NAME THREE THINGS THAT YOU KNOW TO BE TRUE ABOUT GOD’S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE.

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO FOR LIFE PERSPECTIVES, CHAPTER 2, OR VISIT WWW.OPERATIONTIMOTHY.COM AND LISTEN TO SELECTIONS FOR THIS CHAPTER.

OBSERVE: WHY AREN’T PEOPLE MORE DILIGENT ABOUT DISCERNING GOD’S WILL FOR THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES?

CONSIDER: HAVE YOU EVER SENSED THE “VOICE OF GOD” SPEAKING TO YOU THROUGH THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE? EXPLAIN.



NOTES



BECOMING A *chapter 3* PERSON OF CHARACTER



That's What They Say

"Man will do in the presence of God what he will never do in the presence of men."

Walt Henrichsen, Bible teacher

"People need to see the gospel lived out in us if they are going to understand what it really is that we have to offer. If the quality of character is not there, the best knowledge and skills become meaningless. Our TV evangelists have the knowledge and they have honed their skills to an art form, but the notorious flaws in character of some turn it all to straw."

Jim Petersen, missionary

"Character is what a man is in the dark."

Dwight Moody, pastor and college president

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us."

Ralph Waldo Emerson, essayist, philosopher, and poet (1803-1882)

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved." *Helen Keller, American social activist, public speaker, and author (1880-1968)*

Reflect

Which of these quotes strikes you as truth? What do you think the person was trying to communicate?

It's Inside Out

We are a society sold on surveillance. Electronic evidence of our growing distrust... of just about everyone. We set up cameras everywhere: at intersections, in stores, in the office (who trusts their employees these days?). The newest wave in amateur espionage is the nanny cam. If you're not absolutely certain your children's caregiver is who she seems to be, spy on her in your own home. She won't have to know. Who knows what you might find out about her? Or your kids. Or your wife.

There is only one thing that makes all of this checking up on each other unnecessary: character. So perhaps that's the question to be asked. What do you do or say when no one is looking over your shoulder? That's your character. It's who you really are. Examining our character is a bit like pointing the surveillance camera on ourselves. What would the tape from yesterday look like?

“Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike.”

Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President

The Big Picture

In this chapter we will discuss four issues.

- I. What is character?**
- II. Why God develops character**
- III. How God develops character**
- IV. My role in developing character**

IT'S A FAST-FOOD, QUICK-GRATIFICATION WORLD. WE WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT THIS WEEK, AND EARN A FORTUNE THIS YEAR. WE WANT IT NOW. BUT SOME THINGS CAN'T BE ATTAINED OVERNIGHT. ONE OF THEM IS CHARACTER. GOD WANTS TO BUILD IN US STRONG CHARACTER, WITH CLEAR VALUES AND UNFLINCHING INTEGRITY. BUT THE OLD SELF MUST BE REPLACED WITH THE NEW MAN—AND NO MAN GROWS UP OVERNIGHT.

e

I. WHAT IS CHARACTER?

Character is defined by the dictionary as ‘moral or ethical strength.’ Let’s look at some Biblical pictures of the moral strength we call character.

READ CAREFULLY THE LIST OF ATTRIBUTES FOUND IN GALATIANS 5:22-23. WHICH DO YOU RESPECT THE MOST? WHY?

● WHICH IS THE MOST DIFFICULT FOR YOU?

WHAT IS A BASIC MEASURING STICK FOR CHARACTER, ACCORDING TO I JOHN 5:2-3?

The following verses describe aspects of Christian character. Identify each aspect by writing a one or two word answer to identify the character quality (or qualities).

- > Matthew 7:12 _____
- > Matthew 5:8 _____
- > Romans 13:8 _____
- > I Corinthians 15:58 _____





becoming a person of character

*What do you do or say
when no one is looking over your shoulder?*

> Colossians 3:13 _____

> I Thessalonians 5:8 _____

> James 2:8 _____

> I Peter 5:5 _____

We've barely tapped the surface of the Bible's teaching on character. Yet we see a clear picture of the kind of person God desires us to become.

WHY IS THE MOLDING OF CHARACTER SO IMPORTANT TO GOD?

HOW DO YOU SEE THIS IN YOUR LIFE?

IN II PETER 1:3-9, WHAT ARE WE TO ADD TO OUR FAITH?

HOW COULD YOU BEGIN TO DO THIS?



II. WHY GOD DEVELOPS CHARACTER

Testing, testing. The first recorded test of human character is found in Genesis 2 and 3. As soon as He created them, God defined limits for Adam and Eve—a command to keep. They failed that test. But God has never given up on us. He continues to build into our lives the structures and limits that mold character within us.

WHAT CLUE TO GOD'S DESIRE FOR STRONG CHARACTER IN US IS FOUND IN GENESIS 1:27?

WHAT IS GOD'S BASIC APPROACH TOWARD US ACCORDING TO JEREMIAH 31:3?

IN PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14, HOW DOES PAUL VIEW GOD'S ULTIMATE PLAN FOR HIM?

ROMANS 5:1-5 DESCRIBES THE PROCESS OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT. HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PROCESS IN YOUR LIFE?

Character Development

HOW HAS GOD USED THIS TO DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER AND YOU AS A PERSON?

CHARACTER COMES FROM GOD AND IS FORGED IN THE FIRES OF TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES. WHY DO YOU THINK GOD USES THIS APPROACH TO MOLD AND SHAPE US?

WHAT IS THE RESULT OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT?

HOW DOES ROMANS 12:1-2 DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF BUILDING CHARACTER?

THIS PASSAGE DESCRIBES CHARACTER BUILDING AS (CHECK ONE):

☐ REFORMATION ☐ CONFORMATION ☐ TRANSFORMATION

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE DIFFERENCE IS?



HOW IS GOD TRANSFORMING AN AREA OF YOUR LIFE OR HOW HAS GOD TRANSFORMED AN AREA OF YOUR LIFE?

III. HOW GOD DEVELOPS CHARACTER

Tony Dungy, head football coach for the Indianapolis Colts, became the first African American head coach to win the Super Bowl when his Colts defeated the Chicago Bears. “The Lord has a plan,” Dungy says. “We always think the plans are A, B, C and D, and everything is going to be perfect for us and it may not be that way, but it’s still His plan. A lot of tremendous things are going to happen, it just may not be the way you see them.”

These words sound formulaic until you know the context in which they were said. Tony Dungy experienced success, but he also knew pain. He asserted this foundational truth about God and His will from the perspective of deep suffering. Tony and his wife Lauren experienced a parent’s worst nightmare when they learned their eldest son and second of five children, 18-year-old James, had been found dead. James’ death was ruled a suicide.



“It’s human nature to grieve, and you’re going to have some pain,” Dungy says. “But then the choice is how you handle the pain. You can choose to go on and fight through it, or you can choose to succumb to it. You can’t make the feeling go away. There’s no Novocain or anything that can just take it away. You begin to realize that you can still function, you can still move forward.”

Dungy believes that God has placed him in this position not for him and his family to suffer but so they can be an example to others, a testimony. Through this tragedy, Dungy could see God at work. Among many mercies, two people received James’ donated corneas. The miracle of sight resulted from the blindness of suffering.

“You may not win the Super Bowl. Your kids may not go on to be doctors and lawyers and everything may not go perfectly. That doesn’t mean it was a bad plan or the wrong thing. It’s just like a football season. Everything’s not going to go perfect. You’re going to have some losses that you’re going to have to bounce back from and some things that are a little unforeseen that you’re going to have to deal with. It’s how you work your way through things,” Dungy said.

Tony Dungy’s story is one example of how God uses our circumstances, or struggles, to shape our character. Hardships can be very influential in this process. But there are other factors too.

The Seven Elements of Spiritual Transformation

Experience: All of your life experiences are either directed by God, or at least *allowed* to occur. Your experiences in life serve a very important purpose in God's plan to mold your character. The events of your life may have significance on many different levels. But whether good or bad, you can be sure that they always serve this higher purpose.

Struggle: As we just saw, struggles lead to important character developments. The two great motivators in life are pain and pleasure. And God knows when to use each one. We can always trust Him to bring good out of our most difficult times, because where there's pain, there's always an element of gain somewhere.

Scripture: The Scriptures contain direct instructions to guide your spiritual transformation. Like a user's manual, you can refer to these words for various situations: for overall training, for specific instruction in certain areas, or for troubleshooting.

Humility: Your humility is intrinsically linked to your spiritual transformation. James explains that God gives grace to the humble; and grace is tantamount to being transformed and in alignment with God's perspective. In contrast, he explains, God opposes the proud. This core attitude of humility is foundational to your relationship with God. And God often determines our readiness for His transformation based on how humble we are.

The Holy Spirit: God's Spirit is at work in you to bring about God's desires for you. And God is faithful to continue His work throughout your life until it is complete. The Holy Spirit is one of the three "persons" of God mentioned in the Bible. God the Father resides in Heaven. Jesus walked the earth. And the Holy Spirit actually takes up residence inside you to be your inner counselor and chief character-shaper.

Self-Control: Since God never forces Himself on you, the only way you can be transformed is by giving Him control intentionally. But you can't give this control if you don't first appropriate it yourself. There are many forces that might control you (greed, selfishness, anger, lust, etc.) Self-control describes the act of taking control from these forces and surrendering them to God.

Community: If you examine God's ways throughout history, you can notice several things that have remained consistent. One such example is His use of community. For whatever reason, God has decided to use people to shape people. The writer of Proverbs said, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." As you seek to facilitate spiritual transformation in your life, you should anticipate the role that community will play in this process. To the extent that you are connected with other believers as teachers, mentors, peers, etc. you will experience maximum transformation.



Jim Petersen,
Lifestyle Discipleship, p.119

The Visionary Sculptor

Michelangelo visited a quarry in Italy looking for the perfect marble. He found a block that was profoundly flawed; yet he took it. He later said that when he looked at the stone he saw the angel it could become. His task was to liberate the angel from the marble, by removing “everything that was not the angel.”

God sees our flaws. But He sees Himself in us, too, and character building is His constant chiseling away of everything ungodly.



WHAT PAIN HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED AND/OR ARE YOU EXPERIENCING?

WHAT STARTLING STATEMENT DOES ROMANS 8:28 MAKE ABOUT THE NATURE OF ALL OUR EXPERIENCES?

HOW COULD THIS TRUTH AFFECT THE WAY YOU VIEW DAILY LIFE?

WHY DO CHRISTIANS GO THROUGH PAIN?

It may be to give the world a front row seat in order to point them to the hope in Christ.

READ HEBREWS 12:7-11. HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE DEFINE HARDSHIP?

IN WHAT WAY DID DISCIPLINE AFFECT YOUR UPBRINGING?

READ JAMES 1:2-4. THESE VERSES SEEM TO BE CONTRADICTORY. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU FIND THIS TO BE TRUE?



WHAT ADVICE CAN WE TAKE FROM JAMES 5:10-11 TO BE ENCOURAGED IN SUFFERING?



The word *discipline*
comes from the word
disciple, which means
“a devoted student.”

THE OUTCOME OF
YOUR LIFE WILL
BE DETERMINED BY
YOUR CHARACTER.

IV. MY ROLE IN DEVELOPING CHARACTER

Character is one's moral strength or excellence. It is the fortitude one has in the face of contrary influences. As we have seen, God promises to develop our character as we respond to difficulties with hope, perseverance, and teachability to patiently endure and learn from our brokenness. In fact, suffering itself helps produce these responses as we yield to God and cry out to Him in dependence and powerlessness.

READ HEBREWS 11:32-40. IT DESCRIBES GOD'S PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN FAITHFUL—EVEN WHEN UNABLE TO SEE THEIR HOPES FULFILLED. DESCRIBE THEIR ATTITUDE AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

HOW DO YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES AND LIFE REFLECT THIS KIND OF ATTITUDE?

HEBREWS 12:1-4 CONTINUES THIS TRAIN OF THOUGHT. HOW ARE WE TO RESPOND TO SITUATIONS THAT BUILD OUR CHARACTER?

WHAT KEY PRINCIPLE IS GIVEN IN COLOSSIANS 2:6, 7?

Dying to Self

Godly character is a reflection of God Himself or literally Christ living in and through us. Our part of releasing God through us is found in Luke 9:23.

GODLY CHARACTER SHOWS
ITSELF TRUEST WHEN NO ONE
IS WATCHING EXCEPT GOD.

WHAT IS JESUS SAYING?

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? HOW DO WE BEGIN TO DIE DAILY?



God at Work

God's greatest desire is to prepare us for an eternity with Him. He utilizes His supernatural power, circumstances, and other people in this character building process.

HOW IS GOD WORKING IN YOUR LIFE TO DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER?

WHAT VICTORIES AND DEFEATS HAVE YOU SEEN?

AT THE HEART OF CHARACTER IS PERSEVERANCE AND PATIENCE. THESE ARE FUNDAMENTALLY A MINDSET OR A CHOICE OF ATTITUDE. WHAT IS THAT CHOICE AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO CHARACTER?

CAN WE DEVELOP CHARACTER BY THE "SELF-IMPROVEMENT PLAN" OR "YOU CAN DEVELOP GODLY CHARACTER IN THREE EASY LESSONS?" WHAT DO GALATIANS 5:22, 23 AND JOHN 15:5 SAY ABOUT THE POWER SOURCE FOR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT?

Another principal of character development is the “time” perspective. If we focus on a short time span, then our tendency is to panic, become fearful; but if we look through the lens of an eternal perspective—200, 300, 1,000 years from now—it helps us put problems and experiences into perspective and realize that God is working with the eternal in view for us.

A Look Within

In the development of character, God calls us to examine ourselves on the inside. Our true character is reflected in our thoughts and attitudes (our values). Character begins with our world view, or in other words, our view of God. Character is reflected in our values and finally displayed in our behavior. This subject will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Read the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:1-13 Jesus begins with an existing standard and looks deeper, beneath the surface.



WHAT REVEALS JESUS’ CONCERN WITH ATTITUDE AS WELL AS ACTION IN THESE VERSES?

RESTATE PROVERBS 26:24 IN YOUR OWN WORDS.



“Many people cut corners on so-called ‘little’ things such as telling half-truths, taking office supplies home, stretching the expense account, fudging on taxes or thinking impure thoughts.”

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THAT STATEMENT? WHY?

WHAT IS AN AREA OF YOUR LIFE IN WHICH YOU STRUGGLE WITH BEING COMPLETELY HONEST?

HOW HAVE YOU ATTEMPTED TO DEAL WITH THIS IN THE PAST?

“IF YOU TELL THE TRUTH,
YOU DON’T HAVE TO
REMEMBER ANYTHING.”

Mark Twain

If you feel defeated from past or current efforts in this area, you may need to look deeper at some underlying root issues that may be hindering you, such as fear of rejection, fear of failure, anger at God, bitterness, etc. Spend some time reflecting on and allowing God to examine your heart in these areas. Confess anything God reveals and ask for God’s mercy and guidance in how to deal with these.

WHAT PRINCIPLE IS FOUND IN LUKE 16:10 AS IT RELATES TO CHARACTER?

The Help of Another

In developing character, a third help is enlisting the assistance of others who will hold you accountable for your actions and attitudes, particularly ones with which you struggle. Pat Morley, in *Man in the Mirror*, defines accountability: “To be regularly answerable for each of the key areas of our lives to qualified people.”

What are some of these key areas?

TIME	INTEGRITY
With God	in finances
With our spouse	in work
With our children	in friendships

Who are these qualified people? Someone who has: a heart for God; a heart to help others; the ability to speak the truth honestly, yet lovingly.

DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE WHO HELPS YOU TO STAY ACCOUNTABLE? SOMEONE WHO WILL ASK YOU THE TOUGH QUESTIONS? WHY, WHY NOT?

ACCORDING TO JEREMIAH 17:9, WHY DO WE NEED ACCOUNTABILITY?

Accountability here and now is important because God will ultimately hold us accountable for all that we say and do.

INTEGRITY—ONCE LOST—IS
NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO REGAIN.



“Some men have spectacular failures where in an instant they abruptly burst into flames, crash and burn. But the more common way men get into trouble evolves from hundreds of tiny decisions—decisions which go undetected—that slowly, like water tapping on a rock, wear down a man’s character. Not blatantly or precipitously, but subtly, over time, we get caught in a web of cutting corners and compromise, self-deceit and wrong thinking, which goes unchallenged by anyone in our lives.”

HOW DO YOU REACT TO THAT STATEMENT?

“Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” *Proverbs 27:17*

ARE YOU WILLING TO ENTER INTO AN ACCOUNTABLE RELATIONSHIP? WITH WHOM?

Summary: God is working in and through us to conform and transform us into the living image of Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse 3: Transformed, Not Conformed

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Additional Resources

- > *Louder Than Words*, Andy Stanley
- > *Release of the Spirit*, Watchman Nee

[OPTIONAL APPLICATION]

THINK: WHAT ASPECTS OF YOUR CHARACTER DO YOU THINK GOD WOULD MOST LIKE TO CHANGE?

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO FOR LIFE PERSPECTIVES, CHAPTER 3, OR VISIT WWW.OPERATIONTIMOTHY.COM AND LISTEN TO SELECTIONS FOR THIS CHAPTER.

OBSERVE: WHEN YOU ARE ALONE, HOW DOES YOUR BEHAVIOR DIFFER FROM WHEN OTHERS ARE PRESENT? ARE THERE ANY DIFFERENCES THAT SUGGEST CHARACTER ISSUES?

CONSIDER: WHAT CHANGES WOULD THOSE AROUND YOU REPORT REGARDING YOUR CHARACTER?



NOTES



chapter 4

RELATIONSHIPS

That's What They Say

"It is easier to love humanity as a whole than to love one's neighbor." *Eric Hoffer, writer*

"Americans are the loneliest people in the world." *Mother Theresa, a nun who helped the orphans and dying in India*

"The man who lives in a small community lives in a much larger world... The reason is obvious. In a large community we can choose our companions. In a small community our companions are chosen for us." *G. K. Chesterton, English author*

"Community is the place where the person you least want to live with always lives. Often we surround ourselves with the people we most want to live with, thus forming a club or clique, not a community. Anyone can form a club, it takes grace, shared vision and hard work to form a community." *Henri Nouwen, priest and scholar*

"Success in marriage consists not only in finding the right mate, but also in being the right mate." *Anonymous*

Analysts are just beginning to study the psychological effects of isolation on astronauts living long-term in space or crews living at remote research stations. It isn't just zero gravity or the possibility of muscle atrophy or bone loss after extended time in space that makes living in space dangerous. It isn't just what is in the environment. It's what isn't there: people. Although the results aren't measurable or consistent from person to person, one thing is



sure: living in isolation from other humans is not how we were meant to live. Not for a lifetime.

We can't live without air and food and water. And we can't live without other people. Relationships are key to life and especially in living the Christian life. The practical side of our spiritual walk is played out in relationships, in the marriage and in the home.

Big Picture

I. Relationships

II. Husband - Wife

I. RELATIONSHIPS

Relating to Our Heavenly Father

Relationships are central to the spiritual life and to our earthly life. They are at the heart of our love for God because we reflect the relational nature of God Himself. He created us to only function well when we are in an intimate relationship with Him. This relationship with God is what the discipling relationship is seeking to experience. It is to be cultivated and nurtured as we mature.



“Friendship, true friendship, always lifts. It never drags. Oh, it can be heavy, but it is not destructive. Friendship leads you out of the woods and into the sunlit meadow.”

Stu Weber, Locking Arms

The Christian life is not one of the status quo in which we enter into a relationship with God and just stay there. Although some people do stagnate, God’s desire is that we grow. A relationship with God is the foundation upon which we then grow in our fellowship with God resulting in intimacy with Him. It is a life-long process—we don’t just arrive. Much like a marriage, we can grow more deeply in love with our Lord over time and through experiences.

What would growing more deeply in love with our Lord look like?

This spiritual growth or transformation begins with God’s pursuit of me. He pursues me to establish a relationship. He continues to pursue me to develop intimacy. God initiates by using circumstances, struggles and trials to reveal Himself and His character.

“BENEATH ALL OUR PROBLEMS THERE ARE DESPERATELY HURTING SOULS THAT MUST FIND THE NOURISHMENT ONLY COMMUNITY CAN PROVIDE OR DIE. THE GREATEST NEED IN MODERN CIVILIZATION IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES—TRUE COMMUNITIES WHERE THE HEART OF GOD IS HOME, WHERE THE HUMBLE AND WISE LEARN TO SHEPHERD THOSE ON THE PATH BEHIND THEM, WHERE TRUSTING STRUGGLERS LOCK ARMS WITH OTHERS AS TOGETHER THEY JOURNEY ON.”

Larry Crabb

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WHEN WE CONSIDER RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS, WE START WITH OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD?

Relationships with One Another

Since God created us as relational beings, why we do seem to struggle so much in them? Most families have a few stories to tell about dynamics that often turn into the Fourth of July. The Bible has a lot to say about developing relationships. There are over 70 verses in the New Testament that talk about “one another.” Here are a few such passages.

“love one another” *John 13:34-35*

“serve one another” *Galatians 5:13*

“be kind to one another” *Ephesians 4:32*

“submit yourselves to one another” *Ephesians 5:21*

“forbearing and forgiving one another” *Colossians 3:13*

WHY IS GOD INTERESTED IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ONE ANOTHER?

A key perspective in relationships—whether in a family, in a friendship or in a marriage—is to realize that we all have needs.

In the chart on page 60 we will attempt to discover your needs, and if you have a spouse, their needs. In both the “Your Needs” and “Spouse’s Needs” columns, rank what you perceive to be the top three needs. See the end of the chapter for explanations.





*There are over 70 verses in the
New Testament that talk about "one another."*

NEEDS	YOURS	SPOUSE'S
Acceptance	_____	_____
Affection	_____	_____
Appreciation	_____	_____
Approval	_____	_____
Attention	_____	_____
Comfort	_____	_____
Encouragement	_____	_____
Respect	_____	_____
Security	_____	_____
Support	_____	_____

WHAT STRIKES YOU ABOUT YOUR TOP THREE NEEDS?

HOW DO NEEDS AFFECT RELATIONSHIPS?

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE QUOTE FROM HENRI NOUWEN?

“NOTHING IS SWEET OR EASY ABOUT COMMUNITY. COMMUNITY IS A FELLOWSHIP OF PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HIDE THEIR JOYS AND SORROWS BUT MAKE THEM VISIBLE TO EACH OTHER IN A GESTURE OF HOPE. IN COMMUNITY WE SAY: LIFE IS FULL OF GAINS AND LOSSES, JOYS AND SORROWS, UPS AND DOWNS—BUT WE DO NOT HAVE TO LIVE IT ALONE. WE WANT TO DRINK OUR CUP TOGETHER AND THUS CELEBRATE THE TRUTH THAT THE WOUNDS OF OUR INDIVIDUAL LIVES, WHICH SEEM INTOLERABLE WHEN LIVED ALONE, BECOME SOURCES OF HEALING WHEN WE LIVE THEM AS PART OF A FELLOWSHIP OF MUTUAL CARE.”

Henri Nouwen



WHY IS THIS SO HARD?

Jim Petersen of the Navigators commented on relationships: *"I think it's beautiful how God has put the body together. I need my weaknesses as much as I need my strengths because if I didn't have my weaknesses I wouldn't need you. And if I don't have you I'd be so much impoverished for the lack of relationship. So there is real beauty in how it's put together. We should not be down on ourselves because of our weaknesses. We should give thanks for them because it is the glue that holds us together in the body. I should be thankful for what I don't have because this creates a bond that you and I wouldn't have otherwise."*

WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT ABOUT THIS THOUGHT?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pastor in World War II in Nazi Germany, wrote the following: *"The elimination of the weak is the death of the fellowship. The exclusion of the weak and insignificant, the seemingly useless people, from a Christian community may actually mean the exclusion of Christ; in the poor brother Christ is knocking at the door."*

HOW DO WE SEEM TO VIOLATE THIS PRINCIPLE?

HOW WOULD VALUING THE INSIGNIFICANT CHANGE YOUR WORLD?

II. HUSBAND – WIFE

Understanding Needs

Marriage is essentially oneness. Two very different people come together to become one in spirit, soul, and body. But does oneness equal sameness? Does that mean each partner loses his or her uniqueness and the two become mirror images of each other? Is a healthy marriage one where personal needs and desires are eradicated in favor of the unified whole? Is that what God had in mind?

WHAT DOES EPHESIANS 5:31 SAY ABOUT ONENESS IN MARRIAGE?

EPHESIANS 5:33 IMPLORES THE HUSBAND AND WIFE TO MEET EACH OTHER'S NEEDS. WHAT ARE THOSE NEEDS? HOW ARE YOU DOING IN MEETING THOSE NEEDS IN YOUR SPOUSE? WHAT SPECIFICALLY DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

Discovery and Dialogue

WRITE DOWN FIVE OF YOUR WIFE'S MOST PROMINENT NEEDS. NOW ASK HER TO LIST HER NEEDS. DO THE TWO LISTS OVERLAP AT ALL? WHAT DID YOU DISCOVER? WHAT NEEDS DID YOU MISS?

FOR EACH OF THE NEEDS EXPRESSED, DESCRIBE WHAT MEETING THAT NEED LOOKS LIKE?

Understanding Your Differences

It has long been said that opposites attract. But often opposites attack after marriage. God created each of us uniquely and very differently. Men and women are created by God much differently in the physical, mental and emotional realms. This is only the tip of the iceberg of our differences. Those differences, big and small, can be a major source of irritation. Our response to that irritation can easily deteriorate into grumbling, arguing or withdrawal.



COMMENT ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE. WHAT DIFFICULTIES HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY THESE DIFFERENCES? FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING DYNAMICS, HOW WELL DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR SPOUSE? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO UNDERSTAND BETTER?

> PERSONALITY – (I.E. IS YOUR SPOUSE “PEOPLE-ORIENTED” OR “TASK-ORIENTED”, DIRECT OR INDIRECT WITH COMMUNICATION, ETC.)

> FAMILY BACKGROUNDS

Spiritual Journey

Look at I Peter 3:7, “You husbands live with your wife in an understanding way as with a weaker vessel and grant her honor as a fellow of the grace of life. so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT THAT THE HUSBAND TAKE THE LEAD IN UNDERSTANDING AND MEETING NEEDS?



God initiated pursuing a relationship with us in the Garden of Eden. He also initiated meeting our need for forgiveness through Christ’s death on the cross. We respond to this loving act of God toward us. This spiritual principle extends to us in marriage—husbands are called to initiate meeting the needs of the wife and the wife will respond by meeting the needs of her husband.

WHAT DOES THIS VERSE COMMUNICATE ABOUT UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES AND WHAT RESULTS FROM THAT UNDERSTANDING?

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF A HUSBAND FAILING TO UNDERSTAND AND HONOR HIS WIFE?



Love Languages

Communication is much more than talking. Studies on communication indicate that only 7% is verbal. Much of our expression is in the non-verbal—actions, tone of voice, etc. Most of us have a “specialty”—a primary, preferred way to receive love. One of the difficulties in marriage is that we don’t understand or even know our spouse’s specialty. We tend to project our need as their need, so we attempt to love our spouse in the way we would like to be loved.

What is your preferred language of love? In the following chart, mark which is your primary and secondary language of love. Then put down what you perceive to be the primary and secondary languages of love for your spouse.

LANGUAGE	ACTIONS	STEPS	YOU	YOUR SPOUSE
Quality time	being with	time alone, a date	_____	_____
Gifts	giving	flowers, cards	_____	_____
Touch	touching	back rubs, holding hands	_____	_____
Service	serving	honey-do list	_____	_____
Relating	caring	talk	_____	_____
Affirming	build up	praise, compliment	_____	_____

(Adapted from Gary Chapman’s *The Five Love Languages*)

Share your responses with your spouse.

WHAT DOES THIS LOVE LANGUAGE LOOK LIKE FOR YOU? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE FOR YOUR SPOUSE?

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CHANGE HOW YOU EXPRESS LOVE TO YOUR SPOUSE?

Reflection

WHAT HAVE YOU DISCOVERED ABOUT THE NEEDS OF YOUR SPOUSE?

WHAT HAVE YOU DISCOVERED ABOUT YOUR NEEDS?

HOW WILL THIS HELP YOU IN MARRIAGE?

DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO PRAY WITH YOUR SPOUSE?
WHY OR WHY NOT?

TOP TEN NEEDS *(Center for Marriage and Family Intimacy, David Ferguson)*

ACCEPTANCE

*Deliberate and ready reception with
favorable positive response.*

AFFECTION

*To communicate care and closeness
through physical touch.*

APPRECIATION

*Praise. To communicate with words
and feeling personal gratefulness for
another.*

APPROVAL

*Expressed commendation;
to think and speak well of.*

ATTENTION

*Care. To take thought of another and
convey appropriate interest, support,
etc. to enter another's world.*

COMFORT

*Empathy. To come alongside with word,
feeling and touch; to give consolation
with tenderness.*

ENCOURAGEMENT

*To urge forward and positively
persuade toward a goal.*

RESPECT

*Honor. To value and regard highly;
to convey great worth.*

SECURITY

*Peace. Confidence of harmony in
relationships; free from harm.*

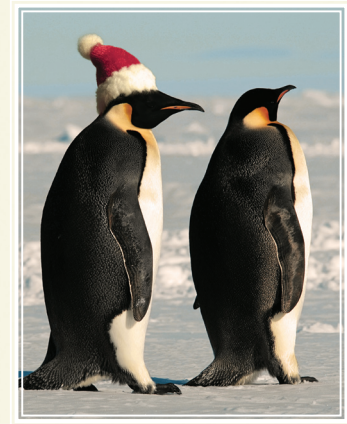
SUPPORT

*Come alongside and gently help carry
a load (problem, struggle).*



Summary: The Husband-Wife Relationship

- > The concept of “a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18, 20) speaks of a supportive relationship between allies and in no way implies that one is inferior to another. Loneliness was replaced by companionship and completion, and this is central to God’s design for marriage.
- > Genesis 2:23-25 teaches that marriage was designed to be a permanent covenant relationship of mutual commitment, support, and esteem.
- > When marital problems prevail, they inevitably arise from a failure to leave, a failure to cleave, or a failure to establish a one-flesh relationship (Genesis 2:24).
- > In the marital relationship, it is proper for the husband to concern himself with pleasing and serving his wife, and for the wife to desire to please and serve her husband (I Corinthians 7:3-5, 33-34). The greatest enemy to marriage is the selfish attitude that is concerned with the other person’s character and one’s own needs. Other-centered love focuses on our own character and the other person’s needs.
- > If we look to our marriage partners to get our personal worth needs met, we will be exploiting the relationship to get something the other person can never deliver. But if we look to Christ and daily renew our minds with the truth that our needs are fully met in Him, we will liberate our partners from unrealistic demands and find fulfillment rather than frustration.
- > The best thing you can do for your partner is to love Jesus more. If you love Jesus more than you love your spouse, you will love your spouse more than if you loved your spouse more than Jesus. Oneness on the level of spirit and soul provides the basis for physical oneness in marriage.



(Ken Boa, *Conformed to His Image*)

Memory Verse

Mark 10:45 (NIV)

“The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.”

Additional Resources

- > *Language of Love*, Dr. Gary Smalley
- > *Five Love Languages*, Dr. Gary Chapman
- > *Love & Respect*, Dr. Emerson Eggerichs
- > *Locking Arms*, Stu Weber

[OPTIONAL APPLICATION]

THINK: WHICH OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU IN 10 YEARS? IN 100?

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO FOR LIFE PERSPECTIVES, CHAPTER 4, OR VISIT WWW.OPERATIONTIMOTHY.COM AND LISTEN TO SELECTIONS FOR THIS CHAPTER.

OBSERVE: WHICH OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS ARE MOST LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE CONFLICT?

CONSIDER: WHY DOES HARDSHIP OFTEN DEEPEN BONDS BETWEEN PEOPLE? WHY DOES IT SOMETIMES DESTROY THEM?



NOTES



KINGDOM *chapter 5* PERSPECTIVES

That's What They Say

"Our life as a family in God's household is critical to our going to the world. As we have previously observed, it is the unique nature of this life together that makes us light in the world. Hence, as we allow ourselves to be scattered into the world, our need for one another becomes a matter of life and death. We will need like never before the care and support of our brothers and sisters."

Jim Petersen, missionary and author

"Unless you've recently sliced Matthew 16:18 out of your Bible, it still says the same thing Jesus said. It still includes an unconditional promise that the church is His personal project ('I will build my church') and also that it will be perpetually invincible."

Charles Swindoll, pastor and author

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose."

Jim Elliott, missionary

"He does not possess wealth; it possesses him."

Benjamin Franklin, inventor and statesman

Seeing Life Differently

One day, there was a blind man sitting on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet and a sign that read: "I am blind, please help." A creative publicist was walking by and stopped to observe. He saw that the blind man had only a few coins in his hat. He dropped in more coins and, without asking for permission, took the sign and rewrote it. He returned the sign to the blind man and left. That afternoon the publicist



returned to the blind man and noticed that his hat was full of bills and coins. The blind man recognized his footsteps and asked if it he was the person who had rewritten his sign and what he had written on it. The publicist responded: "Nothing that was not true. I just wrote the message a little differently." He smiled and went on his way. The new sign read: "Today is Spring and I cannot see it."

Christ taught about the Kingdom of God and God's view of people and resources because He wanted us to see things differently.

The Big Picture

I. Kingdom Thinking

II. The Church and how do I relate?

III. Prosperity and Success

IV. Stewardship

“He who has all of the world’s riches and God has not more than he who has God alone.”

C.S. Lewis, professor and author

I. KINGDOM THINKING

Christ taught much about the Kingdom of God and prayed that the Kingdom would come. Christ sought to transform our thinking and how we live life by challenging us to look at life from God’s point of reference. The essence of Kingdom thinking is that God is in charge. He is at work around us and we are to align with Him rather than seek God to rubber stamp our ideas and activity.

Perhaps you heard that saying, “He’s so heavenly-minded that he is of no earthly good!”

This is the world’s view of a person who follows God, a man whose priorities are contrary to society’s ideas that life is all about more things, more power and better position.

God’s view of success, value, purpose and position are different. As you attempt to understand how to be “kingdom-minded” you will need to understand how God has designed man to fulfill His purpose and a plan based upon how He made each one of us. God’s definition of success is to know and love Him and to understand why you were created.

This understanding will always put you in a place of conflict within your natural man and the spiritual man God desires for you to become.

The Apostle Paul and others were kingdom-minded once they surrendered to Christ and began the journey of knowing Christ. Read the following verses and then consider the questions which follow:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Romans 14:17-18 | Luke 16:15 | Luke 9:24 |
| I Peter 5:6-7 | I Corinthians 5:9-11 | I Peter 3:15-16 |
| John 15:11 | Colossians 3:23-24 | |
| Galatians 1:10 | | |

	WORLDLY OR RELIGIOUS THINKING	KINGDOM THINKING (CHRIST-BASED CHRISTIANITY)
Pleasure	The goal in life is enjoyment and pleasure. Eat, drink and be merry, you only go around once in life.	Living for God is the source of joy and our joy is made complete in him.
Recognition and approval of people	Attaining recognition and approval of people is important. We must have proper self-esteem. We must be acknowledged for our accomplishments.	Seeking God's approval is what really matters and serving others is more valuable than being served.
Popularity	It's all about whom you know and who knows you.	We are to be servants.
Wealth and Status	You deserve the best. Your financial status determines your value as a person. Your position is who you are.	In God's plan our rewards and crowns come at the end of this life, based on how we have lived for God and according to His statutes. A wealth which does not perish.
Power	Position and control is the sign of our success.	Be humble and submit yourselves one to another.
Association with people who don't know God	Separate yourself from sinners and people who do wrong.	We are to live among the lost. We are not to be separate from them but to live among them in order to reach them. The lost are a primary focus.
Sharing your faith	Faith and belief in God is a private thing, not to be broadcast with others. Don't offend anyone.	You are to be ready to share your testimony and live your life as an example of God's love.
Work	Get as much as you can with as little work as possible.	Be the best at whatever you do to represent excellence in Christ.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE DAILY WITH A KINGDOM MINDSET?

HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE HERE ON EARTH MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN ETERNITY?



GATHER SEVERAL FRIENDS AND DISCUSS YOUR THINKING ON LIFE'S ETERNAL PURPOSE. WRITE DOWN THEIR THOUGHTS. HOW DO THEY COMPARE WITH YOUR THOUGHTS? HOW DO THEY COMPARE WITH THE SCRIPTURES YOU READ?

For additional information, see *Conformed to His Image*, by Ken Boa, page 67.

II. THE CHURCH AND HOW DO I RELATE?

In Search of the Church

They come in all shapes and sizes, styles of architecture, denominations, reputations, social stances, and it seems as if there's one on every block. The music varies; the dress codes differ. What is this thing called "the church" all about? Because the term "church" is used in different ways to denote different meanings, new Christians are often confused when these are used interchangeably. The Greek word of "church" in the New Testament refers to all believers who make up the body of Christ. However, Christians also use this term to indicate the local group with whom they choose to worship and grow spiritually. They also often use the word "church" to indicate the physical building or property. Just as we, as individuals, are part of a local group, so the local group and all the individual believers are a part of the larger body of Christ. How is the church described in I Timothy 3:15?

ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 16:18, IS THE CHURCH A BUILDING? EXPLAIN.

WHO IS THE LEADER OF THE CHURCH, ACCORDING TO EPHESIANS 5:23? WHAT REASON IS GIVEN?

HOW IS THE CHURCH DESCRIBED IN EPHESIANS 1:22-23?

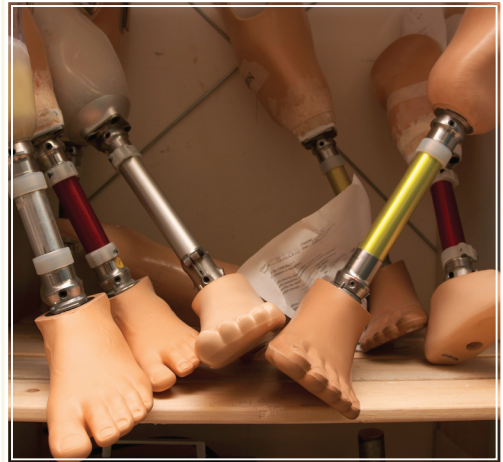




*All believers are a part of the larger
body of Christ called "the church."*

How does one get into the church from I CORINTHIANS 12:11-14 AND ROMANS 8:9?

When does this happen?



The "One Anothers"

THE NEW TESTAMENT OFFERS A SERIES OF "ONE ANOTHER" STATEMENTS THAT DESCRIBE OUR MINISTRY THROUGH THE CHURCH TO EACH OTHER. WHAT ARE THE "ONE ANOTHERS?"

> ROMANS 15:7

> GALATIANS 5:13

> GALATIANS 6:2

> EPHESIANS 4:2



The church reaches outward to people, and inward to embrace its own.

“Another dimension of this truth is community. The body ‘builds itself up in love.’ Koinonia, as used for example by John, means ‘life in the family.’ Body life is twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and embraces the full spectrum of our activities. As we go through life as believers, we are to attentively serve one another, encouraging one another toward godliness in every area. As believers formed themselves into identifiable bodies in the first centuries, their times of gathering were just the tip of the iceberg of their life together.”
Jim Petersen, Lifestyle Discipleship, page 172.

THE BIBLE, THEN, TEACHES US TO MAINTAIN SOUND DOCTRINE; TO USE OUR GIFTS TO BUILD THE BODY, PROTECTING AND SHEPHERDING THE BELIEVERS; TO CONSTANTLY ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER TO BE EVERYTHING WE CAN BE; AND TO BE COMMITTED AND FAITHFUL TO CHRIST. THE CHRISTIAN WHO DOES THESE THINGS WILL NEVER BE A HYPOCRITE! HE OR SHE WILL THRIVE NOT ONLY IN THE CHURCH, BUT IN LIFE ITSELF.

Identifying a Thriving Church

Even if you’re clear on the denominational issue, it’s still likely your local yellow pages are filled with churches. How can you identify whether one is right for you and your family?

First, if you are currently in a local church or assembly, look at this group through the lens of Scripture that you have studied above. Talk over your questions with your Timothy leader. Ask where he goes to church and why he is attending there. If you are looking for a church home, visit several churches that believers you trust recommend. Don’t make your decision strictly on the quality of the preaching or the worship service elements. Check on the types of activities and ministries in that fellowship. Is there an active Bible study ministry? Are members involved in evangelism? Is there dynamic, in-depth ministry to meet the needs of your whole family (your spouse, your children, etc.)? Is the church effective in ministering to the needs of its community? If you’re liking what you see, make an appointment to talk to the pastor or staff member. Ask him about his church’s doctrinal stance. Look for an evangelical pastor who supports the infallibility of Scripture; the full deity of Christ, and His humanity, sinlessness, resurrection, return and the “born again” life and ministry of the believer.

ABSOLUTE BASICS IN ANY ASSEMBLY OR CHURCH

1. They believe the Bible from cover to cover and it is the absolute standard for our thoughts and attitudes.
2. They believe the virgin birth of Christ.
3. Christ is fully man and fully God.
4. Christ rose from the dead (bodily resurrection), ascended into heaven and is coming again.
5. The church is Christ’s body.
6. Salvation is found only through Jesus Christ.

Caution: Go slowly in making decisions in this area, particularly if your family is already involved in a local congregation. Pray and discuss thoroughly with your spouse and children.

III. PROSPERITY AND SUCCESS

Some things never change. When you were a child, you may have stretched out on the floor under the Christmas tree and looked up at the twinkling lights. But you also looked under the tree. You just couldn't help it. You shook the presents and counted the ones with your name attached. Your sense of well-being and your conviction that all was right in the world was proportional to the number of gifts you found. You may have even compared notes with your brother or your best friend—if your gifts outnumbered theirs, that is.

Holiday shopping is still a measure of how well our economy is doing. Researching the retail trends at Christmas is big business. And something big business relies upon. How much we spend tells us how successful we are.

Is that all there is to success? It's hard to think about success without measuring it in dollars. "The 1990s were really a turning point in America's lifestyle," says demographer Martha Farnsworth Riche, former Census Bureau director. "Prosperity changed everything." But this prosperity had a downside: more time behind the wheel and whopping checks every month to the mortgage banker.

How would you define prosperity? Success?

What does success and prosperity look like for most people?

How would this align with the way God looks at it?



Measure wealth not by the things you have but by the things you have for which you would not take money.

In our culture, success is measured by a comparison with others. This type of success is difficult to attain because the standard is someone else's, the measuring stick is generally on outward results, and the time frame is usually short. The world will often define this in terms of possessions, position or power. How we stack up next to others can easily become an obsession.

READ AND COMMENT ON WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT SUCCESS.

> JEREMIAH 9:23-24

> I TIMOTHY 6:9-10

How much money would it take

> for you to feel secure? \$ _____

> to give you significance? \$ _____

> to achieve success? \$ _____

God's view of success is much different than the world's. He sets the standard. He looks at the heart and our attitudes as much as the outward accomplishments. He views life from eternity, not from 'what have you done for me lately.'



WHAT DOES MATTHEW 6:26-33 SAY ABOUT GOD'S VIEW OF SUCCESS?

WHAT SHOULD WE SEEK IN THE END?

CONTENTMENT IS THE KEY TO LIVING LIFE FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE. WHAT DOES PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13 TEACH US ABOUT CONTENTMENT?

HOW WOULD THIS APPLY TO YOU?

“God owns it all and I am his money manager.” *Randy Alcorn, author*

Contentment is an attitude of wanting what I have versus having what I want. It is not found in the abundance or lack of material goods, it is developed as a mental attitude. We are not born content, but rather it is a learned behavior.

COMMENT ON THAT THOUGHT:



The opposite of contentment is drivenness. This is an epidemic of our culture. We are consumed to acquire, to be somebody. Drivenness means we live in a constant state of pressure. Even if that pressure is subtle, it's as omnipresent as a toothache.

Contentment results in peace and freedom. This peace keeps us from worry and anxiety. It is an anchor in the midst of difficulties. The freedom of contentment comes from both not being entangled with possessions and not being driven to have more. Contentment allows us to reflect more and invest our lives into the lives of others, to pour out time and energy and resources into things that transcend the daily rat race of life.

FOR YOU PERSONALLY, WHAT WOULD BE A REASONABLE PICTURE OF CONTENTMENT?



IV. STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is one of the most important concepts in life. At some point in our journey with God, we come to the conclusion that we are not owners of anything. Instead, God owns everything. Even the things that are “ours.”

READ I CHRONICLES 29:11-13 FROM THE *Living Bible*, ON THE NEXT PAGE. HOW DOES THIS VERSE COMPARE TO YOUR OWN VIEW OF YOUR POSSESSIONS?

REVIEW PSALM 24:1. HAVE YOU VIEWED GOD AS THE OWNER OF THESE THINGS?

WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD THIS PERSPECTIVE MAKE IN HOW YOU VIEW LIFE AND RESOURCES?

LOOK AT HAGGAI 2:8. HOW DO YOU THINK THIS VERSE APPLIES TO YOU?

A steward is one who has management authority under the master and has full responsibility for all of the master's possessions.

READ I CORINTHIANS 4:2. WHAT CONDITIONS ARE ASKED OF US AS STEWARDS?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BE A STEWARD RATHER THAN AN OWNER?

“Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your Kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything. Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the Ruler of all mankind; your hand controls power and might, and it is at your discretion that men are made great and given strength.” *I Chronicles 29:11-12, Living Bible*



LOOK AT LUKE 12:48. WHAT KIND OF RESPONSIBILITY IS INVOLVED IN BEING “FAITHFUL”?

WHAT DOES FAITHFULNESS MEAN TO YOU?

When the grace of Christ rules in our lives, we will better discern how to allocate the resources God has entrusted to us. As followers of Christ, we must embrace a stewardship-mindset: we own nothing. As stewards, we manage the possessions of Another. The King owns everything, and we are in His business to serve and represent Him in the world.

IN WHAT ARENAS OF LIFE ARE YOU A STEWARD? IS THERE ANYTHING YOU OWN?

IF YOU ARE TO FULFILL THE ROLE OF A STEWARD, WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO DO THIS WELL, AND GIVE HONOR TO GOD?

Stewardship is usually described in terms of time, talent, and treasure (with the primary emphasis on the third). Ken Boa in his book, *Conformed to His Image*, adds two other categories of stewardship: truth and relationships. These are the only two things (the Word of God and people) that will survive the destruction of the present heavens and earth and go on into the new heavens and new earth. If this is so, we are entrusted with the temporal goods of time, talent, and treasure in order to reproduce truth in our relationships.

READ II CORINTHIANS 9:6-7. WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE BE ABOUT GIVING? WHAT SHOULD IT NOT BE?

WHAT PRINCIPLE CAN YOU IDENTIFY IN PROVERBS 3:9?

READ PROVERBS 11:24, 25 AND DESCRIBE THE IDEAL ATTITUDE FOR GIVING.

Giving is a matter of the heart—it is an act of kindness and generosity to meet the needs of others. Giving may involve money, but it isn't limited to that. Giving from the world's perspective often results in recognition, a name on a building, or having control and influence over the recipient. Giving often has an ulterior motive.



DO YOU ENJOY GIVING? WHY OR WHY NOT?

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT APPROACH TO GIVING?

A true giver loves to act without recognition or reciprocity. This kind of giving is driven by a desire to make an impact and not be in the limelight or receive something back. This kind of giving reflects God's manner of giving to us. God wants your heart before He wants your money. When God has our heart, giving is a response to His goodness. A positive benefit of giving is when we give joyfully, sacrificially, and faithfully, then we are less likely to become focused on ourselves. Giving puts our priorities in line with God's priorities.

Memory Verse

I Chronicles 29:11-12 (NIV)

"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all."



Additional Resources

- > Crown Ministries
- > *Your Money Counts*, Howard Dayton
- > *Heaven*, Randy Alcorn
- > *Abundant Freedom*, CBMC

[OPTIONAL APPLICATION]

THINK: FOR WHICH OF YOUR POSSESSIONS IS IT EASIEST TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S OWNERSHIP?

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO FOR LIFE PERSPECTIVES, CHAPTER 5, OR VISIT WWW.OPERATIONTIMOTHY.COM AND LISTEN TO SELECTIONS FOR THIS CHAPTER.

OBSERVE: WHAT IS YOUR BASIC EXPECTATION FOR THE STANDARD OF LIVING THAT GOD WILL GIVE YOU IN LIFE? HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND IF YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES REVEALED A DIFFERENT PLAN?

CONSIDER: IN WHICH ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE IS IT MOST DIFFICULT TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S OWNERSHIP? WHY?



NOTES



YOUR CALLING *chapter 6* AS AN INSIDER

That's What They Say

"Where to serve is among the first issues in our call to discipleship. We are to serve Christ as insiders in an unbelieving world. Many of us have withdrawn from our old associations to where we have all but lost our insidership. In a sense we have abandoned a post that was uniquely ours, that cannot be filled by another in exactly the same way."

Jim Petersen, Lifestyle Discipleship

"During the reign of Oliver Cromwell, the British government began to run low on silver for coins. Lord Cromwell sent his men on an investigation of the local cathedral to see if they could find any precious metal there.... They reported: 'The only silver we could find is the statues of the saints standing in the corners.' To which the radical soldier and statesman of England replied: 'Good! We'll melt down the saints and put them into circulation!'... Sunday go-to-meetin' silver saints in shining armor are simply out of circulation if that's the limit to their faith." *Charles Swindoll, author, Come Before Winter*

"Always share Christ, if you have to use words."
St. Francis of Assisi, monk

Over a decade after her death, Princess Diana is still a best-seller. At present, there are just under one hundred books about the royal family and more than half of them are about Princess Di. It makes sense that the most popular books are the "tell alls" written by the insiders. The butlers and nannies and family friends who



actually lived in the context of Windsor Castle or Kensington Palace have the corner on the market. Because they're in the know. They have first-hand experience.

No one can resist hearing inside information. We want to know how movie stars live; how millionaires made their fortune; what it's like in a major league clubhouse.

Christians often have the mistaken impression that becoming an insider in the kingdom of God means becoming an outsider to the world. On the contrary, we're called "in" instead of "out."

The Big Picture

In this section, we'll discuss four aspects of our calling as insiders:

- I. What is an insider?
- II. How can I be an insider?
- III. How can I survive as an insider?
- IV. What is an insider's vision?

“Live as though Christ died yesterday, rose from the grave today, and is coming back tomorrow.”

Theodore Epp, Bible teacher

I. WHAT IS AN INSIDER?

Inside Out

In his book, *Lifestyle Discipleship* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1993) Jim Petersen makes the case that “our basic strategy for connecting with an unbelieving world is going to have to change.” In the past, we’ve assumed that if we opened the church doors, sooner or later the world would come to us. If it were ever true, it’s no longer so. We are here for the sake of the lost, not just to change society.

We all say we want to share our faith, but some of us aren’t sure how to do it. A woman once came up to 19th Century evangelist Dwight Moody and told him she didn’t like his method of sharing his faith. He replied, “I don’t much like it either. What method do you use?” She answered, “I don’t have one.” To which Moody said, “Then I prefer my method.”

●

WE BEGIN WITH OUR FOUNDATION: JESUS, THE ULTIMATE INSIDER. READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8. HOW DOES THIS DESCRIPTION ESTABLISH JESUS AS AN INSIDER?

VERSE 5 SAYS WE SHOULD MATCH THE ATTITUDE. WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS MEANS?

●

FROM WHATEVER FACTS YOU KNOW ABOUT JESUS, HOW DID HE FUNCTION AS AN INSIDER IN HIS WORLD?

PAUL DESCRIBES HIS “INSIDERSHIP” IN I CORINTHIANS 9:19-23. WHAT GOAL DOES HE DESCRIBE? (VV.19, 22)

SUMMARIZE HIS STRATEGY AS DETAILED IN THE PASSAGE.





your calling as an insider

*The status of "insider" is only awarded to those
who demonstrate an attitude of self-sacrifice.*

The Principle of Common Ground

READ I CORINTHIANS 9:19-23. WHAT DO THESE VERSES INDICATE ABOUT PAUL'S FLEXIBILITY WHEN RELATING TO THE PEOPLE HE WAS TRYING TO REACH?

Looking for Areas of Common Ground

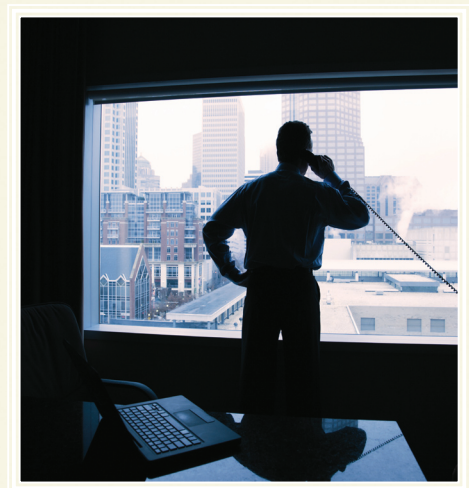
In your life, what are some likely places for building common ground with outsiders? Consider the following:

Tennis	Sewing	Entertaining at home
Camping	Music Concerts	Children's activities
Hunting	Theater	Going to sports events
Swimming	Gambling	Boating
Picnics	Dinner out	Rotary Club

The Trenches

Jesus, though divine, identified with the lowly; Paul, a proud Pharisee and Roman citizen, was "all things to all men." There are times, of course, when God calls us out. After a number of years, Paul was called to leave his life as a Pharisee "insider." He was dispatched to the Gentile world. Even then, he was vigorously involved with non-believers everywhere he went.

The term "insider" means one who lives "in" the world, but is not "of" the world. An insider recognizes that where he lives and works is God's unique and primary mission field for him.



II. HOW CAN I BE AN INSIDER?

Easier said than done! Wait; doesn't I John 2:15 tell us not to love the world? And aren't we told that light has no fellowship with darkness? If Christ truly changes us, how can we possibly be insiders in the world?

READ I CORINTHIANS 7:17, 20, AND 26. WHAT COMMAND IS REPEATED THREE TIMES?

Paul tells us that when God reaches us, He usually has us right where He wants us. Unless our work or status itself is specifically unpleasing to God (for example, criminal acts, or, in Paul's case, his persecution of believers), we should hold our position and use it for Him.

HOW DOES YOUR BEHAVIOR ALIGN WITH I PETER 2:12?

HOW DOES I THESSALONIANS 4:7 APPLY IN OUR LIVES?

JESUS USES TWO WORD PICTURES IN MATTHEW 5:13-16 TO DESCRIBE OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD. HOW WOULD THIS LOOK IN YOUR LIFE?

Taking the Field

It has been said that if our world is a great football stadium, too many Christians are watching from the stands. The action is inside the gridiron. Many of us are emotional spectators, cheering for God's cause and getting upset when the team does poorly on the field. God calls us out of the cheap seats and into the action—until the game is won.

III. HOW CAN I SURVIVE AS AN INSIDER?

The Weary Traveler

Ever traveled abroad? The best part was returning home, wasn't it? In another country, we discover the perils of different languages and unfamiliar customs. Even the most exciting adventures can co-exist with a thread of loneliness.

In spiritual terms, the Christian lives such a life. We'd love to rest and prop up our feet in heaven—or at least with the church crowd—all the time. Instead, we're full time travelers in a foreign world because we are citizens of heaven (see Philippians 3:20).

The best way to teach others about Christ and to make them desire to have Jesus in their own lives is to live a consistent, loving, Christ-centered life in front of them. If you are a good friend, a good listener, attentive to the needs of those around you and morally upright, then people will be likely to listen to you when you tell them about Christ because they will see that there is something genuinely different about you.

READ JOHN 17:20-23. WHAT IS JESUS' PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES, AS EXPRESSED IN VERSE 21?

HOW MIGHT THIS HELP US SURVIVE IN THE WORLD AS INSIDERS?



ACCORDING TO VERSE 23, IN WHAT WAY ARE WE IDENTIFIED WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON?

THE FIRST BELIEVERS HAD A DRAMATIC IMPACT ON THEIR WORLD AS INSIDERS. READ ACTS 2:46-47 AND DESCRIBE THEIR FELLOWSHIP. WHAT WAS THE RESULT?

Strength in Numbers

True Christian community, then, strengthens and sustains us as we live in the world—as does the reality of Christ within us. There are two areas we must consider: How can we leverage our activities and relationships for the cause of Christ? And, how can we team together to reach others?

HOW CAN WE LEVERAGE OUR ACTIVITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE CAUSE OF CHRIST?



HOW MIGHT REMAINING AS AN INSIDER IN YOUR WORK OR IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD GIVE YOU MARGIN?

WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS DO YOU HAVE THAT COULD BE LEVERAGED TO SHARE CHRIST?

Teaming Up

One of the most effective ways to share Christ is to get your friends involved in the relationships of those with whom you are trying to share Christ. You team together, have dinners, go to sports events and help one another. The person searching is deeply impacted by seeing the reality of Christ in you and in your friends. They also see that Christ is central to relationships, to living life and even having fun.

WHO COULD YOU TEAM UP WITH TO BE A POSITIVE WITNESS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD OR AT WORK?

WHAT COULD YOU DO TO INVOLVE YOUR FRIENDS WITH THOSE WHO YOU DESIRE TO KNOW CHRIST?



IV. WHAT IS AN INSIDER'S VISION?

Hang in there! Think of a time when you worked long and hard, and it was all you could do to persevere. What got you through? Was it vision? You had a goal to reach, something to bank your hopes on—the kind of faith Hebrews 11:1 calls “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” As an insider living in the world, you’ll need such a vision.

JUST BEFORE ASCENDING TO HEAVEN, JESUS MAKES HIS VISION STATEMENT IN MATTHEW 28:19-20. WHAT IS HIS VISION FOR HIS FOLLOWERS?



WHAT IS PAUL'S VISION IN COLOSSIANS 1:28, 29?

WE SEE, THEN, THAT OUR VISION IS REACHING THE WORLD. HOW DO WE ACHIEVE THAT END?

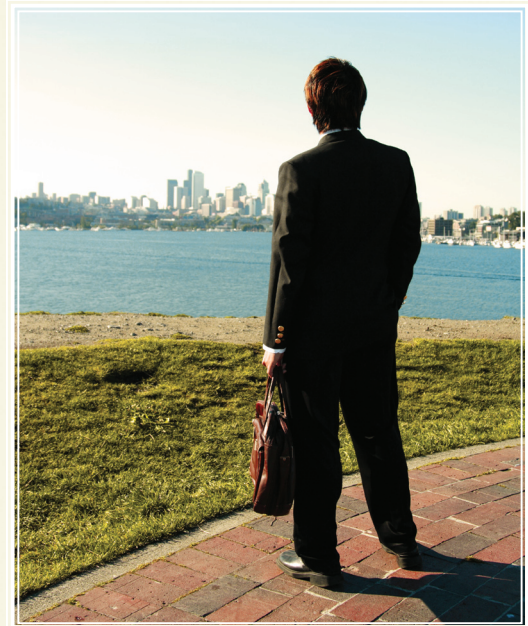
IN JOHN 15:5, JESUS TALKS ABOUT FRUIT-BEARING. WHAT IS THE KEY TO FRUIT-BEARING?

Smooth Sailing

There's no doubt about it: Christians are called to navigate some turbulent waters. Just as any good ship needs a compass, we must keep our bearings at all times. We do so by maintaining His vision for us and for the world.

We must hold our ground in the world as spiritual soldiers. We have to stay involved as insiders if we're ever to make a difference. To do that, we must have unity in Christian fellowship, maintaining margin in our lives so Christ's vision, known as the Great Commission, will stay ever before us.

Above all else, if we allow Christ to live in and through us, God will use us as He accomplishes His purposes for this world.



Take an Insider Inventory

Take a walk on the *In*-side. By evaluating the various settings and people in your life, you can determine those places in which you're an established insider. Consider it your little plot of land in which God has placed you to till the soil. Who are some people in the categories below—and others you might think of—for whom God might want you to be salt and light?

At Home

With Other People

At Work

I AM AN
INSIDER

At Other Places

In the Neighborhood

With my Friends and Social Circle

Who should be added to your “Ten Most Wanted Card”?

Marginal Success

What if you were given the next three years to live? And what if you were told you not only had to accomplish your life's work in those three years—but you had to change human history? Would you carry an observable sense of urgency? Keep a hectic pace?

Consider that Jesus lived under these conditions. He understood and accepted His destiny, and made it clear to His followers. But here's the strange part: He never hurried anywhere. He always had time for people in His path. He found time to pray and be alone. He was calmer and more in control than you or me.

In the space below, evaluate the margin in various areas of your life—that is, how close to empty are you operating? Understanding your responsibilities and limitations, how much margin is left to serve God in these areas? Picture a fuel gauge to determine whether you have a “full tank,” or you’re “running on empty,” or where you are in-between. When you have margin, you have reserves to call upon. When you are overloaded, your tank is “empty,” and you have no more to give. Write any comments or insights you have about each area and how you might reduce your “overload” in these areas.



> MY FAMILY LIFE



> MY FRIENDSHIPS



> MY CHURCH LIFE



> MY WORK



> MY RECREATION



> MY FINANCES

Begin praying for these people, your relationships, and that God would open a door for the Gospel.

Calling and Work

God calls us to participate with Him in His purposes of reaching the world.

HOW DOES CALLING IN EPHESIANS 1:18 APPLY TO TAKING THE GOSPEL OUT?

WHAT APPLICATION CAN WE MAKE FROM II TIMOTHY 1:9?

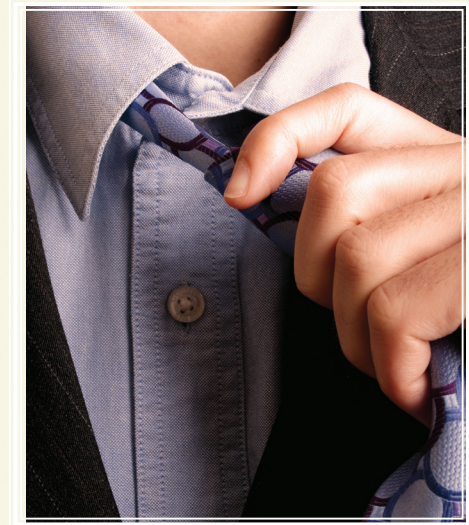
God places each of us into a context to live out the Gospel. For most, God calls us to be a light in our home neighborhood and workplace. Our attitudes toward work are important, so that it does not become the first priority.

Work is important. But it isn't our identity. Who we are transcends what we do. If we don't derive our identity from our relationship with the Lord, our work will tend to shape and define us, and then disappoint us.



WORK IS NOT A RESULT OF THE FALL. IT IS A PART OF GOD'S CREATED ORDER FOR HUMANITY. READ GENESIS 2:5, 15 AND COMMENT.

HOW DID THE FALL AFFECT THE CHARACTER OF WORK IN GENESIS 3:17-19?



HOW WILL OUR WORK BE TESTED AND REWARDED BY GOD? (1 CORINTHIANS 3:13-15)

WHY DO MOST PEOPLE GO TO WORK? GIVE THREE OR FOUR THOUGHTS.

READ COLOSSIANS 3:23-24. WE ARE CALLED TO DO OUR WORK AS UNTO THE LORD INSTEAD OF SEEKING TO IMPRESS AND PLEASE PEOPLE. IN YOUR JOB, WHAT WOULD BE AN EXAMPLE OF EACH APPROACH?

EXAMINE PHILIPPIANS 4:19, WHAT DOES THIS VERSE SAY ABOUT PROVISION?



LOOK AT JEREMIAH 9:23-24; PHILIPPIANS 3:8. FROM THESE VERSES, WHAT SHOULD BE OUR MOTIVATION AS IT RELATES TO WORKING?

READ II CORINTHIANS 5:18-19. WHAT DO THESE VERSES INDICATE IS OUR JOB DESCRIPTION (REGARDLESS OF VOCATION)?

True importance is not found in position or prestige, but in the manner in which our work is done and the Audience for whom we do it. Significance is not determined by wisdom, power, or wealth, but by our relationship with God.

We do not work to provide for our needs. Our culture associates work with the quest for success, significance, provision, esteem, and purpose. By contrast, Scripture teaches us that it is God, not our work, to whom we should look for these things (I Corinthians 4:7). Believers must come to see that God is their source of provision, and their work is a means He uses to supply their needs.

God is not impressed by, or dependent upon, our abilities or accomplishments. But if we do our work for His sake, it pleases Him in the same way the drawings children make for their parents decorate the refrigerator. These drawings are not valued because they qualify to hang in an art gallery, but because of the parent's relationship with the children who made them.

Ken Boa

Memory Verse 6: Your Calling as an Insider

I Corinthians 7:24 (NIV)

“Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.”

Additional Resources

- > CBMC has excellent tools at www.cbmc.com.
- > *True Spirituality*, Francis A. Schaeffer
- > *Lifestyle Discipleship*, Jim Petersen

AND LIS



NOTES



MULTIPLYING YOUR LIFE

chapter 7

That's What They Say

"Jesus chose a few men with whom He could build a relationship and in whom He could pour His life so that when He was gone they could turn the world upside down."

Charles Swindoll, pastor and author

"Laborers are few. They were few in Jesus' day and they are few today. Churchgoers are many. Seminars are many. Conferences are many. Religious institutions are many. Programs are many. But laborers are few."

Leroy Eims, missionary and author of Laboring in the Harvest

"We are called to reproduce the life of Christ into the life of a believer." *Howard Hendricks, professor*

"Discipleship is simply broken people helping broken people." *Anonymous*

The internet has given new meaning to the concept of expansion. Do a search for the word "number" and—depending on which search engine you use—you get 1,730,000,000 responses in .15 seconds. Multiplication of information has become part of our daily lives. We think in terms of expanding systems. Our daily conversations are replete with the prefix "mega." We've turned "max" into a verb. Clearly, "big" isn't that difficult a concept for us. If you apply this thinking to your calling as a disciple, it's easy to conclude that success is defined by quantity.

But what does expansion really look like for a follower of Jesus Christ? His parables encourage us to invest and grow the resources He has given



us. Does that mean maxing out our worship services each week in mega-churches? Does it mean that nothing counts spiritually except the results we can quantify? We are called to reproduce. But reproduce what?

To answer these questions, perhaps we would do well to return to where we began—our purpose. Spiritual growth is just number crunching unless it is connected to purpose. God has an awesome purpose for your life. That is to join Him in developing His Kingdom on this earth and in the hearts and minds of individual men and women.

The Big Picture

- I. Discipleship: Spiritual Parenting
- II. The Process of Growth
- III. The Goal in Discipleship:
Christ is Formed in You.
- IV. Life on Life
- V. Finding a Timothy
- VI. Spiritual Reproduction: Multiplication

“The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly.”

Isaiah, the prophet (Isaiah 60:22)

I. DISCIPLESHIP: SPIRITUAL PARENTING

Discipleship is the PROCESS of helping believers grow SPIRITUALLY in the context of a RELATIONSHIP.

Changing our Paradigm

Over the last two centuries, the meaning of discipleship has taken on many meanings, many of which connote more about a religious behavior than a way of life. In many of today's church environments, discipleship carries the idea of going through a dry program or attending a stuffy class on spiritual growth. The focus is on knowledge and information. By defining it this way, discipleship has become a repellent—especially to many younger people who long for authenticity and community. They are wrestling through real life issues. Why shouldn't discipleship be tethered securely to real life?

True discipleship is all about Christ. And Christ was about relationships. His passion was for people, not tasks or organizations or even movements. For us, this passion translates into multiplying our lives, living among the lost and making disciples where we live.

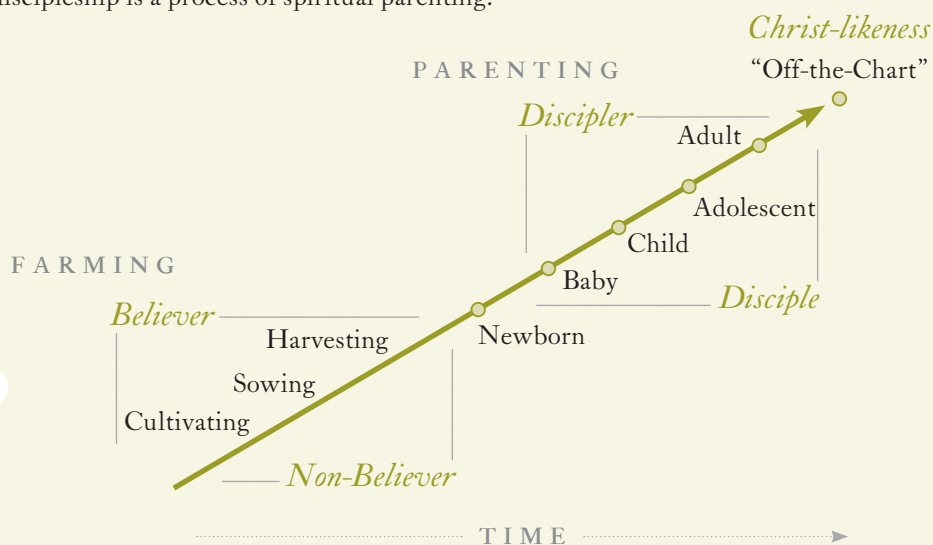
“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’ Amen.” *Matthew 28:18-20*

Spiritual Parenting

Any parent knows: parenting isn't theoretical. Just when the theories seem to be working, along comes a child or a situation that blows a perfect plan out of the water! Talk to people who aren't parents yet and you'll get great ideas, but talk to a parent and you'll get... love. Bottom line, that's what it means to parent. All aspects of the job lead to that one end. Discipleship, if it is nothing else, is parenting another believer in love.



For example, the Apostle Paul writes, "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ has formed you." To the church in Thessalonica he writes, "But we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her children...for you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children..." Peter spoke of "newborn babies." John repeatedly addressed his readers as "dear children." And Hebrews talks about spiritual "infancy" and the importance of moving to "adulthood." In CBMC, we have long used the following illustration that evangelism is the process of spiritual farming and that discipleship is a process of spiritual parenting.



LET'S BEGIN WITH THE SCRIPTURES. WHAT DO THESE VERSES SAY ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TEACHER AND THE LEARNER?

> GALATIANS 4:19

> I THESSALONIANS 2:8-12

IN THE DIAGRAM, WHAT ARE THE FOUR STAGES OF GROWING AS A DISCIPLE?

What are some characteristics of each of these stages?

1. A disciple submits to a teacher who teaches him or her to follow Jesus.
2. A disciple learns Jesus' words.
3. A disciple learns Jesus' way of ministry.
4. A disciples imitates Jesus' life and character.
5. A disciple finds and teaches others about Jesus.

(Bill Hill, *Choose Life*)

"THE IMAGE IS OF A NURSE-MOTHER, TENDERLY FOSTERING HER OWN CHILDREN. SHE IS NOT CONCERNED NOW TO CORRECT EVERY MISTAKE. SHE DOESN'T LOAD HER CHILDREN WITH INFORMATION. RATHER, SHE IS BUSY MAKING THEM FEEL SECURE IN HER LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE.... IF WE WANT NEW BELIEVERS TO ASSUME THE HABIT OF GOING TO THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WE NEED TO BE DOING IT OURSELVES."

Jim Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*

What are the Barriers and Struggles in Discipleship?

Becoming a disciple and helping others to become disciples is difficult, messy and long term. Many start the process but do not finish. Why do you think that is?

Some common obstacles:

- > Never been disciplined themselves.
- > Afraid they don't know what to say.
- > Don't have time.
- > Don't understand the value.

WHICH OF THESE IS YOUR GREATEST STRUGGLE?

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO OVERCOME THIS?

Despite the struggles and difficulties, Jesus did not offer discipleship as an option.
Read Luke 14: 25 – 35.

WHAT DO YOU SEE IN JESUS' TEACHING THAT WOULD DISQUALIFY SOMEONE FROM BEING A DISCIPLE?

DOES HE MEAN THAT WE ARE ACTUALLY TO HATE OUR FATHER, MOTHER, WIFE, CHILDREN, AND OTHERS?

WHAT DOES HE REQUIRE FOR ONE TO BE HIS DISCIPLE?



multiplying your life



*Becoming a disciple and helping others to become disciples
is difficult, messy and Long-term.*

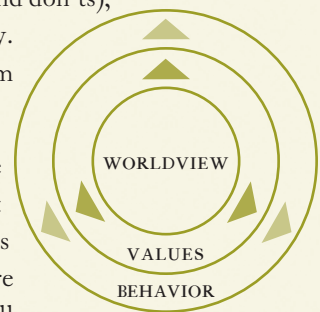
READ AGAIN THE VERSES BELOW. EVALUATE YOUR OWN WALK WITH CHRIST IN LIGHT OF THE PASSAGE.
 HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE?

“Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it; lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, “This man began to build and was not able to finish.” Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!’” *Luke 14:25-35*

II. THE PROCESS OF GROWTH

Authentic Christian growth comes from the inside and works its way to the surface—just the opposite of the manner we so often seek to impose. When we foolishly measure a new Christian’s progress based on the trappings of spirituality (the right words, the correct dos and don’ts), we settle for the good over the best, the expedient over the extraordinary. It is the heart motivation that must change. Spiritual change starts from within—it is a transformation.

This kind of revolutionary transformation takes place on three fronts: worldview, values, and behavior. Discipleship focuses first on worldview—my view of God and God’s view of the world. This is where I answer the big questions of life: How did I get here? Where am I going? Who is in charge? Your answer to these questions will affect your value system—what is important to you, what you are willing to die for? Your behavior, then, is a direct outgrowth of your worldview, which forms your values and resulting behavior. It’s tempting to focus on behavior first: “the dos and don’ts.” (Do I ____, ____, ____, etc.?) We often try to clean people up on the outside (reformation) without a change on the inside (transformation). That’s because it’s easier to measure success that way. But God’s strategy is inside-out.



How much more permanent is inside out change versus outside in?

“AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN WORLDVIEW, VALUES, AND BEHAVIOR HELPS US TO KNOW HOW TO MINISTER TO OTHERS. IF WE WANT TO SEE TRUE TRANSFORMATION OCCUR, OUR EFFORTS SHOULD BE ORIENTED TOWARD WHAT A PERSON BELIEVES AND VALUES. THAT HELPS US TAKE WRONG BEHAVIOR IN STRIDE. WE KNOW THAT IN TIME, GENUINE CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR WILL APPEAR.”

Jim Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*

How is God changing you inside? Give examples.

Consider: “He who began a good work in me will perfect it...” PHILIPPIANS 1:6. How does the verse apply to this idea?

Worldview is formed based upon the truth of Scripture and the person of Christ.

III. THE GOAL: CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU

If the process of growth is inside out, then the true goal begins at the heart, which in Paul's terms is found in this verse: "My children in whom I have labored until Christ is formed in you." (Galatians 4:19)

What does it mean to have Christ formed in you? For many, this is knowledge or information; for others, it is certain behavior or solution. The following principles about discipleship are found both at the heart of discipleship and in the process.

Informational to Relational: "My children..."

- > Classroom to life-on-life relationships.
- > Facts about the Bible to life change.

Product to Process: "in whom I have labored..."

- > Finding quick solutions to ongoing life issues (life is messy and takes time to change).
- > The process or journey is the end (our journey is momentary and daily rather than trying to get to a destination).



Behavioral to Spiritual: "until Christ is formed in you."

- > Change from trying to be like Christ to Christ is my life. The Christian life is not me trying to do things for Christ, but Christ living His life through me. He is the origin, means and end of my activity.
- > Life is not so much about me trying in my strength to be like Jesus, but for Christ to be my life. Jesus is more than an answer to life as He is my life.
- > It is not informational but transformational. Spiritual disciplines are a vital means to a larger end. They are not the end itself.

Inductive to Deductive

- > The process of discipling moves from telling to discovery.

Reflect on these principles.

HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY ONE OF THESE COMPONENTS WHILE BEING DISCIPLED?



HOW WOULD YOU APPLY THEM IN HELPING A FUTURE DISCIPLE?

WHAT OTHER COMMENTS WOULD YOU MAKE ABOUT THE PROCESS?

“The primary objective in discipleship is to bring your disciple to the point of “digging his own well” (to drink from the Word) and lose his dependence on you.”

Chris Adsit, Personal Disciplemaking

“Thirty years of discipleship programs and we are not discipled.”

Jim Petersen, Lifestyle Discipleship

Christ Our Life

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR CHRIST TO BE OUR LIFE?

He is the origin, means, and end.

THESE VERSES DESCRIBE “LIFE.” WHAT DO THEY MEAN TO YOU?

> LIFE THAT IS THE LIGHT – JOHN 1:4

> HE OFFERS AN ABUNDANT LIFE – JOHN 10:10

> HE IS THE ETERNAL LIFE – JOHN 14:6

HOW HAVE YOU GROWN IN YOUR EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST BEING YOUR LIFE?

REFLECT ON GALATIANS 2:20, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU AND HOW COULD IT WORK IN YOUR LIFE?

A relationship with Christ has four essential components:

- > Identity—being “in Christ.”
- > Indwelling—Christ in us.
- > Intimacy—being with Christ, knowing and loving Him.
- > Glory—reflecting Christ forever.



Identity in Christ speaks to ‘who am I?’.

- > I am accepted....
- > I am secure and belong...
- > I am significant, worthy and valued....
- > I am redeemed with a price...

Christ **indwelling** me speaks to ‘what are my resources?’

Intimacy with Christ speaks to ‘what is my ultimate purpose?’

My mission is to bring **glory** to Christ now and forever.



HOW HAVE YOU GROWN IN THESE TRUTHS THROUGH THIS DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS?

IV. LIFE ON LIFE: DISCIPLESHIP IS A LIFE TO LIFE RELATIONSHIP

Most people in western culture approach the subject of discipleship in a systematic, logical manner. We create an agenda, formulate a plan and launch out—often oblivious to the needs of the person with whom we are attempting to share our life in Christ. This approach also leaves out the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is system-bound. That implies a reliance on our own wisdom rather than God’s.

Jesus’ approach followed the patterns indigenous to ancient Palestine. As a Rabbi (teacher), Jesus spent time with his followers. His disciples had the opportunity to observe His reactions to the rich, the poor, the priests, and the politicians. He was constantly asking questions, forcing them to think through choices and weigh events against the teachings of Scripture.

“Before my enlightening experiences in Brazil I had viewed discipleship as a system of information and disciplines. So I organized a syllabus and how-tos. It dawned on me that I was forcing my agenda on everyone. I needed to learn to begin at the other person’s starting point.” *Jim Petersen, Lifestyle Discipleship*

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.” *I Thessalonians 2:8*

Jesus was very practical, too. He and His disciples discussed the purpose and use of money, the importance of family, and the role of government. For over three years, His disciples were engaged in a life-on-life course on how to live for God in a fallen world.

HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THIS?



HOW COULD YOU DO THIS WITH ANOTHER?

For the Duration

Life-on-life discipleship is a long-term commitment. This kind of relationship requires sacrifice and may seem too costly to some.

Just as parents can't give up on their children, we can't give up on our spiritual children, even if the road is long, difficult and painful. Christ gave His life for you; should you do less for others?

ARE YOU PREPARED TO PAY THIS KIND OF PRICE?



WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO HAVE GOD SAY TO YOU “WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT”?

Generational

DISCIPLESHIP IS ALSO GENERATIONAL. TRUTH IS PASSED FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER. WHAT ARE THE FOUR GENERATIONS NOTED IN II TIMOTHY 1:5?

IN ISAIAH 54:2-3, WHO ACTUALLY POSSESSES THE NATIONS?

WHY WOULD SEEING DISCIPLESHIP AS GENERATIONAL BE IMPORTANT?

WHO ARE THE GENERATIONS THAT PRECEDED YOU?

Discovery Process

Discipleship is a discovery process not an informational dump. The following are four fundamental principles outlined by Walt Henrichsen in *Disciples are Made, Not Born*.

- A. Major in principles rather than methods. Focus on function, not form.
- ☐ B. Major in meeting the needs of others rather than in developing and imparting techniques.
- C. Major in developing the thought processes rather than skills.
- D. Major in how to trust God rather than teaching theories about God.

HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THESE PRINCIPLES?

Goals for Our Spiritual Offspring

> The following are goals also outlined by Walt Henrichsen:

1. Know CHRIST and experience the truths about Him, so that Christ is living through them.
2. Develop FAITH, HOPE and LOVE as an outgrowth of their intimacy with Christ and interdependence in a COMMUNITY.
3. Assume their share of the RESPONSIBILITY that is intrinsic to the Gospel.

> Teach men to depend upon God, not you.



V. FINDING A TIMOTHY: A CRITICAL CHOICE

We can't disciple everyone. The time and commitment required by both the discipler (Paul) and the disciple (Timothy) force us to focus on a few. With all the powers of the universe at Christ's command, He chose to pour his life into a few, ragged disciples. He knew that a few dedicated people would in time shake the world for God. Victory is never won by multitudes. The principle applies today—if we build quality leadership the multitudes will be reached and won.

If we can work successfully with only a few, we can be successful by choosing and challenging these few to become a critical part of the discipleship process. Who are the people we are looking for, and how do we challenge them to become involved in Operation Timothy?

The first step is to be able to recognize a potential disciple. What are the qualities we are looking for in a Timothy?

> F.A.T. Man

1. Faithful
2. Available
3. Teachable

WHAT WOULD THIS LOOK LIKE PRACTICALLY?

As you ask, consider:

“Teachability is a person's capacity for growth. You show me a person who is teachable, and I'll show you a person in whom there is no limit in terms of potential.” *Dr. Howard Hendricks*

Steps in Finding a Timothy

1. Ask

Prayerfully make a list of men you believe have these qualities or potential to develop them. Prayer is a key element in the selection process because these are qualities of the heart. You need God's mind in this for only He can discern the hearts of men and see their potential.

“...The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” *1 Samuel 16:7*

2. Seek

Your Timothy will come from one of three sources. First, he may be a man you have had the privilege of leading to Christ. In this case, as his spiritual father, you have the same responsibilities as any parent. Second, in your day-to-day activities, God may bring a young, immature Christian into your life and place him into your teaching stewardship. A third source may be a man who is not a Christian, but wants to explore God's Word and investigate the possibility of making Christ his Lord and Savior.

- > New Christian
- > Immature Christian
- > Seeker

3. Knock

When the Lord brings a potential Timothy across your path, take the initiative. In Luke 6:13 we see that after prayer the Lord called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them. How you qualify and challenge your Timothy is vital to your overall success.



Take the INITIATIVE.

How Do I Invite Timothy to Do Operation Timothy?

Ask general questions about Timothy's background, including spiritual, emotional, physical areas of life as you spend time together. Ask God to give you discernment to recognize when he has prepared a Timothy. Ask Him for wisdom to encourage a prospective Timothy to investigate the Scriptures with you. Reflect on the Spiritual Awareness Chart at right, asking God to give you insight into where Timothy is in his spiritual journey.

Take some time and begin to pray about who would be a person with whom you could begin to meet in this kind of relationship.

WHERE WOULD YOU BE IF SOMEONE BEFORE YOU HAD NOT BEEN FAITHFUL?



Spiritual Awareness Chart



VI. SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTION: A FINAL CHALLENGE

Consider these final ideas. Let God challenge you to enter into His mission and vision.

WHAT WILL LAST FOREVER?

EXAMINE JOHN 6:27 AND ISAIAH 40:8. WHAT ARE THE ONLY THINGS THAT WILL LAST?



WHAT ARE YOU EXCHANGING YOUR LIFE FOR?

WE WILL EXCHANGE OUR LIVES FOR SOMETHING. IN ISAIAH 43:4 AND ISAIAH 60:22, WHAT SHOULD WE INVEST IN?

WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU INVESTING IN?



A Life Purpose

A LIFE PURPOSE STATEMENT KEEPS US FOCUSED. WHAT WAS PAUL'S PURPOSE IN COLOSSIANS 1:27-29?

HOW COULD YOUR PURPOSE INCORPORATE SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTION?

The Principle of Reproduction and Multiplication

In the first pages of the Bible we discover one of the physical purposes of man on earth: reproduction and multiplication. The same is true in the spiritual dimension.

“Discipleship is our opportunity to tap the infinite resources of God. It is our chance to give our lives to significance rather than mediocrity.” *Walt Henrichsen*

God's Heart for the World

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” *John 3:16*

“Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.” *Psalms 2:8*

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” *Luke 19:10*

Memory Verse

II Timothy 2:2 (NIV)

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

Additional Resources

- > *Halftime*, Bob Buford
- > *Experiencing God*, Henry Blackaby

Consider the Impact of One

In 1900, Dr. A.E. Winship published a study of the families of two men, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) and “Max Jukes” (not his real name, 1720-?). Edwards was one of America’s greatest theologians—a writer, pastor, and philosopher. Jukes was a degenerate man whose family taxed the New York state prison system enough to provoke a study on them.

The first man left a remarkable legacy. Jonathan and Sarah Edwards built a family that was “exceptionally strong in scholarship and moral force.” Among the 1,400 individuals studied, there were 13 college presidents, 65 college professors, and many principals of seminaries and academies. One of them gave a quarter of a million to a Yale University endowment. Sixty-two members of the family became notable physicians. Over 100 were clergymen, missionaries, and theological professors. Many were business leaders, bankers, and inventors. Eighty served in public office as mayors, governors, congressmen, and senators. One was vice president. Seventy-five were army and navy officers. Sixty were prominent authors or editors, one of them a bestselling novelist. They wrote 135 books among them.

On the other hand, Max Jukes was idle, uneducated, and vulgar. Of the 1,200 members of his family, by birth and marriage, only 20 had decent job skills. Seven were murderers. Fifty were infamously depraved women. Sixty were habitual thieves, and 130 others were regularly convicted of various crimes. About ¼ of the family were professional paupers and another ¼ died as children for lack of proper care. The state of New York estimated the Jukes cost taxpayers \$1,250,000 in court, jail, and poorhouse expenses.



[OPTIONAL APPLICATION]

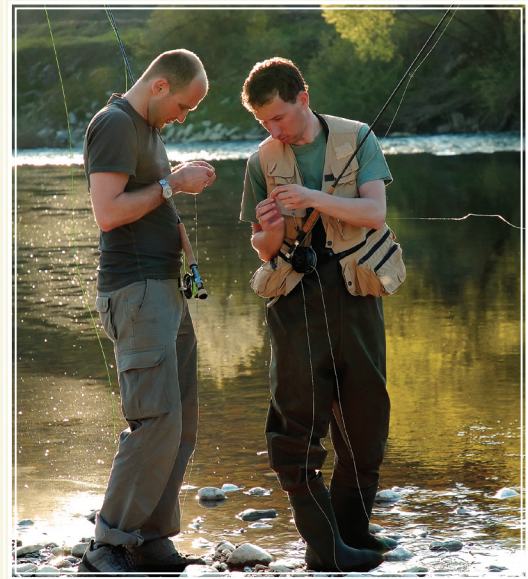
THINK: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHARING CHRIST WITH SOMEONE AND DISCIPLING SOMEONE?

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO FOR LIFE PERSPECTIVES, CHAPTER 7, OR VISIT WWW.OPERATIONTIMOTHY.COM AND LISTEN TO SELECTIONS FOR THIS CHAPTER.

OBSERVE: WHAT ATTITUDES WOULD INDICATE TO YOU THAT A PERSON IS WORTHY OF YOUR INVESTMENT AS A SPIRITUAL MENTOR?

CONSIDER: WHO COMES TO MIND AS SOMEONE FOR WHOM GOD MIGHT WANT TO USE YOU AS A SPIRITUAL MENTOR?

NOTES



WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS TO MULTIPLY YOUR LIFE FOR CHRIST?



1 *Digging into the Bible*
II TIMOTHY 3:16
[NIV]

“ All Scripture is God-breathed
and is useful for teaching,
rebuking, correcting
and training in righteousness. ”

2 *Knowing God's Will*
PROVERBS 3:5-6
[NIV]

“ Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge Him, ”
and He will make your paths straight.

3 *Becoming a Person of Character*
ROMANS 12:1-2
[NIV]

“ Therefore, I urge you, brothers,
in view of God's mercy,
to offer your bodies
as living sacrifices,
holy and pleasing to God—
this is your spiritual act of worship.
Do not conform any longer
to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed
by the renewing of your mind.
Then you will be able
to test and approve
what God's will is— ”
His good, pleasing and perfect will.

4 *Relationships*
MARK 10:45
[NIV]

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

5 *Kingdom Perspectives*
I CHRONICLES 29:11-12
[NIV]

“ Yours, O LORD,
is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the majesty
and the splendor,
for everything in heaven and earth
is Yours.
Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom;
you are exalted as head over all.
Wealth and honor come from You;
You are the ruler of all things.
In Your hands are strength and power
to exalt and give strength to all. ”

6 *Your Calling as An Insider.*
I CORINTHIANS 7:24
[NIV]

“ Brothers, each man,
as responsible to God,
should remain in the situation
God called him to. ”

7 *Multiplying Your Life*
II TIMOTHY 2:2
[NIV]

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

PROVERBS 3:5-6
Knowing God's Will

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him
and He will make your paths straight.”

[NASB]

II TIMOTHY 3:16
Digging into the Bible

“All Scripture is inspired by God
and profitable for teaching,
for reproof, for correction,
for training in righteousness;

[NASB]

MARK 10:45
Relationships

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

[NASB]

ROMANS 12:1-2
Becoming a Person of Character

“Therefore, I urge you, brethren,
by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies
a living and holy sacrifice,
acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual service of worship.
And do not be conformed
to His world,
but be transformed
by the renewing of your mind,
so that you may prove
what the will of God is,
that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

[NASB]

I CORINTHIANS 7:24
Your Calling as An Insider.

“Brethren, each one
is to remain with God
in that condition
in which he was called.”

[NASB]

I CHRONICLES 29:11-12
Kingdom Perspectives

“Yours, O LORD,
is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the victory
and the majesty,
indeed everything that is in the heavens
and the earth;
Yours is the dominion, O LORD,
and You exalt Yourself
as head over all.
Both riches and honor
come from You,
and You rule over all,
and in Your hand is power and might;
and it lies in Your hand
to make great
and to strengthen everyone.”

[NASB]

II TIMOTHY 2:2
Multiplying Your Life

“The things which you
have heard from me
in the presence of many witnesses,
entrust these to faithful men
who will be able
to teach others also.”

[NASB]