

## **Discipleship – Level III**

### ***Total Commitment – Full Surrender***

***“... ....The kingdom of God suffers violence,  
and the forceful take hold of it.”***

***Matthew 11:12***



*Discipleship Level III*  
**Total Commitment – A Kingdom Mentality**  
**Putting Christ First**



*“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you as well.”*  
- Jesus (Matthew 6:33)

<sup>23</sup> “Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.”

– Jesus (Luke 9:23-24)

**Lesson #1 – Total Commitment**

*The Call to Radical Discipleship*

**Lesson #2 – The Judgment of our Lives**

*Living every Day in Light of Eternity*

**Lesson #3 – Radical Spirituality**

*Cultivating Spiritual Passion*

**Lesson #4 – A Life of Destiny**

*Discovering and Living your Life Mission*

**Lesson #5 – Stewardship of Time**

*Putting “First things First”*

**Lesson #6 – Stewardship of Money**

*Putting Christ first in our Finances*

**Lesson #7 – A Servant Heart**

*Washing the Feet of the Saints*

**Lesson #8 – Submission to Authority**

*Renouncing Rebellion*

**Lesson #9 – Teamwork and the Resolution of Conflicts**

**Lesson #10 – “Secular” work in the Name of Jesus**

*Cultivating Excellence*

## ***Introduction to Level III – Radical for Christ! “Full Time” Christianity***

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,  
and all these things will be added to you as well.”  
Matthew 6:33*

### ***There is no such thing as “Part Time” Discipleship***

The Smith’s had lived a “normal” Christian life for many years. They believed in God, attended church sporadically, and threw a few bucks into the offering plate as it passed by... etc. For them, God was an important “*part*” of their lives – along with other significant activities, such as work, study, family time and entertainment.



After many years, they began to attend a small group Bible study and become more fully involved in the things of God. The change was noticeable. Spiritual things began to take priority in their use of time and resources. They attended services more faithfully; began to tithe; pray in the home; and seek opportunities to serve God with their time and talents. God had come to occupy the *principal* place in their individual and family lives.

Their son summed up the change by commenting...

*“Mommy, before we were ‘part time’ Christians, but now we’re ‘full time’ Christians!”<sup>1</sup>*

***The Objective of Level III is to become “full time” Christians – Comitting to God our time, resources, relationships and “self.”***

***For Discussion*** - What do you think are some of the differences between a “part time” and “full time” believer?

### ***Some hallmarks of a “full time” Disciple***

- Serves Jesus as “*Lord*” and not just “*Savior*”
- Seeks to live every day as if Jesus were returning that evening
- Cultivates spiritual passion through daily prayer, scripture reading and fasting
- Knows and seeks to fulfill their life mission
- Uses time and money according to spiritual priorities
- Has a servant’s heart
- Submits to civil and church authorities
- Works well with others and resolves conflict in a Christ-like manner
- Gives a positive Christian example in the workplace through an ethic of excellence

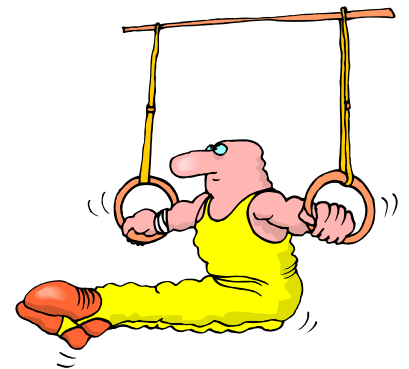
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<sup>1</sup> True story, shared with verbal permission. Name changed.

### ***Level III Exercises – “No pain, no gain!”***

*In the process of this course we will plan specific activities to learn better how to live a more fully committed life.*

- ***Monitoring our hearts in the “moments” of daily life*** – (Lesson #2) – Exercises to analyze particular “moments” from daily life in light of eternal values
- ***Appointments with God***– (Lesson #3) We will return to the concept of a daily time for private prayer and reflection on the word of God.
- ***Extended Fasting***– (Lesson #3) – Plan an extended fast of two or more days during the course of the semester.
- ***Extended Seasons of Prayer*** – (Lesson #3) – Plan to attend a special meeting for prayer: early morning, late night, or a retreat.
- ***Declaration of my Personal Life Mission*** – (Lesson #4) - By using questions for self evaluation, we will seek to discern some components of our life mission, and compose an initial “personal mission statement.”
- ***Consecrating our Calendar*** -- (Lesson #5) – We learn to organize our time according to the values of the kingdom of God and our personal mission statement by identifying and planning one specific activity for kingdom living.
- ***Consecrating our Budget*** -- (Lesson #6) – We work up a “personal budget” based on the principles of the kingdom of God.
- ***A Plan to Serve*** – (Lesson #7) – We consider some practical ways to serve others at home, in the community and at church.
- ***Evaluation of my personal preferences for conflict resolution*** - – (Lesson #9) – Using a particular case of conflict from our own life, we will attempt to evaluate our own personal approach to conflict resolution.
- ***Evaluation of my testimony at my “secular” job*** - – (Lesson #10) – We consider specific ways to provide a Christian example through our “secular” work.



## ***Counting the Cost*** ***The Radical Call to follow Jesus as Lord***

<sup>23</sup>Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. **Luke 9:23-24**

***The “Cost” of Discipleship – Take up our cross – daily!***

***Our Goal in this lesson is to – Understand better the radical and far reaching nature of the call to be a genuine disciple of Jesus***

***We consider...***

- The difference between genuine grace and “cheap” grace
- *The extreme nature of commitment to Christ as Lord*
- *The joy of a committed life*
- *The need for self-examination and honesty*
- *A prayer for full commitment*



### ***1. Genuine Grace v. Cheap Grace***

***Salvation is free – but discipleship costs!***

***Salvation is by Grace!***

<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. **Ephesians 2:8-9**

***We cannot earn the love of God!***

<sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **Romans 5:8**

It does not matter how often we pray; how much we give; how sacrificially we serve – God loves us the same!



***We are sons and not slaves! Read 15:11-32***

What did the younger son think he needed to do in order to win back the love and acceptance of his father? How did the reality of the situation differ from this expectation?

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Why was the older son so miserable? With what attitude did he serve his Father?

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We are called to be radical, but *the love of God cannot be won or lost by our good Works*. God loves us unconditionally!

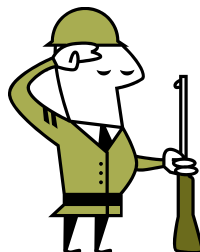
***No Cheap Grace! True Discipleship involves cost***

Our salvation in Christ is absolutely free – by grace – but this grace is not cheap! True discipleship, like any commitment in life, has a price.

***Cheap Grace...***

- Is the grace “*we give ourselves.*”<sup>2</sup>
- Is the grace which permits us to enjoy all the benefits of the Christian life, without fulfilling the responsibilities which this commitment entails
- Is the grace which allows us to use the name “Christian” without putting Christ first in our lives.
- Is the grace which allows us to be religious, fulfilling certain “obligations” without consulting God and his Word about how we should conduct our daily lives.

***The Cost of Discipleship - Submit ourselves to Christ as our Lord, putting him first in every area of life.***

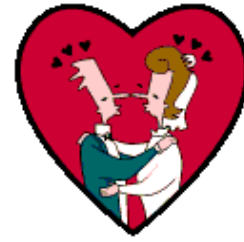


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<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship.

## 2. The Cost of a Commitment

*Every commitment in life has a cost!*



### **Marriage**

In order to marry – one must renounce other flirtations. Imagine a groom who asks to include the following sentiment in his marital vows ...

*I accept to live with you, enjoy physical intimacy, and share a home, a name and children. But I reserve the right to go out on dates with other women now and again....”*

While love may be unconditional, the true marital vows set a high price on enjoying this loving relationship!

### **Citizenship – An oath of loyalty to the flag**



In order to become a citizen of any country, one must agree to honor the laws and obligations of that nation. Imagine a candidate for citizenship who proposes the following, self-styled, loyalty oath...

*“I promise to live in this country, receive the benefits of the police, fire department and schools – but I reserve the right to abstain from paying taxes, to ignore laws I do not find convenient, and even sell arms to the enemies of this country should it be in my own financial best interest...etc..”*

What nation would accept such a citizen?

### **The Military**

In order to become a soldier – one must submit to military discipline and learn to obey orders without question or delay. Imagine the following vow for those enlisting for military service...

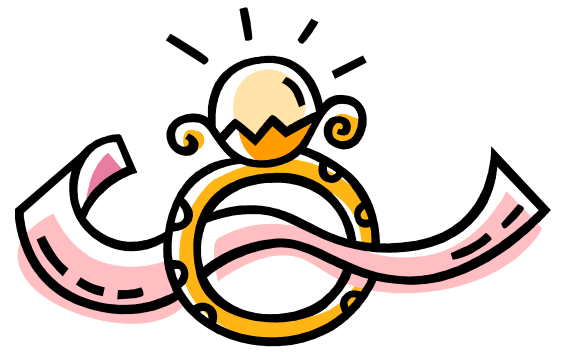
*“I commit myself to be a member of the armed forces of this nation – to wear the snazzy uniform with the shiny buttons and medals – but I do not agree to have my hair cut and reserve the right to question those orders which seem uncomfortable or difficult to execute, depending on my feelings at the moment....etc..”*



What army would accept soldiers such as this?

## **What is the “cost” of a commitment with Christ?**

*We read the following parable...*



### *How much?* *The Cost of Discipleship*

In Chapter 13 of Matthew we read that Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a businessman who dealt in fine pearls. When he found the pearl of great value, he sold everything in order to purchase it.

We know that many Christians interpret the pearl mentioned in this parable to represent us, and the businessman to represent Jesus, who gave all to redeem us. But now we realize that He, Christ, is the pearl of great price, and we are that treasure hunter who seeks happiness, security, fame and eternity.

Once we find Jesus, we ought to give all that we possess to “have” him. He possesses happiness, joy, peace, healing, security, eternity – everything! And therefore we ask the obvious question. *“How much does this pearl cost? I want it.”*

*“Very well,” says the salesman, “it is extremely expensive.”*

*“Ok, but how much?”* We insist.

*“It is very, very expensive.”*

*“Really? Do you think I can buy it?”*

*“Of course. Anyone can acquire it.”*

*“But didn’t you just say that it is extremely expensive?”*

*“Yes.”*

*“Well then, how much does it cost?”*

*“Everything you own,”* responds the salesman.

We think for a few moments. *“Very good, I have decided. I’m going to buy it!”* we exclaim.

*“Excellent. How much do you have?”* he asks. *“Let’s set the price.”*

*“I have \$30,000 in the bank.”*

*“Ok, \$30,000. What else?”*

*“That’s it. That’s all I have.”*

*“You mean to say you do not have anything else?”*

*“Well, I guess I have a few bucks here in pocket.”*

*“How much do you have on you?”*





We whip out our wallets and start digging through our pockets, *“Let’s see... twenty, forty, forty five... that’s it. Forty five dollars and ten cents!”*

*“Fantastic. What else?”*

*“I just told you. Nothing else. That’s it!”*

*“Where do you live?” He asks.*

*“Well, in my house... I have a house.”*

*“Ok then, the house also,” he says as he jots down notes.*

*“You mean I’ll have to live in my tent??!!”*

*“Oh, you have a tent?! The tent also. What else?”*

*“But if I give you that then I’ll have to sleep in my car.”*

*“A car also? Excellent.”*

*“Actually, I have two.”*

*“Wonderful. Both cars will be transferred to my ownership. What else?”*

*“Look, you already have my money, my house, my tent, and my two cars. What else do you want?”*

*“Are you single? Do you have any family?”*

*“Well... yes, I have a wife and two kids....”*

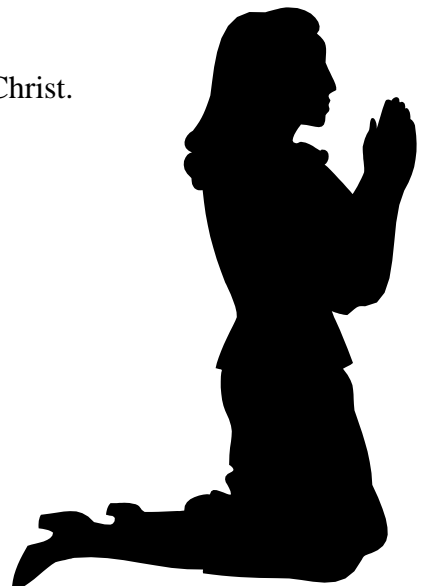
*“Excellent. Your wife and kids also. What else?”*

*“I don’t have anything left!! I’m completely alone and empty!”*

*Then the salesman exclaims: “But how could I have almost forgotten! YOU! You also! Everything about you and your life becomes mine: Wife, kids, house, money, vehicles and also your person.”*

*Then he adds, “Now listen carefully, for the moment I will allow you to use all of these things, but always remember that they belong to me and that you yourself belong to me and that any time I have need of any of these things we have just mentioned, you must yield them to me, because I am the rightful owner.”*

Such is the transaction when we choose to belong to Jesus Christ.



### 3. Components of Radical Discipleship

- A. *Extreme commitment to the Lordship of*
- B. *Joy!*
- C. *Constant growth.*
- D. *Brutally honest self-examination*



#### A. *An extreme commitment – Jesus is my Lord!*

##### *The price of serving Jesus as “Lord”*

- *Seeking to know and obey his will*
- *Renouncing the right to a “normal” life*
- *Counting the cost*
- *Choosing the narrow way*

#### *Is Jesus your Lord? What does the word “Lord” mean?*

For you, what does the title “Lord” mean? Mention three synonyms.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### *How do we know if Jesus is indeed the Lord of our lives?*

Many would like to call themselves Christians and receive benefits of the kingdom of God without renouncing the right to manage their own lives. They desire to know Jesus as their savior, without accepting him as Lord!

Circle those qualities that mark a true disciple.

*Miracles – Preaching the word – attending church – healing the sick*

*Praying for 15 minutes a day – Praying an hour a day – casting out demons*

In reality none of these characteristics provide a reliable measure of the genuineness of a follower of Jesus as Lord!

***A Disciple Obeys! Who is the “captain” or “boss” of your life?***

*<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ - Matthew 7:21-23*

How can it be possible to do all these things mentioned above, and still not be a genuine disciple?

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According to this text, what distinguishes a genuine disciple?

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**Read Luke 9:47-62 -- A true disciple renounces the right to a “normal” life –**



What are the conditions and excuses which these people give not to follow Jesus?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

How does Jesus respond to them?

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***Satan’s Temptation –***

***Don’t be so “extreme!” You can be a “normal Christian”***

Satan attempts to deceive us into seeking the blessings of God without submitting to the cost of following Jesus in truth.

- It is not necessary to dedicate *all your time* to Christ
- It is not necessary to dedicate *all your belongings* to Christ
- It is not necessary to be so *extremist* in your service for the Lord
- You can be a Christian and still have a “normal” life



**Read Mark 8:31-38** – *Peter’s Temptation*

Why does Jesus rebuke Peter (and Satan)?

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What does it mean to “deny one’s self?”

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What is the promise for those who are willing to “lose” their lives for Christ and for the gospel?

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What does Jesus mean when he says, “... *because everyone who wants to save his life, will lose it; and everyone who loses his life for my sake and for the gospel, will save it.*”

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*We cannot seek a “normal” life!*

We all dream of the comfort of stable home and family. While there is nothing wrong with such natural human desires, this goal cannot be the main priority for a true disciple.

**Read Luke 14:25-34** -- *A Disciple Counts the Cost* –

Why is it necessary for the builder to evaluate the cost of a project before laying the foundation?

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Why is it necessary for a King to evaluate the requirements of battle before attacking?

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What does it mean to “hate” parents, spouse, and children, in your opinion? Are we not called to “love” our neighbor, and much more our families?

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## ***The Disciple takes the narrow path***

*Without guidelines, there is no order*

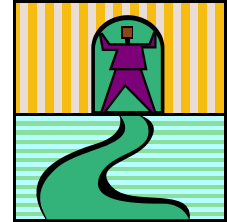
- A train goes nowhere if it leaves the rails
- No one can win a game with no rules
- A driver who leaves the lane risks his life



Likewise in the spiritual dimension. A disciple must follow the narrow path set out in scripture.

Jesus said...

<sup>13</sup> *“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup> But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. - Matthew 7:13-14*



There are some who say - *“Being so radical robs the joy from life.”*

Is this true? How do we respond?

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## ***B. A radical life is a happy life God pays well!***

<sup>28</sup> *Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”*

<sup>29</sup> *“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel <sup>30</sup> will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. Mark 10:28-30*



Summarize Jesus’ promise in these verses.

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***Joy follows the pain of the cross!***

Remember the agony Jesus suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane?

<sup>1</sup> *During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Hebrews 5:7*

<sup>4</sup> *And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.<sup>[a]</sup> Luke 22:44*

Jesus surrendered to the will of his Father “...not what I want, but your will be done.”

How could Jesus surrender to such unthinkable suffering? What motivated him?

<sup>2</sup> *....Jesus .... the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:2-3*

According to these verses, what motivated Jesus to submit to the cross?

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What should motivate us to yield all to Jesus as Lord, no matter the cost?

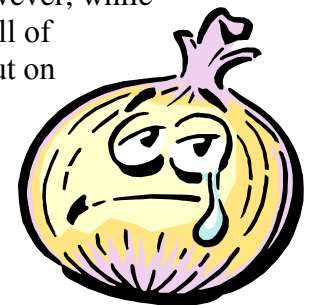
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***Let's not be Pharisees! -- Arrogant, Bitter and Joy-less***

***“Radical o Rajatabla”<sup>3</sup> – Fully Committed or Full of ourselves!!***

Jesus reserved his most scathing rebukes not for the tax collectors or prostitutes, but for the religious hypocrites of his day – the Pharisees! These religious leaders lived a radical life in every way. They fasted to the point of emaciation; they prayed hours and hours a day; memorized scripture and scrupulously obeyed the requirements of the law. However, while they appeared to be “fully committed” to the Lord, they in fact were simply “Full of themselves!” Their radical religiosity was based not on sincere love for God, but on an arrogant desire to become better than others!! Jesus described them as whitewashed tombs that appeared beautiful on the outside, but inside were filled with dead men’s bones! (Matthew)



<sup>3</sup> Phrase coined by Mayra Rodriguez, instructor of level III at Lion of Judah.

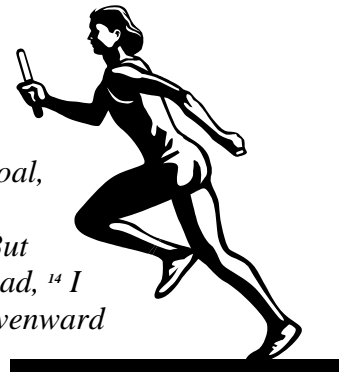
We can be radical, and still displease the Lord! While their actions reflected radical commitment, their character did not. Instead of the fruit of the Spirit, they were arrogant and acerbic – full of themselves!

Let us not become modern day Pharisees!! As we approach these topics of radical commitment, let us remember that our spiritual intensity and sacrificial behavior in no way earn the love of God or substitute for a loving, humble and merciful heart. Let the grace of Christ constantly sweeten our spirit and keep us focused on Jesus and his mercy, and not our own quest to become spiritual super-heroes! *A radical life is a joyful life!*

### ***C. Full Commitment is a Process – We never “arrive”***

***The Apostle Paul always sought to be more fully committed***

*<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 3:12-14***



***The example of the Father of a demonized son – “I believe! Help my unbelief!”***

*<sup>24</sup> Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” **Mark 9:24***

How many of have felt like this? We believe in the Lord and have surrendered to him, but at the same time we are painfully aware of how far short we still fall of being fully committed. We do believe, but need God to help us with our remaining unbelief.

***Peter’s Example – John 12:15-19 – We are not as committed as we think we are!***

Peter believed himself to be a fully committed disciple. With sincere bravado, he said the following to Jesus before his arrest...

*<sup>29</sup> Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”*

*<sup>30</sup> “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice<sup>[a]</sup> you yourself will disown me three times.”*

*<sup>31</sup> But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same. **Mark 14:29-31***





But as we all know, Peter denied the Lord and later “wept bitterly.”

***After his failure, Peter admitted his weakness (John 21)***

After Peter’s fall, Jesus asked him twice...

*Simon, son of John, do you love me?*

*(Using the Greek word, “Agape,” which means, “Self-giving love”)*

In response, Peter answered twice...

*Lord, you know I love you.*

*(Using the Greek word “Fileo,” which means “affectionate, fraternal love”)*

Why do you suppose he answers in this way? Why does Peter not use the highest word, “Agape,” to express his love for Christ?

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Humbled by his failures, Peter knew that his love still lacked full commitment.

***Jesus called Peter to grow in self-giving love as his disciple***

Finally, Jesus asked the third time,

*“Simon, son of John, do you love me,”* (using the lower word, “Fileo”)

Of course Peter was saddened that Jesus lowered his standard this third time, but answered truthfully;

*“Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you.”* (Fileo).

Jesus will take us “where we are at,” and bring us to higher levels of commitment.

In the following verses (John 21:18-19) Jesus predicts Peter’s growth, which ironically, will result in a more child-like submission to his heavenly father. He will eventually die a martyr’s death, the ultimate expression of “ágape.”

***Give what you can! Full commitment is a process. Take your cross “daily”***

Why do you think Jesus says we must take our crosses “daily?”

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### ***D. Self-examination is necessary to be a Radical Disciple***



***We must recognize our own excuses for withholding our full devotion***

#### **Read Luke 14:15-24**

What are three excuses that the invited guests made for not accepting the Lord's invitation?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***Which areas of our life lack 100% commitment to the Lord?***

Indicate which area of life is most difficult for you, at this time, to surrender to the Lordship of Christ. (Circle one or two at the most)

*Use of Money – Use of Time – Body – Possessions – Family – Friends – Work*

Other \_\_\_\_\_.

#### ***Prayer of Surrender***

We invite you to say this prayer, sincerely, to the Lord.

***Lord, I surrender all my life and all my rights to you.***

***I surrender...***

- *The right to use my time as I choose*
- *The right to use my money and belongings as I see fit*
- *The right to make my own plans for my future*
- *The right to seek comfort and pleasure in life*

***I give to you...***

- *My body – my mind – my emotions*
- *My family – my children – my parents – my spouse – my friends*
- *My money – my possessions – my job*
- *My dreams – my future*



*I especially ask for your help to surrender this most difficult area of my life:*

\_\_\_\_\_. *It's all yours – for you to use for the purposes of your kingdom. **You are my Lord!***

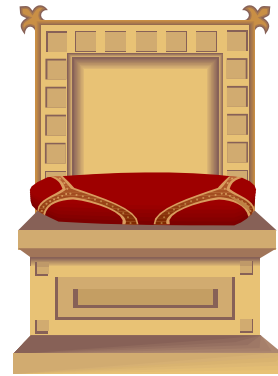
## ***The Final Judgment in Daily Life*** ***Living every moment in light of Eternity***

<sup>10</sup> *For we will all stand before God's judgment seat... each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. **Romans 14:10 and 12***

### ***Why do we live!***

*How do we define "success?"*

- Happiness?
- Having money and possessions?
- Enjoying pleasures?
- Being comfortable and secure?
- Achieving much in a good career?



### ***The Radical Disciple lives for the day of his judgment***

*He or she lives to hear these words...*

*"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' **Mateo 25:23***

***The Question of a true disciple -- What will God say about my actions, words and attitudes in that day of his final judgment of my life?***

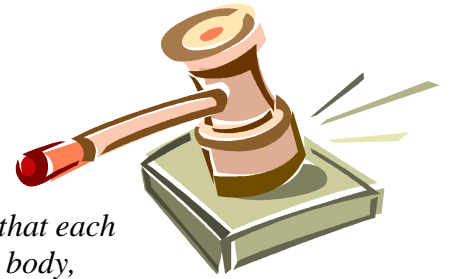
**Two Judgments** – the Bible speaks of the ultimate judgment on our lives before the great white throne (Rev. 21). This judgment decides our ultimate salvation or damnation completely on the basis on or faith, or lack of faith, in Jesus Christ the Savior. However, the Bible also teaches that *"we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ"* where the content of our lives will be evaluated. In this moment we will receive either praise and honor from God or shame and regret. This awesome moment of God's evaluation of our lives should inform our daily life.

***Our Goal - in this lesson – to begin to cultivate an eternal perspective in daily living***

***We consider...***

- *How our lives will be evaluated?*
- *The difference between the judgment for salvation and the judgment of our works*
- *How to view life through an eternal perspective?*
- *Exercises for self-examination in light of the final judgment of our lives*
  - *How am I using my time?*
  - *If Jesus were to return today, how might I live differently?*
  - *Who really controls my life and decisions, moment by moment?*

## ***Final Judgment – We all will give account to God!***



<sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. **2 Corinthians 5:10**

<sup>1</sup> This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. <sup>2</sup> Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. <sup>3</sup> I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup> My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup> Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God. **1 Corinthians 4:1-5**

<sup>36</sup> But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” **Matthew 12:36-37**

According to these verses, what are three ways that our lives will be evaluated before the tribunal of God?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ***We cannot earn salvation – but we do earn “crowns!”***

### ***Our “works” do not go before us, but they do follow us!***

The book of Revelation uses an interesting phrase about the good works of believers. While our works do not bring us to heaven, in a mysterious way, they do accompany us. The precise nature of “rewards” remains mysterious, but the concept emerges repeatedly in the Biblical teaching on heaven.

*“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”* **Revelations 14:13**

## ***The Judgment before the great White throne – Read Revelation 20:11-21:8***

According to this text, the only ones who will survive this particular judgment are those whose names are written in the book of life. How does one’s name become recorded there?

\_\_\_\_\_.

***We are saved by faith and not by works!***

*<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. **Ephesians 2:8-9***

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus... **Romans 8:1***

***... But our works in the Lord will be evaluated one day! Paul said...***

*<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. **2 Timothy 4:7-8***

***There are “rewards” in Heaven!***

*<sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. (**Matthew 16:27**)*

What do you think these rewards will be?

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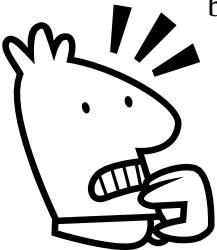
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### ***An Eternal Perspective – “Eternity stamped on our Eyes”***

The great revivalist pastor and theologian, Jonathan Edwards, before he preached his famous, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” in 1740, said the following prayer...

**“Lord, stamp eternity on my eyes!”**

With this vision of eternity – of heaven and of hell – he preached with an anointing that provoked a tremendous revival that spread to thousands in the region. A perspective informed by eternity helps us to live a life of true commitment to the Lord – thinking not primarily of our own happiness or comfort, but of the purposes of the kingdom of God.



***“If only...!!!” – The cry of the unprepared***

As students, how many of us lamented, “*if only ...*” On more than a few occasions. We procrastinated and failed to prepare sufficiently for the big exam, and found ourselves unprepared when the moment of truth arrived. We lamented...

*“If only I had studied more!”*

*“If only I had not wasted so much time in meaningless things!”*

Likewise in the Christian life, all too often we fail to take advantage of the opportunities God has provided to invest our lives into His eternal purposes. Like the youth who fails to prepare for the big test, we can come to our ultimate judgment day poorly prepared for God’s final evaluation of our lives.

We will lament...

*“If only I had taken advantage of the opportunities I had to serve the Lord!”*

If we were to dwell on this reality – that all we do will be tested done day – how might our lifestyle change?

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## **Self Examination**

### **The key to being prepared for the judgment**

*<sup>31</sup> But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. <sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world. **1 Corinthians 11:31-32***

*<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. <sup>27</sup> No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. **1 Corinthians 9:24-27***

### **Exercises to Examine Ourselves**

- 1. **What will last?** How am I building “the house of my life” - “Go for the Gold” - How am I investing my energies in life? Am I making the most of the time?*
- 2. **“Love the coming of the Lord”** – If I knew that Jesus would return at the end of this week, what might I do differently?*
- 3. **“Throne Check”** – In the nitty gritty moments of daily life, is Jesus really the “Lord” of my actions, thoughts and words?*

***1. What will last? How am I building the “house of my life?” –  
Am I making the most of the time?  
“Go for the Gold!”***



We can spend our lives on that which will last into eternity, or that which will disappear. It seems so contradictory, but it is possible to be saved, and yet waste our lives!! Let us embrace a quest for significance, a thirst for that which is of eternal value!

*<sup>16</sup> ...making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Ephesians 5:15-16*

***How am I building the “house” of my life?***



*<sup>10</sup> By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. <sup>11</sup> For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup> their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. <sup>14</sup> If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15*

***No sloppy building – no hack jobs in our lives! “Wood, hay and stubble...”***

When a true craftsman inspects a sloppily built house, he might exclaim, “Hack job!” Some materials, and some buildings, last better than others. Likewise in the way we “construct” our lives, everything will one day be inspected by the Lord, tested with fire. How are you building the “house” of your life? What type of materials, which is to say, activities, will last the ultimate testing of God? Do we invest our energies into that which has eternal significance?



According to the text, if our work burns up, what will become of our souls?

\_\_\_\_\_.

In contrast, if our work stands the test, what will become of our heavenly future?

\_\_\_\_\_.

***The materials of a “well built” life: Gold, silver and bronze***

*All that which is done genuinely in the name of Jesus, will last!*

*“ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. **Colossians 3:17***

*For example...*

- Praying
- Studying the Bible
- Visiting the sick...etc.

*But also...*

- Calling your wife during the day
- Playing ball with your son
- Doing your homework!
- Learning English
- ...even taking a nap!!!



..... if it is done in the name of the Lord, and it is His will for you to do so!!!

**The significance of any activity depends on God’s particular will for that particular moment!**

**Exercise #1: “Go For the Gold”**  
***“Golden” Actions in Daily Life***

Note below some activities that you could do this week which you are confident “would pass the test of fire” before the throne of God; activities you could do in the name of Jesus – which have eternal value.



***“Golden” Actions – with eternal value, that you could do this week.***

1. \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_.

***Distractions are “thorns” that choke our lives!***

*“And others are the ones sown among the thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.” Mark 4:18-19*

Many activities fill our time, but have no eternal value. Jesus refers to these activities and distractions in the parable of the sower, when he refers to the thorns that choke out the plant and keep it from bearing fruit. Like straw, these activities take up space, but have little substance, and burn easily. These “distractions” can easily fill our days and nights and take our attention away from the purposes of the kingdom. Some such activities may appear to be valuable, and even religious, but do not line up with God’s will for our life at that particular time. Take note of some activities that you might be tempted to do this week which in all likelihood would not stand the test of fire before the throne of God.

***“Straw” Activities – (without eternal value) which you sometimes do***

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

***A Specific Step – A golden beam!***

Think of one particular “golden” activity that you do not normally do, which you could plan to do this week. Be specific.

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_.

Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_



**2. Love the coming of the Lord! Live expectantly.  
Watch – as if Jesus were returning this week!**



**What does it mean to “Watch?”**

- a. **Keep in mind the “prize” at the end of the race – the rewards promised in heaven**

**Example of the Apostle Paul**

*<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all **who have loved his appearing.** **2 Timothy 4:6-8***

The Apostle Paul approaches his own death with peace and confidence. How does he maintain this attitude? (based on the verse).

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What does it mean “to love the appearing of the Lord,” in your opinion?

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If we love the coming of the Lord, we live expectantly, thinking of the ultimate evaluation of our actions.

- b. **Beware of distractions!**

*<sup>34</sup> “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come on all those who live on the face of whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.” **Luke 21:34-36***



According to the text, note three distractions that could make us ill-prepared for the coming of the Lord.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



*c. Stay alert – like the homeowner expecting to be robbed!*

**Read Matthew 24:36-51**

What does “watching” mean in this context?

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How should we take warning from the story of the flood at the time of Noah?

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Jesus teaches that we ought to be like a homeowner who knows the specific night when thieves plan to break in and rob the house. What do we learn from this comparison?

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***Be faithful and Active – Read the three Parables of Matthew 25***

These three parables teach us the need to be prepared for the coming of the Lord and the ultimate judgment of our lives. Each parable touches on the distinct attitudes and practices which a disciple who “loves the coming of the Lord” ought to demonstrate in their daily living.



What do we learn from the parable of the ten virgins?

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What do we learn from the parable of the talents?

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What do we learn from the parable of the sheep and the goats?

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## Exercise #2 – If Jesus were to return tonight...?

Let's try to ask ourselves the following questions:

*If Jesus were to return tonight...  
How would I live this day?  
How would I use my time?  
How would I treat others?*

### ***If Jesus were to return tonight, how would you have lived today?***

If Jesus were to return tonight, what would you have done *exactly the same*? Mention two actions, words or attitudes that you would not change.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

If Jesus were to return tonight, what would you have done *differently* today? Mention two changes you would have made in your actions, words or actions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

### ***If Jesus were to return tonight, how would you have lived the last week?***

If you think that Jesus were to return tonight, what would you have done exactly the same this past week? What actions, words, or attitudes would you do exactly the same?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Now thinking that Jesus were to return tonight, what would you have done differently this past week?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_



### Exercise #3 – Throne Checks!

*Check the Throne... in the moments of decision in daily life*

*Who is really in charge?*

While we live for many years, our life consists of the present moment. While we may think of Jesus as our Lord in an ultimate way – in order to live out our discipleship, we must learn to identify and evaluate the disposition of our heart in the present moment.

*Am I living, in this moment, under the control and Lordship of Jesus Christ?*

*¡Throne Check! - consider the throne – the control room – of your life. Who is calling the shots?*

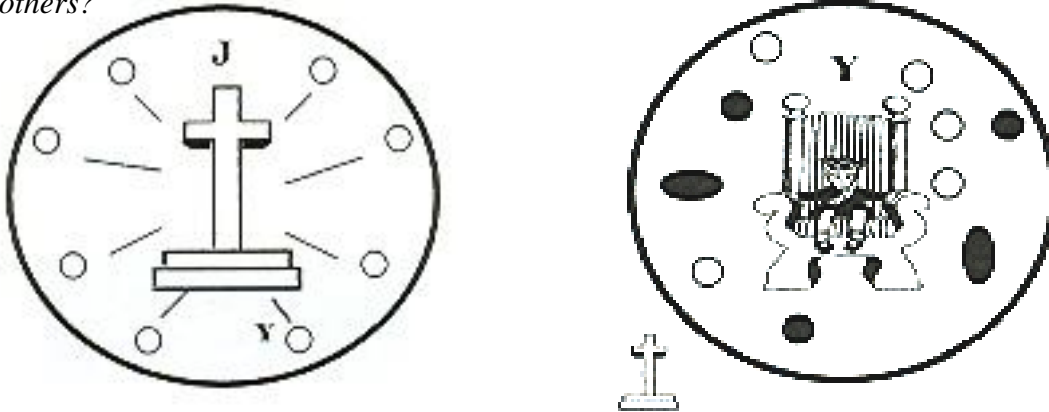
A Christian college student, when passing other Christian students on campus, would make the following comment: “*Throne Check!*” In other words, he would challenge his friends, at that little moment of daily activity, to stop and consider, “*Who occupies the throne of my heart right now?*” This light hearted, jocular game raised really serious questions...

*How is my attitude at this moment?*

*At this moment, am I really honoring Christ with my thoughts and words?*

*At this moment, am I following God’s will, my own will, or the desires of others.*

When we do a “Throne Check,” we stop for a moment to consider our *interior throne* – who is really in charge? Am I acting, feeling and speaking according to *God’s will, my will, or the will of others?*



**Try it! -- Who sits on the throne of my life – in this moment?!**

*When I wake up -*

*Driving or taking the bus -*

*At work -*

*Talking on the phone -*

*Unwinding in my free time -*

¡Throne Check!

¡Throne Check!

¡Throne Check!

¡Throne Check!

¡Throne Check!....etc.



## Exercise #3 – Do “Throne Checks” this week

### *In each case*

- *Mention the moment –*  
What was “going on” when you did the “check?”
- *Honestly, who ruled your actions, words and attitudes at that moment?*  
God, you, or someone else?
- *Explain your answer*

## Examples

### *Throne Check #1*

*Moment - I complained when my wife asked me to take out the garbage*

*Who ruled on your throne? I did.*

*Explanation - At that moment I had a selfish rather than a servant like attitude*

### *Throne Check #2*

*Moment – I was working on Tuesday morning*

*Who ruled on your throne? – God.*

*Explanation - At that moment I realized that I was working for the Glory of God with a positive attitude, fulfilling my responsibilities the best I could.*

### *Throne Check #3*

*Moment: I was gossiping with my friend on the phone*

*Who ruled on your throne? - My friend.*

*Explanation – At that moment I realized that I was allowing my friend, not Jesus, to be in control of my actions and words.*

### **Exercise #3: Do Four Throne Checks this Week**

#### ***Throne Check #1***

*Moment* - \_\_\_\_\_.

*Who ruled on your throne?* - \_\_\_\_\_

*Explanation* - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

#### ***Throne Check #2***

*Moment* - \_\_\_\_\_.

*Who ruled on your throne?* - \_\_\_\_\_

*Explanation* - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

#### ***Throne Check #3***

*Moment* - \_\_\_\_\_.

*Who ruled on your throne?* - \_\_\_\_\_

*Explanation* - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

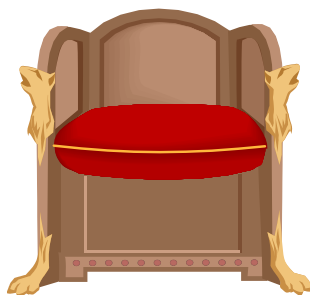
#### ***Throne Check #4***

*Moment* - \_\_\_\_\_.

*Who ruled on your throne?* - \_\_\_\_\_

*Explanation* - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.





## ***Radical Spirituality*** ***How to Cultivate Spiritual Passion***

*Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold...*  
**Matthew 24:12**

<sup>15</sup> *I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!* <sup>16</sup> *So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.* **Revelation 3:15-16**

<sup>5</sup> *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.* **John 15:5**

***Our goal in this lesson .... Is to consider ways to cultivate and maintain our spiritual passion.***

***We consider....***

- *The insidious danger of lukewarmness*
- *The call to be an extravagant worshiper*
- *The causes of lukewarmness*
- *How to fan the flame of our spiritual passion*



### ***Lukewarmness – Our Spiritual Enemy!***

***Read Revelation 3:14-22 – The lukewarm believers of Laodicea***

It is all too possible to be a Christian and yet close the door in Jesus' face! The degree of fellowship and intimacy with Christ we enjoy depends, to a large extent, on our own desire, or lack thereof. In the account of the Laodicean believers we observe a tragic scene – Christians who close the door to Jesus, who invites them to spend time in intimate fellowship over a meal. So many such moments exist, day by day, in which Jesus would enter more deeply into our lives to share intimately with us, *but it is we who keep the door shut!*

In the case of the Laodicean church, what were the causes of their lukewarm spirituality?

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Think of your own life. What are the principal causes of lukewarmness for you?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

***The call to be an “extravagant” worshiper  
“To waste ourselves on Jesus!”<sup>4</sup>***

*<sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. **John 4:23***

**“proper” v. “extravagant” love – Read Luke 7:36-50**



In what ways do we observe the formal and restrained love of the Pharisee?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

In what ways do we observe the extravagant love of the “sinful” woman?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What explains the different types of love and expression between the woman and the Pharisee?

\_\_\_\_\_.

---

<sup>4</sup> A phrase taken from Christ Otto, “The Glory of a Wasted Life.”



For you, personally, note some ways in which you could demonstrate extravagant love for the Lord.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Causes of Lukewarmness – Spiritual “Wet Blankets” – Passion Squelchers**

1. *Complacency*
2. *Negative Attitudes in Daily Life*
3. *Excesses and Pleasures*
4. *Distractions and busyness*



#### **1. Passion Squelcher #1: *Complacency* - Don't settle!**

*It is all too possible to be “a friend” of Jesus without receiving all he would want to give us!*

**Read Luke 11:1-13** – *Parable of the Pushy Neighbor*

In the story, does the main character give his neighbor bread because he is his friend? Yes or no?

\_\_\_\_\_.

In our lives, do we receive the Holy Spirit only because God loves us? Yes or no?

\_\_\_\_\_.

According to the parable, what quality must we possess to receive the full measure of the Holy Spirit that God would give us?

\_\_\_\_\_.

## 2. Passion Squelcher #2: *Negative Attitudes and Words in Daily Life*

*Ways to sadden the Holy Spirit Read Ephesians 4:25-32*

“...And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...” – Ephesians 4:30

Our actions in daily life can impede the flow of the Holy Spirit in our lives!

Based on the text, mention four ways to “grieve the Holy Spirit” and lose communion with the Holy Spirit in our lives.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



## 3. Passion Squelcher #3: *Excess and Pleasure*

<sup>18</sup> *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit...*  
**Ephesians 5:18**

The Holy Spirit, like wine, can intoxicate by filling our body and emotions with his influence. An excess of literal wine, or other pleasures or distractions, can likewise “intoxicate” the human psyche and thus harden us to the filling influence of the Holy Spirit in our conscious experience.

Mention some “pleasures” or “amusements” that could become distractions to our spiritual sensibilities should we consume them in excess.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



#### **4.Passion Squelcher #4: *Distractions (And even ministry service)***

**Read Luke 10:38-42 – *It is possible to serve Christ and yet lose intimate fellowship with him!***

What distinguishes Mary from Martha? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

With which figure do you identify most? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Review Question**

If you are feeling spiritually “cooled off,” what could be some potential causes?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### **How to Fan the Flame of our Spiritual Passion**

*“For this reason I urge you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you..” 2 Tim 1:6*

- 1. Live in holiness and cultivate a positive attitude*
- 2. Renew your daily appointments with God*
- 3. Set aside especial times to pray*
- 4. Fast*
- 5. Meditate on the Word of God*
- 6. Intercede*

## 1. Live in holiness and cultivate a positive attitude in daily life

### Read Ephesians 5:15-21 – Cultivating the Presence of God in our daily life

Based on the text, note four practical ways to cultivate communion with the Holy Spirit in our daily life.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



## 2. Renew your appointments with God!

### *¡Plan appointments with God!*



1. *Designate a specific time* – Put it on the calendar!

2. *Designate a specific place, without distractions.* Turn off the cell phone!

Seek a private place, free of interruptions, telephones, crying babies and the incessant din of television and radio.

### *Biblical Examples of Appointments with God*

- **Jesus** taught the importance of shutting the door of your room and praying to God in private. (Matthew 6:5-15) Scripture records that he was in the habit of going to the Mount of Olives to pray in private. (Luke 22:39)
- **Moses** - went regularly to the Tent of Meeting, outside the camp, to meet with the Shekina Presence of God. The Divine cloud of fire descended on this place and Moses spoke with God “*face to face as a man speaks with his friend.*”
- **Daniel** prayed three times at set times every day in his room, beside a particular window. (Dan 6:10).
- **Peter** prayed on a quiet roof at twilight, after dinner. (Acts 10)

The place and time could be different for each of us, but what is important is that it be a comfortable and solitary place, so that you can pray in a concentrated way without interruptions.



**Seek a place conducive to concentration (that can be visited every day)**

- Not a moving car in traffic
- Not the shower
- Not the bed
- Not an office with the telephones ringing
- Not a mountainside lake that can only be visited twice a year



Mention five possible places and times for a regular, daily appointment with God

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



**My Appointment with God**

*Note below a regular time every day in which you can set aside time for prayer.  
(Not necessary to fill every square!)*

<i>Mon.</i>	<i>Tues.</i>	<i>Wed.</i>	<i>Thurs.</i>	<i>Fri.</i>	<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
a.m.						
afternoon						
evening						

***Elements of Prayer – What do I say?***

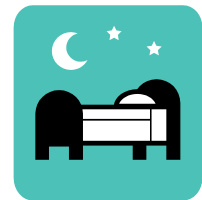
Review: What are some elements of prayer (topics) which can be observed in the “Our Father?” (Praise, intercession...etc.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

***3. Set aside special, extraordinary times for prayer – Many ways!***

***Vigil – Pray through the night – read Luke 6:12-19***

What results from Jesus’ night of prayer?



1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_.

**Question: How does one pray for hours and hours?**

- ***Follow the outline of the Lord’s Prayer.*** Remember that this prayer can be said in 30 seconds, or can form the outline for 30 hours of prayer as well! Use it to rotate topics for prayer.
- ***Use Psalms.*** The Prayer Manual of the Bible can be extremely helpful for extended seasons of prayer.
- ***Move!*** Do not feel obliged to remain kneeling or sitting for hours on end. One can pray pacing or walking as well!
- ***Allow “spaces”*** – One need not fill every moment with words. Extended silences are “ok.”
- ***Variety.*** One need not monologue the entire time. Sing. Read scripture. Observe silence. Journal. Speak in tongues. All of these activities can become part of the prayer.



**Early Morning Prayer - Read Mark 1:35-39**

What results from Jesus' early morning of prayer?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Coffee Break Prayer (Luke 11:1) - 3 Minutes of Prayer (right there!)**



We can find moments for prayer hidden among the crevices of our daily activities. These “snatches” of prayer – three minutes here, five minutes there, can make all the difference in complementing more regular disciplines of daily, secluded prayer. One need not even find a private place, but grab the moment “right there” and experience communion with God in the places of every day life.

**Examples of “Coffee Break” Prayer**

- In the car in the parking lot before coming into the house
- In the waiting room of the dentist’s office
- At “Starbucks”
- In the cafeteria of your workplace
- In front of the computer at work



Jot down a couple examples of places and times in your daily Schedule when you could “snatch” a couple minutes of prayer.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Prayer Retreats**



At times Jesus escaped to the mountains or to the desert to pray in solitude for days at a time.(Mark 6:46)

Note down three private places, away from home, to which you could withdraw alone, without distraction, to pray for an extended length of time.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Prayer – Read Acts 4:23-31**

What was the result of this united prayer?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



Note down three specific opportunities in the week in which you could pray with others.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Fasting – Praying with your entire body!**

What are some different ways in which one could fast?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

***We should have a discipline of regular fasting***

Do you already have a plan for regular fasting? If so, when and how do you do it?

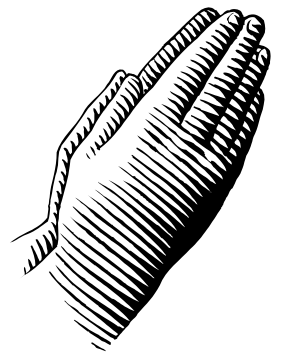
Examples:     *Every Wednesday I fast from lunch and take a prayer walk*  
                  *Every Friday I fast by eating only bread and water*  
                  *Once a month I fast for three days, drinking only juice*  
                  *Every Thursday I fast from coffee*

If you do not already have such a plan for regular fasting, we will set a goal for this month.

My fasting “plan” - \_\_\_\_\_.

**Assignment: Plan an “extended fast” (more than one day)**

*Use the addendum: “My Fast”*





## 6. Meditate on the Word of God – Eat and Digest the Word

**Definition of Meditation** – Take time to consider profoundly the words of a particular verse, personalize them and allowing the Spirit to apply them to our lives.

- “Make the verse my very own!” – (A student of Level I)
- “I let the Psalm carry me away...” – (A student of Level I)



### How to meditate on the word?

- Choose a particular verse out of a general Reading.

Example – “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” **Psalm 23:1**

- Concentrate on this verse for two or three minutes (at least), repeating it and thinking about the meaning of each word.
- Personalize and Pray it

Example – “The Lord is not merely a shepherd to everyone, but he is also **my shepherd**. He knows me by name. He knows every hair on my head. Thank you, Lord, my shepherd, that I’m never alone in life. I ask you to guide me and provide for my every need....etc.”



- Sing it!

Try something a little bit different. Instead of only praying the verse and thinking about it, try singing it! Improvise, and let your heart carry you away. When we worship God with his inspired word, it takes life within us!

## 7. Intercession – The Spiritual Struggle of a true Disciple

A radical disciple is called to spend hours in regular intercession for the kingdom of God to come! Revival in general, and spiritual growth of the individual, depend on this discipline.

### Examples of Intense Intercession in the Word of God

**Jeremiah** – Jeremiah was a prophet who struggled in prayer for his people...

<sup>[a]</sup><sup>1</sup> Oh, that my head were a spring of water  
and my eyes a fountain of tears!  
I would weep day and night  
for the slain of my people. **Jeremiah 9:1**

**Paul** - Paul's ministry consisted of much more than preaching. He interceded for hours and hours in private as well....

*"...<sup>29</sup> To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.. <sup>1</sup> I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **Colossians 1:29 – 2:1***

**Hannah** - Burdened by the agony of her infertility Hannah prayed with intensity and desperation. God answered and gave her a son – the prophet Samuel, which means, "God hears."

*Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD's house. <sup>10</sup> In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. <sup>11</sup> ... <sup>12</sup> As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. <sup>13</sup> Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk <sup>14</sup> ....Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. <sup>16</sup> Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." **1 Samuel 1:9-16***

### **Jacob fought with the Angel**

*<sup>24</sup> So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. <sup>26</sup> Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." **Genesis 32:22-32***

According to these verses above, how do we observe the emotional intensity that characterized the prayer lives of these men and women of God? Briefly describe the prayer of each one.

Jeremiah: \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul: \_\_\_\_\_.

Hannah: \_\_\_\_\_.

Jacob: \_\_\_\_\_.

Why was it necessary to seek God with such intensity and boldness, if God already knows what we need before we ask him? (Luke 11)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

***Other examples of intercession in the Bible.***

- Abraham - Genesis 18:16-33
- Moses - Exodus 17:8-13; 32:30-35; 33:7-23
- Daniel – Daniel 9:1-19 y 10:12-14
- Nehemiah – Nehemiah 1:4-11
- Ana y Simeon -Luke 2:25-40

***And you...? What's your spiritual temperature?***

Based on what we have studied in this lesson, what are some specific ways in which you would like to cultivate greater spiritual passion this week?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Assignments – Use the Following Addenda to plan...**

- *An Extended Fast*
- *An event for early morning or late night prayer*

# My Fast

*“Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”  
--- Jesus*

## ***Terms of the Fast***

*I hope to abstain from* \_\_\_\_\_

*Beginning Point* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Day/Month/Time)

*Ending Point* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Day/Month/Time)

## ***Special Petitions***

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Evaluation***

Describe the experience.

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Were you able to fulfill your goal? \_\_\_\_\_.

Did you experience any benefit from the fast, during or after?

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## My early morning or late night of prayer

**Choose** which you will do – An early morning or late night of prayer? \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***When and where will you do it?***

Date: \_\_\_\_\_.

Time Frame: From \_\_\_\_\_.

Until \_\_\_\_\_.

Place: \_\_\_\_\_.

Alone or with others? \_\_\_\_\_.

If with others, whom? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



### ***Evaluation:***

Were you able to fulfill your goal? \_\_\_\_\_.

How did you fill the time? What did you do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Did you experience any benefit, during or after? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Any testimonies related to this particular activity?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## ***A Life of Destiny Discovering and Living your Life Mission***

<sup>4</sup> *The word of the LORD came to me, saying,*  
<sup>5</sup> *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew<sup>[a]</sup> you,  
before you were born I set you apart;  
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”*

**Jeremiah 1:4-5**

<sup>8</sup> *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” – Isaiah 6:8*

### ***You have a destiny to fulfill! - (The example of Esther)***

*And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?*  
- Esther 4:14



Esther, a young Hebrew woman, was used of God to save her people from devastating genocide. She lived out her destiny – her purpose in life.

And you? Do you plod through life, hoping to make it to the weekend? Or do you live with intentionality, aiming to fulfill a divinely given mission?

According to the Bible, each one of us possesses a heavenly mission to serve God and advance His kingdom on earth. He has fashioned us purposefully to contribute to his cosmic plan of redemption in a unique way. Our part is to discover that loving intention, and live it out!

### ***Our Goal in this lesson...***

- 1. Appreciate the vital importance of identifying our life mission... which will...***
  - a. Keep us from detours and major missteps in our life planning*
  - b. Remind us of our holy “duty” to serve God*
  - c. Motivate us to bear afflictions and make sacrifices*
  - d. Give us the hope of ultimate joy*
  
- 2. Begin to identify the major contours of our life mission and put it into writing***
  - a. The general purpose that we share with every human being*
  - b. The particular mission for which we are designed*

**One must “Declare the Vision” in order to “run with it”**

Then the LORD replied:  
“Write down the revelation  
and make it plain on tablets  
so that a herald<sup>[a]</sup> may run with it. **Habakkuk 2:2**

**Jesus articulated his mission clearly and boldly!**

<sup>16</sup> He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”<sup>[a]</sup> **Luke 4:16-20**



According to this text, what were some of the primary features of Jesus’ mission on earth?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Paul declared his mission**

*It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation. **Rom. 15:20***

<sup>28</sup> *He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. **Col. 1:28***

Based on these verses, mention some features of Paul’s life-mission.

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## Part I – The vital importance of a life mission.

1. *Keeps us on track – it keep us from detours and major missteps in our life planning*
2. *Reminds us of our holy “duty” to serve God*
3. *Motivates us to bear afflictions and make sacrifices*
4. *Gives us the hope of ultimate joy*

### 1. Having a Mission Keeps us on track – it keeps us from detours and major missteps in life planning

#### *Jesus needed to resist strong and pressing distractions*

Urgent demands of circumstances and those around us can easily derail us in fulfilling our life mission. Consider the example of Jesus...

<sup>35</sup> *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.* <sup>36</sup> *Simon and his companions went to look for him,* <sup>37</sup> *and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”*

<sup>38</sup> *Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”* <sup>39</sup> *So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.* **Mark 1:35-39**

Because he kept his mission foremost in his mind through prayer and reflection, he was able to say “no” to the demands of those around him, however well-intentioned they may have been. According to this text, what was the mission Jesus needed to fulfill. What was the demand he needed to resist? How could this have been difficult?

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#### *John knew his identity and his place – which kept him from a major error!*

*John the Baptist – “a man sent from God...”* (Juan 1:6)

<sup>19</sup> *Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders<sup>[a]</sup> in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was.* <sup>20</sup> *He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.”*





<sup>21</sup> They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?”

He said, “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet?”

He answered, “No.”

<sup>22</sup> Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

<sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”<sup>(b)</sup> **Juan 1:19-23**

According to this text, what was John’s mission?

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If he had been uncertain about his own identity and calling, John could have fallen into a tragic error. How so? How did knowing his own mission keep John from a fatal mistake?

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## **2. Knowing our Mission reminds us of our holy “duty” to serve God**

<sup>16</sup> For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! **1 Corinthians 9:16**

<sup>14</sup> I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.  
**Romans 1:14**

Paul uses strong language: “I am compelled to preach” and “I am obligated...” Why such strong language?

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How would you define the term “duty”? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why would this term be used often in the military? \_\_\_\_\_

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### 3. Knowing our Mission motivates us to bear affliction and make sacrifices

*In order to fulfill his mission, Paul pressed on in spite of danger*

*<sup>24</sup> However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace. Acts 20:24*

According to this verse, what motivated Paul to continue forward in the face of certain suffering and even death?

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*Our mission keeps our “eyes on the prize”*

*<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. <sup>27</sup> No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. 1 Cor. 9:24-27*

Paul compares himself to an athlete that longs to win the gold. Such an athlete must discipline him or herself and train rigorously to stay in shape and remain competitive. Mention some examples of abstinence, or self discipline, which an athlete must impose upon himself or herself to be successful.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

According to this text, what is Paul’s goal? What motivates him?

---

---

In order to fulfill the mission, one must make sacrifices in the Christian life. Mention some ways that a Christian must discipline himself or herself or make sacrifices to accomplish their life mission.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



#### ***4. Knowing our Mission give us the hope of ultimate joy***

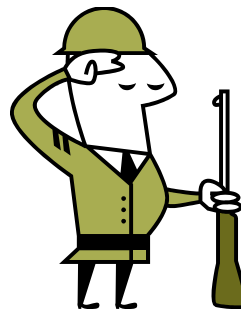
*<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.— 2 Timothy 4:7-8*

*<sup>24</sup> Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. Colossians 1:24*

#### ***And you...?***

- *Do you know you have a mission?*
- *Do you live with intensity and passion?*
- *Do you feel a holy sense of duty to fulfill this mission?*

Without a mission, we lack a reason to live with intensity, direction, focus, and a sense of holy obligation. We *must* seek to understand our own life mission.



## Part II – Defining our Life-Mission

### Some “callings” are shared by all human beings!

1. *The call to love -- our relationship with God and neighbor*
2. *The call to holiness – our character*
3. *The call to serve – our ministry*

#### 1. We are all called to love

“ ... One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” **Mateo 22:34-40**

According to this text, what are the two highest callings for every human being?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Think about your own life. Note down a specific way you can love God with all your...

*Heart:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Soul:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Mind:* \_\_\_\_\_

Note down four significant “neighbors” in your life, from various contexts, whom you are called to love as yourself.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



## 2. We are all called to holiness and integrity

<sup>8</sup> He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the LORD require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly<sup>[a]</sup> with your God. **Micah 6:8**

According to this text above, what are some “missions” that each human being shares? List them and then try to express them in your own words.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. We are all called to serve God and fulfill the “Great Commission”

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” **Matthew 28:18-20**



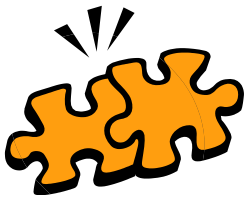
According to this text, how do we fulfill the “Great Commission?”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### Review question:

What are three “missions” we share with all humanity?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## We each have a unique mission as well

*We are “fashioned” to fulfill a specific and unique purpose*

We are each *fashioned* to fulfill a distinct mission in our own, unique way. As in the case of fingerprints, we all seem similar, *but none is exactly alike!* You are unique, and your calling is unique.

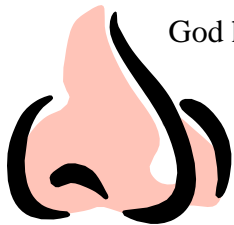
*Every one is called to...*

- *Love God and others -- ;In our own way!*  
Through our own temperament and personality!
- *Live in holiness - In our own way!*  
At our workplace, in our family and in our community!
- *Serve God and make disciples In our own way!*  
With our unique gifts and talents!



*We are members of one body, but with a distinct shape* (1 Corinthians 12)

God has molded us to serve in a special way. We are “members” of the “body of Christ.”



*A body contains a multiplicity of organs and members*

*Some are public and visible in nature*

*While others are hidden and private*

Some are soft in texture



*While others are hard.*

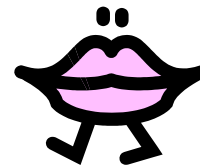
A multiplicity of colors

And a multiplicity of functions



Distinct shapes

Distinct textures



*All are necessary!* In some cases, the least visible members are in fact the most vital of all!

## ***There are many ways to serve the Lord!***

### ***The Example of Bezalel – An anointed craftsman***

<sup>1</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, <sup>3</sup> and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— <sup>4</sup> to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, <sup>5</sup> to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. **Exodus 31:1-5**

What is the special “anointing” upon Bezalel’s life? \_\_\_\_\_.



## ***Begin composing your own “Life Mission Statement”***

***How can I discover my mission?***

Discovering one’s mission is a life-long process. Discipleship Level IV focuses extensively on the process of identifying and developing our spiritual gifts. But we begin the process of discovery using some simple questions to provoke reflection.



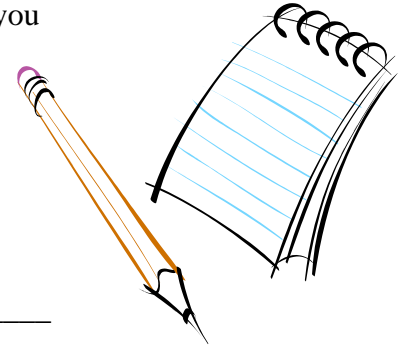
***Note down some achievements in your life that give you emotional satisfaction.***

Some major achievements by worldly standards may not be important in your own emotional world, while some seemingly small and insignificant achievements may give you great satisfaction. Focus on those achievements which give you joy, regardless of how they may look on a resume!

Example - I rebuilt a car  
I graduated from college  
I enjoyed lots of laughter with my daughter  
I wrote a story that made my teacher cry

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you like to do?** -- Note down some talents or personal strengths you possess. (No false modesty!)



Example – I easily feel compassion for the sick and suffering  
I enjoy working with my hands  
I have fun playing with kids  
I come alive on stage

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**What captures your interest?**

Think of something which seems like it would be fun to try.

Example - I would like to go to another country to preach some day

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**What do others say about you?**

Sometimes others observe potential we may not see about ourselves. What have people said they see in you – strengths or perhaps weaknesses?

People have told me that ....

Example - I'm sincere and trustworthy  
That I don't have much patience with kids  
That I've got a good voice

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



### ***What are some gifts you suspect you may have?***

Note down some spiritual gifts you suspect you might have. (*To see some Biblical lists of spiritual gifts, see 1 Corinthians 12:27-30; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11...etc.*)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Role Models and Examples***

Some individuals “catch our eye” as examples for us to follow. We feel like they have a similar temperament, gifts or ministry calling. They provide a model to help us visualize our own future in ministry. Note down a couple people of whom you have once thought, “*I could imagine myself serving God like he or she does?*”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_



### **Features of a Mission Statement**

- ***It should dream of the stars:*** Some dreams are God-given. By faith, we “*call things that are not, as though they were.*” Many times we write down that which seems unattainable, only to return to these words years later, praising God for his ability to make our dreams come true.
- ***It should have feet on the ground:*** While we want to exercise faith and vision, this statement should be rooted to some extent in your present reality. There exists a line between faith and fantasy.
- ***It should become increasingly specific over the years:*** An initial mission statement may be general in nature, but over the years it should become increasingly refined and specific.
- ***It should be “summarize-able”*** – A Mission that cannot be remembered is less useful in daily living than one which can be repeated, almost as a slogan.

For example, consider the following famous “mission statements”

- **“Bringing happiness to millions”** – Disney
- **“Exceptional care without exception”** – Boston Medical Center
- **“Follow without holding anything back”** – (Lyrics from a song)
- **“Crossing barriers to impact lives for Christ”** – a missionary pastor
- **“Transforming lives – Transforming the City”** - An urban church
- **“A worshiper of God and a deliverer of men”** – Mike Bickle

### ***Declaring my Mission: A Worksheet***

Using the ideas mentioned above, take a stab at an initial “mission statement.” Begin with general, universal “callings.” Then consider some contours, or primary features, of your unique calling in life. Finally, attempt a summary “slogan” that you can carry with you day to day to help keep you focused on this mission.

***My general mission in life – which I share with all believers.***

***I am called to....***

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

***Some unique contours of my mission...***

I believe my primary talents and gifts are .....

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to serve God by ....

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*General Description of my mission*

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*Summary Slogan:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Exercise – Write your own eulogy!**



Let's think of our lives – or rather – *our deaths*. Visualize your own funeral. What would you like to be said about you? Mention some comments you would like spoken about you at that time which summarize the impact you had on their lives.

*What would the following individuals say....?*

A family member (spouse, brother, son/daughter...etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Another family member (spouse, brother, son/daughter...etc.). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A friend \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A neighbor \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A church friend \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A co-worker (or boss) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Stewardship of Time Putting First things First***

*...making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.  
Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.*

**Ephesians 5:15-16**



### **Make it count! *Are you making the most of the time?***

- Are you always busy, but never quite able to get important things finished?
- Do you sometimes waste time in ways you cannot even remember?
- Do you neglect to fulfill important commitments and obligations?
- Do you have a hard time saying “no?”
- Do you tend to leave things for the last minute?

Which of these questions rings most true for you? (Choose one)

---

### ***Do you make time for that which is important?***

*Note below one activity that if you were to do it with greater consistency it would radically improve your effectiveness in life.<sup>5</sup>*

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*Why do you not do it consistently?* (Circle the appropriate answer below)

I think it is not important --- I do not want to do it --- I don't have time

Which did you circle? If you chose the third option, *this lesson is for you!* We neglect so many important activities in life because of our inability to appropriately manage our time.

***Our Goal is to consider ways to organize our time more effectively and wisely, in a way that reflects our mission statement and the priorities of the kingdom of God.***

***We consider...***

- *What it means to “steward” our time?*
- *How self control is critical in our ability to manage our time?*
- *How the urgent in life drives us, often at the expense of that which is truly important in God's eyes.*
- *How to plan to do that which is truly important from an eternal perspective.*

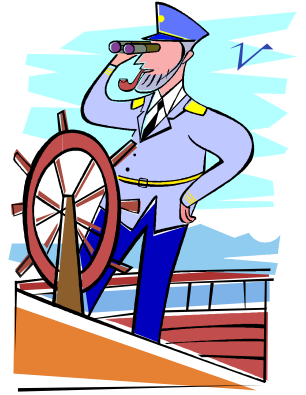
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<sup>5</sup> Stephen Covey. Putting First things First.

## ***Self Control – The Key to Making the most of our time***

### ***Who is the captain of your boat?***

*Self control* demonstrates the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives. God is our supreme commander in life, but he commissions each of us to “*captain*” the ship of our individual lives. With the anointing of the Holy Spirit empowering us, we possess the holy duty to direct our own lives, planning how to use our time and resources to accomplish the mission God has given us.



### ***If we do not control our time – others will!***

*Without planning, we do not accomplish what we set out to do!*

How many of us know that “intentions” alone are insufficient – We must *execute!* -

<sup>13</sup> *...for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

**Philippians 2:13**

### ***Example: The discipline of prayer.***

We all want to pray. 99% of the time, we neglect to pray not for lack of desire or intention, but for lack of proper *organization*. *We do not pray because we do not plan prayer*. Can you say with certainty, *when and where you plan to pray during each day of this week?* If not, most likely by this time next week you will have prayed very little. One must *plan* when and where to do that which is important in life!

### ***We must “steward” our time – Our time is not our own!***

We do not “own” our time! God has graciously given us a certain number of hours and minutes to fulfill His calling in our lives. He will one day call us to account for how we used each moment – for good or ill!

### ***Wasting time = Wasting life***

Time is life. Each moment presents us with a holy decision: Will I use this moment to accomplish something of eternal significance? Will I use this moment to advance God’s kingdom and purposes in my life? Managing time well determines our “success” in every sense – spiritual, emotional and physical. If we fail to make the most of the time, we waste the “stuff” of our lives. *If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.*

## ***We all will give account for our use of time***



*“We have each been entrusted with sufficient time to do the whole will of God and to fill out His perfect plan for our lives.... The problem is not that of needing more time, but of making better use of the time we have. Let us face the fact squarely that each of us has as much time as anyone else in the world. The president of the United States of America has twenty-four hours to his day, and so have we. Others may have more ability, influence, or money than we, but they have no more time.... Although we cannot be held responsible for our capacity, we are responsible for the strategic employment of our time...”<sup>6</sup>*

This is to say, wasting time is sin!

### ***How do we invest our “free” time?***

*“After making a generous allowance of eight hours a day for sleep and rest – and few really need more than that – three hours a day for meals and social intercourse, ten hours a day for work and travel on five days, there still remain no fewer than thirty five hours unaccounted for in each week. What happens to them? How are the extra two days in the week invested? The whole of a man’s contribution to the kingdom of God might well turn upon how those crucial hours are employed. They will determine whether his life will be commonplace or extraordinary.”<sup>7</sup>*

## ***Full Time Christians – 100% for God! No “part-timers!”***

**Part Time Christianity** -- relegates God to the “religious” compartment of our lives.

***The part time Christian divides his or her time into compartments:***

1. Church activities ... *For God*
2. Work .... *To earn money*
3. Personal time.... *To fulfill my desires and be entertained*

***The part time Christian considers himself to be the master of his own time***

He says...

*After fulfilling my obligations to God through church related activities, and after fulfilling my responsibilities to my employer at work, I can use my time as I like. I ask myself, “What would I like to do with my free time?”*

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<sup>6</sup> J. Oswald Sanders. Spiritual Leadership, Moody Bible Institute, 1980, pp. 136-137.

<sup>7</sup> J. Oswald Sanders. Spiritual Leadership, Moody Bible Institute, 1980. p.139.

**Full time Christianity** – Use all my time, *whether at church, home or at work*, for God!

*The true disciple dedicates 100% of his time to God*

1. Church Activities... *For God*
2. Work .... *For God*
3. Personal time ...*for God*

*The radical disciple says...*

*I am a “full time” Christian. I do not own my own time. Whatever I do, whether serving in a church ministry, mowing the lawn, working at the computer, playing with my kids or taking a nap... it is all for God! The question I ask for every moment and every activity: What does God want me to do?*

**Sabbath Rest: *Busy-ness is not next to Godliness!***

The Sabbath day of rest crowned the creation of the universe itself. God rested! Under the Old Covenant, God commanded his people also to observe a day of rest. While the New Covenant does not include obligations about the ceremonial observation of feasts, festivals and Sabbath days (Colossians 3:16-17), the writer of Hebrews explains that there remains a “Sabbath rest” for the people of God, found ultimately in a relationship with Jesus. By his ultimate sacrifice, we can be righteous before him apart from our own efforts. We can “rest” in his work on the cross. And yet the principle remains from the very creation of the world, that regular, cyclical rest honors God and cooperates with the rhythms of His creation.

If there is one thing that the story of Mary and Martha teaches, it is that holy “leisure” can and does honor God, when focused on Jesus. Especially urban, North American society glorifies a type of busy-ness which impoverishes our soul. Thanks to certain technological developments, we can be interrupted by the demands of our occupations at any time, in any place. We live tethered to our technology, quite literally. Observing “Sabbath” through moments, days, and entire seasons of rest and separation helps us to cultivate wonder and passion in our love for Christ. Such “holy leisure” honors God more than a compulsive drive to engage in constant, frenetic activity. When we cease striving, we recognize that the world spins apart from our own exertions and we remember who truly “makes things tick.”



***Busy-ness can distract us from our true mission. See Mark 1:35-39***

<sup>35</sup> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. <sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him, <sup>37</sup> and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

<sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” <sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Jesus did not heal everyone! After healing Peter’s mother-in-law and hundreds of suffering people until late the previous evening, Jesus awoke early, before dark, to seek God in solitude and stillness. At daybreak Peter and the crowds found Jesus and demanded his attention. “Jesus, what are you doing here in the middle of nowhere, being so unproductive!? There are more people to be healed and everyone is looking for you!” Jesus calmly informed them that he needed to move on to the next town in order to fulfill the mission God had given him. This moment of solitude and stillness enabled him to reconnect with his calling before his father, and enable him to say “no” to the urgent, pressing needs around him.

As we will see in the analysis below, much of our busy-ness, even when doing something good and positive, can distract us from accomplishing God’s truly important purposes in our lives. We must discern that which is truly important for us to do in order to fulfill God’s purposes in our lives, and resist the temptation to respond instinctively to every urgency that clamors for our attention.

***How are you using your time?***

If we desire truly to live as a disciple, we must evaluate how we use our time. The graphic below, drawn from the work of Stephen Covey, helps us to analyze our use of time through four general categories of activity in terms of importance and urgency.

***Activities can be...***

1. Urgent and important
2. Important but not urgent
3. Urgent but not important
4. Not urgent and not important

Study these quadrants and ask yourself, Which quadrant best represents my life? How am I using my time?

***How am I using my time – Four types of activity*** <sup>8</sup>

- **Quadrant I** - That which is urgent and important
- **Quadrant II** - That which is not urgent, but is important
- **Quadrant III** - That which is urgent, but not important
- **Quadrant IV** - That which is neither urgent, nor important

<p><b><i>I. Urgent - Important</i></b></p> <p><i>This must be done – NOW!</i></p> <p>Emergencies Pressing Needs Imminent due dates Deathbed prayers</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> A sick child The car breaks down An exam for tomorrow The bills are due today</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>****II. Not Urgent - Important ****</i></b></p> <p><i>If you don't plan it, you won't do it</i></p> <p>Prevention of future problems Cultivating healthy relationships Taking time to listen to another person Sabbath Appropriate rest Continuing education Caring for health – (exercise) Personal and Spiritual growth Daily prayer and Bible study Studying for an exam next week Some recreational activities</p>
<p><b><i>III. Urgent – Not Important</i></b></p> <p><i>Saying “yes” to everything</i></p> <p>Interruptions Some phone calls, emails and texts Some meetings Some invitations Some commitments</p>	<p><b><i>IV. Not Urgent – Not Important</i></b></p> <p><i>Time wasters</i></p> <p>Meaningless tasks – done for appearances Some calls, emails and texts Some media – tv, radio, etc. Some internet surfing Unedifying or excessive entertainment and recreation Addictions and destructive behaviors</p>

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, p.151. (Adapted)

## ***Our Goal – Maximize Quadrant #2 – Why?***

***Quadrant I – Emergencies!*** Many emergencies can be prevented! Procrastination or poor planning results in many crises which could have been avoided. Through proper advance planning, ie. Level #2 behaviors, we can multiply peace and effectiveness.

***Quadrant III – Interruptions or Side-tracks*** - So many competing concerns clamor for our attention and energy. If we fail to discern that which is important, prioritize and place appropriate boundaries, then these pressing needs can drive our lives. We say “yes” to everything and find ourselves constantly busy without accomplishing God’s calling on our lives.

***Quadrant IV – Time Wasters*** - Many activities lack meaning. We lose ourselves before a screen!

### **Quadrant #1 - Urgent and Important -- Must be done NOW”!**

#### ***The Quadrant of Emergencies!***

***Examples:***

- Exam tomorrow and I have to study!
- Christmas tomorrow and I have to buy presents!
- The car broke down and I have to get it fixed now!
- The bill is due and must be paid today!
- You are sick and must see a doctor right away!



***What happens when we dwell in “the urgent?”***

- *We live in a constant state of emergency*
- *We neglect that which is important in order to attend to that which is pressing*
- *We find ourselves putting out fires without advancing in our life mission*
- *Anxiety and Stress produce an excess of adrenaline, resulting in health problems*
- *We cause some crises that could have been prevented*
- *We neglect prayer and scripture study in order to respond to constant emergencies*
- *We neglect our physical, spiritual and emotional health*

***Procrastination – The sin of quadrant #1***

***Examples***

- *You put off the oil change until the car breaks down*
- *You put off studying until the night before the exam, resulting in an all-nighter*
- *You don’t make time to exercise and eventually suffer preventable health problems*
- *You are too busy to spend time with family, and then when the kids experience problems, there is not a deep enough relationship to intervene effectively.*

***Planning – the key to moving the emergencies of quadrant #1 into the productive activities of quadrant #2***

Note down some emergencies in your life that could be avoided with better advance planning

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

***How to escape from quadrant #1? --- Advance planning!***

**Quadrant #3 – Urgent – Not important**

***The Quadrant of Distractions***

***Saying “yes” to everything! Always busy, but not productive!***



So many things clamor for our attention which are not truly important or significant.

***Examples***

- The phone rings and we answer automatically, regardless of what this call is interrupting
- A friend invites you out to a movie. You put off studying and go in order not to disappoint her.
- You agree to do certain favors for people in order not to offend them.

***What happens when we live in quadrant #3?***

***\*\*\* We say “no” to that which is truly important! \*\****

- We live with a short term mentality
- We depend too much on the opinions of others
- We neglect long term plans and goals
- We feel like a “victim” in life – out of control
- Important relationships suffer from neglect
- We neglect prayer and private study
- We neglect health and rest

**Question: *What if the “interruptions” are also “important?” Should we not be interruptible to some extent?***

Yes! In one instance, Jesus was pushing through a crowd to get to the home of a synagogue ruler and heal his daughter before it was too late. Yet he paused in the crowd to look for a woman who had touched him in faith and been healed. Then, as if he had all the time in the world, he listened to her story and expressed love for her. He allowed himself to be “interruptible,” even when responding to crises! And yet at other times he said “no” to pressing needs in order to fulfill his overall mission.

More often than not, urgency that clamors for our attention is not frivolous, but important in its own right. One must learn to discern *God’s will* amidst the many important things we can do!

***Lack of Boundaries – The sin of quadrant #3!***

**“People Pleasing”** -- We desperately want to avoid disappointing others, so we make promises we cannot fulfill. We react to the demands of others and scramble to fulfill their expectations.

***Example:***

- Someone invites you to an activity and you say “yes,” and as a result skip your prayer time.
- The phone rings during play time with you son, and you answer rather than giving your undivided attention to your son.

Note below some of the “distractions which clamor for your attention.”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

***How to escape Quadrant #3 --- Discern God’s will and say “no” to distractions***

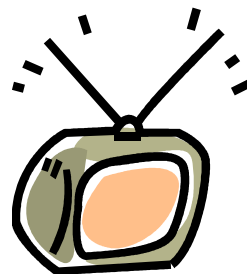
## Quadrant #4 – Not Urgent and Not Important

### *The Quadrant of the “Couch Potato”*

**Time Wasters – Unproductive Activity** Many activities can be healthy and constructive in moderation, but when done in excess, become useless or even counter-productive. The key phrase - “*too much.*”

#### **Examples**

- Sleep too much
- Watch TV, movies or sports too much
- Surf the Net too much
- Talk on the phone too much
- Face book too much
- Hang out in the mall or the gym too much
- Take drugs or alcohol



#### **What happens when we dwell in Quadrant #4?**

- Irresponsibility in life
- Fired from jobs
- Debt
- Dependency on others for our provision
- Neglect of emotional, physical and spiritual health

**Why do we waste time in that which has no eternal significance?**

#### ***Laziness -- “counterfeit rest” – The sin of Quadrant #4***

Sleeping, resting, or engaging in leisure activities can honor God when done wisely, with an appropriate theology of Sabbath. When we focus these activities on God we experience “*re-creation*” in our “*recreation.*” True rest energizes us to love God and our neighbor, fulfilling our mission. Counterfeit rest through excessive or unedifying leisure activity dulls our soul, body and spirit. Wisdom will enable us to balance our lifestyle in a way that discerns restorative leisure from time-wasting activity.

What are some unfruitful activities that consume your time? Note them below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

– **How to escape from quadrant #4 --- ;Define your life mission!**

- Avoid activities which do not advance this mission



## Quadrant #2 – Important but not Urgent Stewardship of Time *The Quadrant of Planning*



*We are called to be responsible in life without being “forced”*

*‘ Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!’ It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. ‘ How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?’ ‘ A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—’ and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man. **Proverbs 6:6-11***

What do we learn from the ant?

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### *Examples of Responsible use of time*

- Preparing for due dates in advance, and not under pressure
- Taking a Discipleship class!
- Caring for health (before a health crisis)
- Investing in relationships (family, friends, co-workers)
- Praying and reading scripture
- Learning new skills and information
- Observing “Sabbath” rest for personal renewal
- Appropriate sleep
- Setting aside time to plan – both short term and long term

### *What happens when we live in quadrant #2?*

- We cultivate self discipline and self control
- We cultivate emotional, physical and spiritual health
- We feel greater control in life
- We avoid certain crises and are more prepared for genuine ones
- We fulfill professional goals

Note down one important activity in your life that you would like to do with greater regularity.

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### *How we can maximize Quadrant #2*

1. *Define and Refine what is important – your life mission*
2. *Say “no” to distractions (and be willing to disappoint others)*
3. *Discern restorative leisure that reflects the theology of “sabbath.”*
4. *Plan, plan, plan and plan what is important*

## Planning Exercise

*We will do an exercise to develop this discipline, focusing on one specific quadrant #2 activity:*

- 1. Identify one important goal for your life*
- 2. Identify one particular activity that will further this goal*
- 3. Plan when you will do this one important activity*

### **1. Step One – Identify a personal goal -**

Note below a personal goal you have (Use your Personal Mission Statement)

*Examples* - Be a good father;  
Be a man of prayer

**A Personal Goal you have** - \_\_\_\_\_

### **2. Step Two – Identify an Activity to further this goal**

Using the goal mentioned above, note one important activity that will help you achieve it.

*Example #1 - Goal – Be a good father*  
*Activity – Family Time – spend time playing with my kids*

*Example #2 – Goal – Be a man of prayer*  
*Activity -- Daily prayer times*

**Your Personal Goal** - \_\_\_\_\_.

**Activity** -- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Step Three - Plan it! If we don't plan it, we won't do it!**





### 3. Step Three – Plan one activity to help achieve your goal

*Example: When will I spend time with my family?*

<i>Mon.</i>	<i>Tues.</i>	<i>Wed.</i>	<i>Thurs.</i>	<i>Fri.</i>	<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Sun.</i>
						Attend church as a family 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
					Family Time 1:00 p.m on...	
Family Time at night after work	Family Time at night after work	Dinner with family before service 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.	Family Time at night after work	Dinner with family before cell group 5:30-6:30 p.m.	Family Time at night	Family Time at night



***Plan it! Do it!***



***Plan one important activity!***

***Plan it! Do it!***

*Using this Calendar – Plan when you will do the important activity you have identified.*

<b><i>Mon.</i></b>	<b><i>Tues.</i></b>	<b><i>Wed.</i></b>	<b><i>Thurs.</i></b>	<b><i>Fri.</i></b>	<b><i>Sat.</i></b>	<b><i>Sun.</i></b>
a.m.						
afternoon						
night						

***Assignment -- Bring your calendar to the next class.***

***Prayer of Repentance – Let’s pray together...***

*Lord forgive me for the sin of procrastination.  
Many times I put off that which is important and end up paying the price.  
Help me to plan ahead!*

*Lord forgive me for seeking the approval of others rather than yours at times!  
Teach me to say “no” when I feel you want me to!*

*Lord forgive me for laziness – for wasting my time in activities which do not edify me or others.  
Help me to rest wisely and well! Help me to stay focused on my mission in life!*

*Help me Lord, to live every hour for you, wisely, fulfilling your will for my life. I want to be a faithful steward before you!! Help me make every moment count!  
Amen.*





## ***Stewardship of Money Treasures in Heaven***

*“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”* **Luke 16:13**

*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you as well.”*  
**Matthew 6:33**

***Our Goal in this lesson is to learn to be faithful stewards of our money; managing it wisely, 100% for the kingdom of God.***

***We consider...***

- *How money can easily become an “idol” which controls our life*
- *What it means to be a “steward” of money?*
- *The disciplines of faithful stewardship*
  - *Sow*
  - *Stop to think*
  - *Strategize*



***\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ ---- The #1 Idol in the World!***

*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.* **Colossians 3:5**

- The love of money is the root of all types of evil
- The varieties of greed
- How anxiety and the love of money go together
- Jesus’ calling to surrender all to him.

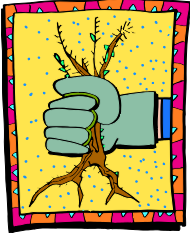
***We are not true disciples until our wallet is converted!***

How can greed be “idolatry?” How can the love of money be a “substitute god” in our lives?

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***The Love of Money – the root of all kinds of evil – 1 Timothy 6:6-10***



*6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:6-10*

What does it mean that “...godliness with contentment is great gain?”

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Paul teaches that “*the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil...*” List some of the “evils” which result from the love of money.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



**Read Luke 12:13-21 -- *The Varieties of Greed — The Rich Fool***

Jesus warns us, “*be on guard against all types of greed...*” Greed has many faces. In the case of the “Rich Fool” from this parable, how do we observe greed at work. What does this man expect from his money?

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**Read Luke 12:22-34 -- *Greed and Anxiety - A natural combination***

How can *anxiety* lead us to *greed*?

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Inversely, how can greed produce anxiety?

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According to the text above, what is the antidote to the idolatrous anxiety for money?

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Jesus explains that “*where your treasure is, there your heart will also be.*” What does this mean, in your opinion?

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Jesus said, “*seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you as well.*” (Matt 6:33 and Luke 12:31) What does this mean, in your opinion?

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**Read Mark 10:17-31 -- Jesus calls us to surrender all — *The Rich young Ruler***

Why, in your opinion, does Jesus command the rich young man to sell all and give to the poor?

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What does it mean to have “*treasures in heaven,*” in your opinion? What are these “treasures?”

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***Christians are called to be “Stewards” of money***

*A Steward = An Administrator – a trusted servant who cares for and invests the funds and resources of his master.*

Based on this definition, why do we say that a Christian is a “steward” of his possessions?

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***We are Stewards of “our” money because...***

- God is the rightful “owner” of all things
- God has *entrusted* us with everything we call our own
- We must eventually *give account* for the manner in which we have used these resources

***Disciplines for Faithful Stewardship***

- 1. Sow**
- 2. Stop (and think)**
- 3. Strategize**

***Discipline #1 – Sow -- Invest in an untouchable account!***

*<sup>9</sup> Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops;  
<sup>10</sup> then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. Proverbs 3:9-10*

What principle is taught in this verse above?

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## The Example of Jesus

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. (2 Cor. 8:9)*

How does Jesus provide an example for us to follow?

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## How do we sow?

1. *With joy and abandon*
2. *Generously*
3. *Tithing*
4. *Offerings*
5. *Charity*



## Sow with Joy – God loves a joyful giver!

1 Chronicles 29:9 summarizes the spirit in which the offering was made for the temple project

*° The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly. 1 Chron. 29:9*

List some possible “bad attitudes” that could contaminate our giving?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Sow generously and with abandon

*° Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ° Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ° And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ° 2 Corinthians 9:6-9*

Paul explains the principle of “sowing” in the kingdom of God. Summarize it below.

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What does it mean to be a “joyful giver?”

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***Sow through Tithing – 10% of Income***

*<sup>8</sup> “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. <sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. <sup>11</sup> I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty. <sup>12</sup> “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty. **Malachi 3:8-12***



What does it mean to “rob” God, do you think?

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What is the promise to those who tithe?

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Do you have any testimony of being blessed through giving tithes or offering?

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**2. Sow through Offerings – Extra donations for the Work of God**

*Tabernacle Project – Exodus 25:1-9 and Temple – 1 Chronicles 29:1-9*

All the materials for the tabernacle were donated by the Israelites, voluntarily.

***Sow with Charity – Merciful donations to help those in need***

*Examples...*

- Donation to the Red Cross after a national disaster, such as a hurricane or earthquake
- Donations to orphanages in other countries
- Donations to a family in need in the church

Can you mention any other types of “charity?”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions about Stewardship**

***Is it necessary to tithe in the church where a person attends, or is it possible to tithe to some other ministry?***

We teach that one should tithe *in the church one attends*. Offering to other ministries is commendable, but one should be faithful to the local church one attends. If someone moves from Boston, he or she can certainly send offerings to Lion of Judah if they want, but the tithe should be to their new, local congregation.

***Does the pastor receive and manage all the money collected in the general offering?***

NO! The pastors and other staff of the church receive a regular salary decided by the deacon board of the church. These salaries constitute a portion of the overall expenses of the church. The pastors do not manage the money collected on Sunday and generally *do not know how much each member gives!* The deacons manage this information.

***How are the tithes and offerings used in our church, Lion of Judah?***

There is a budget of expenses of the church. This budget, decided by the deacons, is presented publicly in congregational meetings every year and formally approved. Any member of the church can request permission from the deacons to review the budget of the church.

*These regular expenses include:*

- Mortgage for properties
- Maintenance of properties
- New building projects
- Gas, electricity, water...etc.
- Materials and training for the various ministries
- Contributions to local and foreign missions

***Should I tithe weekly, or monthly?***

One should tithe with discipline and regularity, in whatever schedule one chooses. Under normal circumstances, we recommend that a family set aside a certain amount of money each week, as Paul counsels the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:1-3). Some receive their salary every two weeks and prefer to tithe in this schedule, in order to be sure that the this money set aside for tithing does not end up being used for other purposes.

***Is saving money sinful or demonstrate a lack of faith?***

No. Saving for the future is wise and Biblical. (See Proverbs). It is sin, however, to *trust* in our savings for our sense of security and to refuse to be generous or faithful in order to pad our savings. (as did the Rich Fool). Prudent and wise saving, however, allows us to have discretion to cover unexpected expenses in our own lives, and also to be generous when opportunities arise.

***Is it bad to build up a credit card debt?***

Yes. Scriptures presents debt as a negative thing in the life of a believer. (Prov. 22:7) “*The debtor is slave to the lender.*” Some expenses in our society require taking loans, such as owning a house, or a car, or paying college tuition. But apart from these specific cases, we do not advise people to acquire debt, especially with credit cards that charge exorbitant interest.

***Is it good to have a budget?***

Yes. God calls us to exercise self control. If we fail to plan how we will apportion our money, more likely than not we will spend on that which lacks value in the eyes of God. Drawing up a budget is wise and important for a mature Christian. There are many ways to make a budget, which are beyond the scope of this lesson, but we present a worksheet (see addendum) as a simple model. We also recommend that one note down each expenditure in order to keep track of how our money is being spent. All too often our money mysteriously disappears and we cannot explain how.

***How can I find more training about this matter?***

The church offers an excellent, internationally known curriculum called “Crown Financial Ministries.” We recommend this course highly.

## ***Reflection Questions***

What are some good reasons to save money regularly, if possible?

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How are the tithes and offerings of Lion of Judah managed and spent?

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## ***Discipline #2 – Think before spending***

*“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of love, power, and of self control.” 2 Timothy 1:7*

### ***Two questions to help us think before spending***

1. *What is the difference between a “need” and a “want?”*
2. *What are the small, frequent expenditures that drain my wallet?*

Many times we waste our money (God’s money), because we fail to employ self control and restraint in the management of our finances. We neglect to think before spending.

***Before spending, try asking the following questions...***

### ***Question #1 – Do I “need” this or do I “want” it?***

We all make purchases based on “wanting” rather than true “need,” but we will exercise greater restraint if we do so *intentionally*, and not *carelessly*.

*How can we distinguish between what we desire and what we genuinely need?*

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*What are some examples of expenditures which are not necessary or prudent in your life, especially in the presence of financial limitations?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Question #2 – Where does the money go?

Have you ever asked yourself the question, “Where does all my money disappear to...? I start with my wallet full, and by the end of the day it disappears, and I have no idea to where?”



The truth is we waste hundreds and perhaps thousands of dollars every year on “little stuff.”

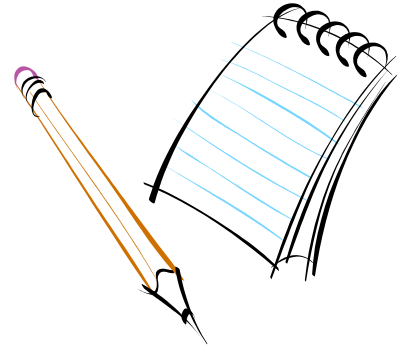
### *How much does a donut and coffee cost?*

If we spend \$1.00 every day to buy ourselves a donut and a another \$2.00 every day on a cup of coffee...

How much does it add up to in a week? \_\_\_\_\_

In a month? \_\_\_\_\_

In a year? \_\_\_\_\_



Consider for a moment how you spend money in a typical week. What are some small, unnecessary expenditures?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Discipline #3 - Plan***

### ***Draw up a personal budget***

Using the model below, take a stab at a personal budget, based on your projected income, what you spend, and your plans for saving, tithing and offering.

### ***Important --- Don't give up!***

Learning to manage our (God's) money is a long and sometimes aggravating process. Forcing ourselves to do these exercises will help us to discipline ourselves and become better stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Even if we follow our budget partially and imperfectly, in the long run we will do better than we would without any plan at all. Try it!



## Personal Budget (Model)

Monthly income (salary, benefits..etc.) : \_\_\_\_\_



### Fixed Expenses (Monthly)

- Rent or Mortgage \_\_\_\_\_
- Tithe \_\_\_\_\_
- Utilities (Gas, water, electric) \_\_\_\_\_
- Car (payments, maintenance, gas) \_\_\_\_\_
- Food \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- Clothing \_\_\_\_\_
- Entertainment \_\_\_\_\_
- Other - \_\_\_\_\_
- Other - \_\_\_\_\_
- Other - \_\_\_\_\_



+ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total of Fixed Monthly Expenses** \_\_\_\_\_



Monthly Income (salary, other) \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly Expenses - \_\_\_\_\_

Money "left over" = \_\_\_\_\_



Savings \_\_\_\_\_

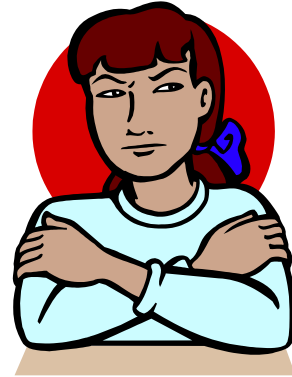
Special Offerings \_\_\_\_\_

*"Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you as well."*

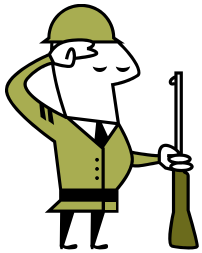


## ***Submission to Authority***

*<sup>16</sup> You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.  
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart  
you, God, will not despise. Psalm 51:16-17*



17



*<sup>23</sup> For rebellion is like the sin of divination,  
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.  
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,  
he has rejected you as king.”1 Samuel 15:23*

***Sacrifice and Christian service are useless without submission!***

According to these verses above, what type of sacrifice pleases the Lord?

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How is rebellion comparable to divination and idolatry, in your opinion?

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***Our Goal is to learn the importance of submission for radical discipleship.***

- *How can we know if we have a rebellious heart?*
- *Why rebellion is such a serious sin in the Christian life?*
- *How can we learn submission?*

***Rebellious Christians?! Is that possible?***

Absolutely! In the name of the Lord himself we regularly rebel against parents, teachers, employers, pastors and civil leaders, always blaming the one in authority for being the “*bad guy.*” This fundamental flaw severely limits our blessing and usefulness in the kingdom of God!

***And you...? Do you have a rebellious or submissive heart?***

***Ask ourselves the following questions....***

- *How do you respond to the parking lot attendant who asks you to move your car?*
- *How do you respond to the usher who asks you to change seats?*
- *How do you respond to your boss when he or she asks you to do something differently?*
- *Do you follow traffic laws?*
- *How do you respond to the ministry leader who asks you to do something you would rather not do?*
- *What do you do when the pastor does or says something that “rubs you the wrong way?”*
- *Do you complain about your boss, pastor, or ministry leader?*
- *Do you tend to blame others when there is conflict in your life?*

***Rebellious people tend to blame others for conflict in their lives.***

- *You are fired from your job – My boss had it “in for me!”*
- *You lose a friend – They have “issues!”*
- *You get a parking ticket – The police should be doing more important things!*
- *You change churches – The pastor’s did not pay enough attention to me!*

In reality, such attitudes rebel not so much against specific people, but against God, the ultimate authority, who has placed these individuals in authority.

## **Why is rebellion such a grave sin?**

- 1. Rebellion is the “original sin.”***
- 2. Rebellion is “Satanic” in essence***
- 3. The rebellious Christian is useless for God***
- 4. The rebellious Christian suffers spiritual attack from the evil one***
- 5. The rebellious Christian does harm***
- 6. The rebellious Christian uses the word, “Lord,” without submitting to God’s “Lordship.”***

## 1. Rebellion is the “original sin”

The root of all sin is rebellion against God and the authorities which He has ordained in the world. *We rebel because we believe we know better than God!*



### *The First Temptation – I want to be God! Genesis 3:4-5*

*“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

Describe Eve’s temptation.

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According to Satan’s lie, why does the Lord implement laws in life?

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## 2. Rebellion is a Satanic Quality

When Ezekiel prophesied against the King of Tyre, he compares his fate to the fall of Satan...

*The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>12</sup> “Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says:*

*“‘You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. <sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl.<sup>[a]</sup> Your settings and mountings<sup>[b]</sup> were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. ....<sup>17</sup> Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. **Ezekiel 28:11-13; y 17***

According to this text, what caused Satan’s rebellion?

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Mention an example of how strength, fame, talent, or beauty could result in rebellion for a person.

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### 3. *The Rebellious Christian is useless to the Lord*



*.... Like a wild animal or an un-tamed horse!*

*<sup>9</sup> Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. <sup>10</sup> Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him. Psalm 32:9-10*



What does the rebellious heart share in common with an un-broken horse?

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### 4. *The Rebellious Christian is "open" to Spiritual Attack*

*The rebellious Christian is like a soldier who refuses to follow orders!*

Why is it absolutely necessary for a soldier to submit to the orders of his commanding officers without hesitation?



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### 5. *The Rebellious Christian is dangerous*

*Like a car without steering or brakes!*

If we refuse to submit, how can we be compared to a car without brakes?



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## **6. The Rebellious Christian uses the name “Lord” without submitting to his “Lordship.”**

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ (Matthew. 7:21-23)

How is it possible to do miracles and prophesy without submitting to the Lordship of Christ in truth?

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*The rebellious Christian has a “stiff neck” – slow to “turn” in response to the Lord’s voice*

<sup>9</sup> “I have seen these people,” the LORD said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. <sup>10</sup> Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.” Exodus 32:9-10

Why compare a rebellious heart to a stiff neck?

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*And you...?*

- *How “flexible” is your neck?*
- *Are you an untamed horse?*
- *Are you a self-directed soldier?*
- *Are you a car without brakes?*
- *When an authority gives you instructions, do you respond quickly, or do you resist?*

## **How to cultivate a submissive heart The “breaking” process**

**God breaks us with his discipline out of His love for us. How?**

1. *Moments of Crisis – He wrestles us - Jacob*
2. *Our personal failures – He shows us our weakness – Peter*
3. *Long periods of waiting – in the desert He teaches us to depend on him – Moses*
4. *Moments of “cruel obedience” – we agonize to accept His will – Jesus in Gethsemane*
5. *Human authorities – which represent the authority of God*

***God breaks the one He calls – for love!***

*<sup>19</sup> Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Rev. 3:19*



**Read Hebrews 12:4-11**

What are some ways God disciplines us?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What is the benefit of God’s discipline in our lives? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***1. God breaks us through moments of Crisis***

***God struggles against us to humble us.***

Have you passed through moments in which God seems to be against you? It is natural to feel this way when He gives us a good “spanking!” But God disciplines us out of love, in order to form us into gentle and humble men and women.



**Read Genesis 32:22-32 – *God wrestles with the rebellious heart – Jacob becomes Israel***

How could Jacob at the same time love God sincerely and yet also be shifty, sneaky and rebellious? Yet this is precisely what we observe in the story of his early life! In order to use Jacob, God first needed to *break* him. A lifetime of deception and shady dealings led Jacob to his ultimate crises. His lies had earned him enemies, and now his brother Esau came against him with an overwhelming force. The night before the looming battle, Jacob spent the wee hours of the morning locked in a wrestling grip with the Angel of the Lord.

In the case of Jacob, how did the Lord break him? What physical manifestation reminded him of this breaking experience?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***The difference between “discipline” and “punishment.”***

When Job suffered terrible loss, some friends suggested that God was punishing him for some secret or hidden sin. Others suggested that God was unjust, and should be denied! Job struggled at length to come to terms with his situation, and we finally learn that neither explanation was true. Job’s suffering had nothing to do with punishment, but neither was God senseless or unjust by allowing it. In some mysterious way, God allows and uses suffering to mold us. Much as the coach or the drill sergeant “disciplines” his chosen recruits, so also God allows struggle to mature us spiritually. This discipline has nothing to do with punishment, and everything to do with our spiritual formation into maturity and the likeness of Christ. (Romans 8:28)

Have you passed through moments of crisis in your life, when you were forced to struggle with God to accept His will. Describe the experience? What came out of it for you?

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***2. God breaks us through our personal failures – He shows us our fragility***

Peter, before denying the Lord, boasted of his radical commitment and willingness to follow, even to the point of death!

<sup>9</sup> *Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”*

<sup>30</sup> *“Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice<sup>[a]</sup> you yourself will disown me three times.”*

<sup>31</sup> *But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same. **Mark 14:29-31***

As we all know, Peter was not as strong as he thought himself to be! After denying Jesus three times, he went away and “wept bitterly.”

How can the Lord use our own failures for our own good?

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### 3. God breaks us through long seasons of waiting – the Desert

<sup>3</sup> (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.) **Numbers 12:3**



#### ***Meekness is not Weakness!***

We know the awesome power of Moses' leadership and authority – that he waged war against the greatest pagan superpower of his day. How can such a strong leader also be considered the “meekest man on the face of the earth?”

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What is the true meaning of “meekness” in your opinion?

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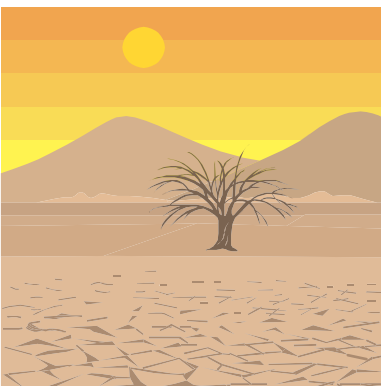
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#### ***The desert – God's training camp!***

Moses wasn't always so meek! Having been raised in the very palace of the Pharaoh, he grew up with the self confidence of a prince. As a young man, he became enraged when he witnessed an Egyptian abusing an Israelite, and took matters into his own hands by killing the Egyptian. Burning with zeal to save his people, he assumed the role of deliverer and tried to intervene in a dispute between two Israelites. However, before he could fulfill his destiny as deliverer, God needed to deal with his pride and will. Moses fled in fear from Egypt and hid as a fugitive in the desert. Having lost his privileged position in Egyptian society, he lived forty years in complete anonymity before being called by the Lord.



#### ***Why the desert?***



The desert is a place of privation and need. We become deeply aware of our human fragility, and all our pretence of self-sufficiency melts away. Stripped of all our natural supports, we become obliged to depend on the Lord, and learn that “*man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*”



**Read Deuteronomy 8:1-20 – *God uses the desert to break Israel.***

What are some of the privations, needs, or dangers we experience in the desert?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

According to the text, what are some of the “lessons” of the desert?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

***After 40 years of “desert treatment,” Moses was humbled***

***He removed his shoes!***

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, he commanded him,

*“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”* **Exodus 3:5**

In that epoch, slaves generally worked in bare feet. In light of this fact, what did the act of removing his shoes mean for Moses?

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**Responding, he said, “Who am I...?”**

When God called Moses to deliver his people, Moses responds by asking..

*“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”* **Ex. 3:11**

How do we observe the dramatic change in his attitude? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

**5. God breaks us through moments of “cruel obedience” - Jesus**



**Submission means yielding to the will of God – “Thy will be done!”**

In spite of being the ultimate ruler of the universe, Jesus passed through the “cruel” breaking in the garden, the night before facing the torture of the cross.

*’ During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.* **Hebrews 5:7**



**Read Matthew 26:36-44 and Luke 22:39-44 – The Agony in the Garden**

How do we observe Jesus’ struggle in his humanity to accept the will of the Father?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

And you...? Have you experienced a moment of intense struggle, in which you were forced to say, “... *but not my will, but yours be done.*” Mention the experience briefly below?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



## 5. God breaks us through human authorities

***Rebellion against human authority is rebellion against God’s authority!***

When we rebel against a legitimate authority God has instituted, we rebel against God Himself!

***What to do with a “mean boss?”***

***The Case of David and Saul – “Touch not the Anointed of the Lord”***

*David had opportunity to take revenge against Saul!*

You think your boss is bad!? King Saul attempted to pin David to a wall with a spear out of sheer jealousy - twice! David fled as a fugitive, hiding in caves and deserts, while Saul and his army sought to kill him. In spite of all this, David refused to do harm to his legitimate king. On one occasion, David entered a cave with his men, to find Saul there, relieving himself! At long last, he had his chance at revenge, seemingly provided by the Lord himself. His men encouraged him—“*Kill him!*”

Consider David’s response...

*9 But David said to Abishai, “Don’t destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed and be guiltless? 10 As surely as the LORD lives,” he said, “the LORD himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. 11 But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let’s go.” 1 Samuel 26:9-11*

Why did David fear to harm Saul, in spite of Saul’s wickedness and injustice?

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***We ought to revere our authorities with holy fear – the case of Miriam and Aaron***

**Read Numbers 12:1-10** -- Why did Aaron and Miriam rebel against Moses, in your opinion?

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In general, why do people rebel against their spiritual authorities?

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***Submission to Spiritual Authority in the Church***

*17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you. Hebrews 13:17*

Have you ever found yourself complaining about your spiritual authorities, whether pastors or ministry leaders? (be honest) What was the cause?

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***Rebellion against Civil Authority = Rebellion against God***

**Read Romans 13:1-7** – Civil Authority

Mention a few civil authorities we encounter in society?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



According to the Apostle Paul, why ought a Christian to submit to civil authority in society?

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### **Professional Authority**

These words were written to servants – which in our day apply to “employees.”

*<sup>22</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. <sup>25</sup> Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism. **Colossians 3:22-25***

According to this text, why should we submit to our employers?

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Write the names of some people in authority over you in your context of employment.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Family Authority – Husband the pilot and wife the co-pilot!**



*<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything... <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her .... <sup>33</sup> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. **Ephesians 5:22-25 y 33***

In contrast to male chauvinism, how should a husband lead his family?

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How should the wife respond to her husband?

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Children are to “*obey*” parents, but wives are called to “*respect*” their husbands. Why the difference, in your opinion?

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### ***Prayer of Submission***

And you? Do you have a truly submissive heart before God’s authority? If you find yourself complaining often against civil, spiritual or family authority, then more likely than not, your will still needs to be broken by God.

*Note an authority figure in your life to which you have a hard time submitting*  
(Home, work, church.)

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Let us pray the following declaration of “surrender.”

(We suggest the posture of kneeling, as a symbol of submission.)

***Lord God, I confess I am a rebel.***

***On many occasions I do things my own way***

***And refuse to submit to your commands.***

***I complain against authorities in my place of work, in my home,***

***and in my church.***

***Please forgive me.***

***I ask you to break my pride and willfulness.***

***As Jesus prayed, “Not my will, but your will be done.”***

***Amen.***

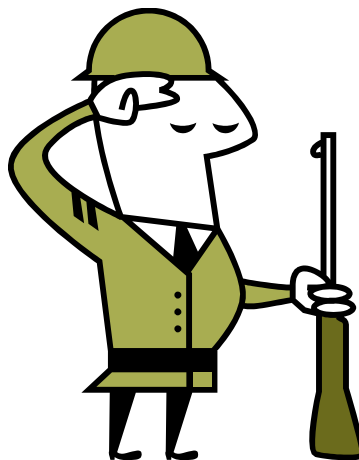
***Review Questions:***

Mention the reasons why rebellion is such a grave sin in the Christian life?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

What are some ways in which the Lord breaks us and humbles us?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



## Radical Service

### *Washing the Feet of the Saints*

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

– Mark 10:45



***El que no sirve - ¡No sirve!***

*“The one who doesn’t serve – serves for nothing!”*

**Ministry = Service:** The word, “minister,” means literally, “to serve.”

**Our Goal** in this lesson is to learn to cultivate a mentality of servant hood in all we do: *“How to be radical servants!”*

**We consider...**

- ***How service and spiritual authority go together***
- ***The profile of a radical servant***
  - *Humble*
  - *Happy*
  - *Faithful*
  - *Daring*
- ***Practical ways to be a servant in daily life***

### ***The Servant Heart – The child and the cup of water***

*There once was a young boy who lived with his family in a small country house alongside the Appalachian Trail. Every day dozens of travelers would pass by as they walked along this nature trail, often in the blazing heat of summer. This child would entertain himself on sweltering summer afternoons by setting up a lemonade stand along this trail and giving away cold drinks to the hikers who passed by, free of charge. It never occurred to him to profit from this service, since “the fun of it” lay in the joy of giving something special that would refresh others.*



*As an adult believer in Christ, this man began to receive special revelations from God – “prophetic words” – from God. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he receives personal messages to share with people that would bless and “refresh” their weary souls!*

Consider how the heart and motivation of a person connects to their spiritual “anointing.” This man had a true “servant heart.” He enjoyed giving to others and refreshing their spirit. God used this heart of love as a vehicle through which the Spirit would give prophetic words – cups of cold water – to encourage and satisfy the souls of His thirsty people.

## *The Radical Servant Wields Spiritual Authority*

### **Who wants to be boss?! Why?**

On various occasions the disciples argued amongst themselves as to who would be the greatest; who would take charge when the master had passed on! (Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48) Even at the Last supper, sitting at table in one of the most sublime moments of human history, a squabble broke out as to who would be the greatest! (Luke 22:24) Consider this example of power-plays and infighting among the apostles.

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”<sup>2</sup> He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them.<sup>3</sup> And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>5</sup> And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. **Matthew 18:1-5***

In this context in particular, what does it mean “to become a child?”

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### **What do we seek – the crown or the cup? Read Mark 10:35-34**

What is the request of James and John?

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Is it wrong to desire to exercise authority in God’s kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_.

Mention some positive motivations to seek to exercise authority?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



What could be some wrong motivations?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

James and John asked for the “crown” of authority; the right to sit on thrones and exercise authority. Instead of a crown, Jesus offered them “a cup” and “a baptism.” What do these symbolize, in your opinion? (See Mark 14:36)

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Jesus seized the moment to teach them about the true nature of *spiritual authority*, as opposed to *worldly authority*. What is the difference between authority from a worldly perspective, and that which characterizes the kingdom of God?

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How does Jesus give a perfect example of spiritual authority? (Mark 10:45)

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## The Profile of the Radical Servant

### 1. Humble

- *Renounces his privileges*
- *Takes the “lower place” in relation to others*

### 2. Happy

- *Serves all, and especially the “least,” as if he were a King!*
  - .... *As if he or she were the president*
  - .... *As if he were an angel in disguise*
  - .... *As if he were Jesus himself, in disguise*
- *Feels privileged to serve*
  - .... *With a smile!*
  - ... *Always eager*



### 3. Faithful

- *Executes what they have promised*
- *Serves with actions and not only words*

### 4. Daring

- *Extravagant – Goes the “extra mile”*
- *Takes chances*
- *Does not make excuses*





## 1. The Radical Servant Humbles Him or Herself

### a. The “radical servant lets go of privileges and rights

**Example: The Incarnation of Jesus Christ!**

*The greatest becomes the least!*

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. <sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature<sup>a</sup> God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature<sup>b</sup> of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!*

*<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Philippians 2:3-11***

Mention some typical “boasting points” for people in our contemporary society.

(Example: Physical beauty...etc.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the ways that Christ “emptied himself” to become human? (humbled himself)

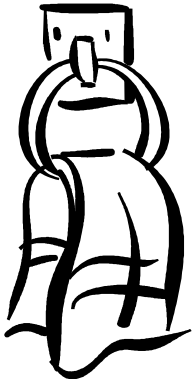
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



**b. The Radical servant takes the “lower place”**



**The Ministry of the Towel – Jesus washes the feet of the disciples**



<sup>1</sup> It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

<sup>2</sup> The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. <sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; <sup>4</sup> so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. <sup>5</sup> After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ....

<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. <sup>13</sup> “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. **John 13:1-5; 12-15**

The radical servant “values others above himself.” How does Jesus put this principle into practice in this context? Why does Jesus use the act of washing feet to demonstrate what it means to serve others?

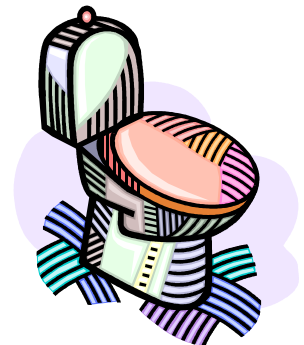
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In your household (or workplace), what are some “feet-washing” type tasks? (What no one wants to do!)



1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



***Self Denial does no = Self Hatred! -- Jesus did not suffer from a low self esteem!***

*<sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God.... he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ....You have called me "teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am..." (John 13:3, 5, 13)*

How do we observe his *self assurance* in these verses?

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Jesus was *secure* in his own sense of identity and authority. Why do you think it could be difficult for an *insecure* person to serve others with humility and self denial?

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## ***2. The Radical Servant is Happy and Attentive***

***Serves each one as if he or she were "the president"***

The radical servant considers "*each one to be more important than him or herself.*"

*If the President of the United States were to visit your house tonight. How would you receive him? What type of meal would you prepare? How would you prepare the bed and room where he would sleep? In what state would you leave the bathroom? What would be your attitude towards him? Would you do all this reluctantly?*



Every human being we serve is much more important than the President of a merely human nation. The Bible teaches that they are *angels* – or better yet, *Jesus himself* – dressed in disguise!

### ***Illustration of the Foolish Worker***

*One day a young man was painting a wall in the factory where he worked. A stranger stood by, observing him work for a while. The young man, annoyed by being observed, said to the stranger – "What are you looking at?"*

*The quiet stranger replied, "My wall."*

*He was the owner of the factory! If the young man had known the true identity of this stranger, he would have treated him with more attention and respect.*

**a. Serve each one as if he or she were Jesus himself in disguise!**

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ **Mat. 25:34-40**

Based on this text, what should motivate us to serve others in practical ways?

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**c. Serve others as if they were “angels in disguise.”**

<sup>1</sup> Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. <sup>2</sup> Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. ...” **Hebrews 13:1**

In Genesis 18:1-16 we read about Abraham serving three “visitors” with lavish Middle Eastern Hospitality. Little did he know, at first, that they were two angels – and the Lord Himself!

Some “people” we serve could be disguised angels!

**b. Serve especially the “least” as if he or she were royalty!**

**Read Mark 10:46-52** - Bartimeaus

Why do the disciples rebuke Bartimeaus? How do they view him?



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In contrast to the disciples, how does Jesus treat this man?

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*The name – Bartimeaus = Son of Honor!*

Ironically, this man’s true identity lay in his “noble” lineage – “son of honor.” And yet he had been degraded to the point of utter humiliation and “dishonor.” All human beings bear the image of their creator, and as such, deserve the utmost honor and respect, regardless of how this world and the enemy have degraded them.

Mention some examples of “Bartimeaus” in our context – those who have been degraded and could be treated with “dishonor” rather than the respect they deserve as image-bearers of God?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

***c. The Radical servant feels privileged to serve – with a smile!***

If we view each person as if he or she were the president, or an angel, or our Lord himself – with what attitude would we serve them? Of course, we would be eager, excited and thrilled to do the most menial task in his service!!

***“Service with a Smile” -- Don’t be a “grouchy waiter!”***

Have you ever had a grumpy waiter or waitress? Their demeanor and facial expressions betrayed reluctance at the very least, and perhaps even annoyance as they fulfilled their tasks in a perfunctory fashion. How did you feel? Did you enjoy the meal? Did you leave a big tip?



Most of us feel uncomfortable, or even guilty, when people serve us in this way. We feel as if we are burdening or inconveniencing them by allowing them to serve us. In contrast, consider the feeling when someone seems genuinely happy and grateful for the opportunity to serve you ... as if you were doing them a favor by allowing them to do so!

Let us serve with a smile that comes from within as we view each person as if he or she were inestimably precious. What a privilege to make them happy or help them in some way!!

Mention a certain task that is difficult for you to do with joy.

\_\_\_\_\_.

How can you adopt a better attitude in this particular task?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

**d. The Radical Servant is eager to anticipate the needs of others**

Jesus asked Bartimaeus, “What would you like me to do for you?” Like a good waiter, he asks, “How can I serve you today?” Consider using this simple motto as a mission statement with each person we encounter through our days:



*How can I serve you?*

Mention the name of a family member or friend with whom you live: \_\_\_\_\_.

Very simply, how can you discover a need this person has and a specific way to better serve this person?

\_\_\_\_\_.

**3. The Radical Servant Follows Through! - Serves with actions and not mere “talk.”**

**a. Follows through on commitments**

**Read 21:28-32** – *Good intentions v. Good deeds*



What is the difference between the two sons?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*How easy it is to promise, and how difficult to deliver!* Who cannot identify with this truth? Note down a couple contexts in your own life in which you have not fully executed on commitments you have made. Be specific.



1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**b. The Radical Servant serves with actions and not mere words**

<sup>16</sup> *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.* <sup>17</sup> *If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?* <sup>18</sup> *Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.* **1 John 3:16-18**

What could be a comparable example from our own context?

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*“Put your money where your mouth is”*

#### **4. The Radical Servant is Daring**

**Read Luke 10:25-37 – The Example of the Good Samaritan**

**a. The Radical Servant is extravagant and at times imprudent – Goes the “extra mile”**



Mention three ways in which the Samaritan goes “above and beyond” the type of help which would be “normal” in society?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**b. The Radical Servant takes chances to serve**

Mention two specific risks which the Samaritan took in order to serve the needy man

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**b. The Radical Servant overcomes obstacles and does not make excuses**

There are always reasons not to serve. Obstacles. Note three specific obstacles – three “excuses” the Samaritan could have used to avoid serving the way he did.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Let's be Radical Servants!

### *Examples!*

Think of three people you know who are good examples for you of radical service. Note their names and, in each case, the specific way they express this ethic of servant hood.

**Example – Brother Bob** ----- An usher who brings Kleenex to people with sincere concern

**Example – My Wife** ----- Cares for the kids with phenomenal patience

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ---- \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ ---- \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ ---- \_\_\_\_\_

### *New Opportunities to Serve*

Let's consider our daily lives. Note some new, practical ideas of how you can serve others. Please do not put down something you already do consistently, but something different, new or beyond the norm for you!

#### *Note down a new act of service for....*

A family member: \_\_\_\_\_

A neighbor: \_\_\_\_\_

A brother or sister from church: \_\_\_\_\_

A co-worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Testimony: What did you do differently this week? How did it go? \_\_\_\_\_

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***Service begins at home! Brainstorm!***

***Think of a person close to you, who you see virtually every day...***

Note down the name of a person with whom you live (spouse, child, friend, etc.) If you live alone, note down the name of someone you see regularly (friend, co-worker).

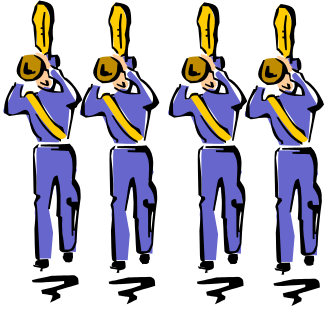
\_\_\_\_\_.

***Brainstorm***

Note down 10 specific, *new* ways you can serve this person in daily life!

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_





## Unity in God's Army: *Teamwork and Conflict Resolution*

<sup>25</sup> *If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.*  
– Mark 3:25

<sup>3</sup> *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*  
– Ephesians 4:3

### *Are you a “Team Player?”*

Many of us, in spite of being mature Christians, prefer to work as “lone rangers” rather than in collaboration with others.



*Let's ask ourselves the following questions:*

- *Do you have a hard time sharing projects with others?*
- *Does it bother you when you do not receive public recognition for things you do?*
- *Do you feel neglected and hurt when others receive recognition?*
- *Does it bother you when others excel in similar gifts or ministries to your own?*
- *Do you feel a secret satisfaction when another person fails?*
- *When another person fails, do you share the news with others?*
- *Do you have a hard time working behind the scenes?*
- *Do you feel bad when another person in your ministry has gifts that excel yours?*

Perhaps you need to learn more about working together with others!

***Our Goal*** in this class is to learn more about how to serve God in unity and collaboration with others, focusing on personal repentance and strategies for conflict resolution.

### **Obstacles to Unity**

- **Independence and Pride – “*The Lone Ranger*” Syndrome**
- **Jealousy and Competition – “*The Princess*” Syndrome**
- **Poor conflict resolution skills – “*The Porcupine*” Syndrome**

## Obstacle #1

### Independence and Pride: *The Lone Ranger Syndrome*

*The Lone Ranger fails to understand...*

- *That we need one another in the Body of Christ (Interdependence)*
- *That we are called to work together with others*



**Christians are by nature “Interdependent” – We need one another!**

*Interdependence = Mutual need*



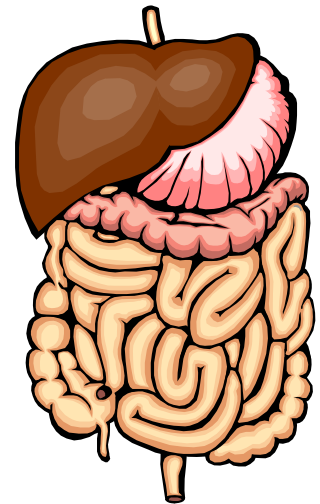
There is simply no alternative! If we are true believers, we *must* have unity with other believers. In Christ we become members of a family, and whether we like it or not, *family is family!* Scripture also teaches that Christians are “the body of Christ.” Just as an arm or a kidney has no other choice; neither do we. We are connected to the other members of the body, or we die!! We cannot “opt out” of sharing with other believers. As Christians, *we are stuck with one another!*”

***We are members of One Body: Eyes and Intestines!***



<sup>12</sup> *Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.* <sup>13</sup> *For we were all baptized by<sup>a</sup> one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.* <sup>14</sup> *Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.*

<sup>15</sup> *Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.* <sup>16</sup> *And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.* <sup>17</sup> *If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?* <sup>18</sup> *But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.* <sup>19</sup> *If they were all one part, where would the body be?* <sup>20</sup> *As it is, there are many parts, but one body.* **1 Corinthians 12:12-20**



Consider the following two members of a body: *Eyes and intestines.* How could the eyes easily consider themselves to be more valuable than the intestines?

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On the contrary, how could one argue that the intestines are in fact more important to the functioning of the body than the eyes?

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Likewise in the church, how can we easily evaluate the importance of certain people or roles in incorrect ways?

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### ***The Call to “Teamwork”***

Pick a team sport – football, baseball, basketball, water polo..etc.

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In this sport, what are some characteristics of a poor “team-mate?”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



In that same sport, mention some qualities of a good “team player.”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



*Jesus- The Perfect Team Player*

**Read Philippians 2:1-18**

Based on this text, mention five qualities of a good “*team player.*”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

***Competition is great – but not against our own team mates!!***

*<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, **Philippians 2:3***

Note down an example of acting out of “competition or self promotion” in the context of church life and ministry.

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**Obstacle to Unity #2  
Jealousy and Competition: The Princess**

***The Princess fails to understand...***

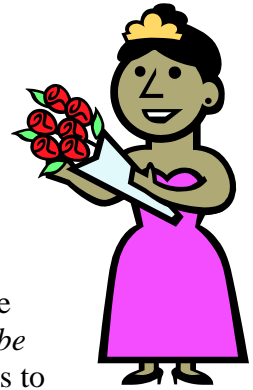
- *That life is not a beauty contest or competition*
- *That the success of others does not lessen her*
- *We “win” in life when we help others to “win” as well!*



## Is life a Beauty Contest?

### Jealousy – a symptom of fear and insecurity

Many of us live as if everything in life were a competition against others. Appearance, possessions, position – even prayer and spirituality, can become the stuff of competition!! Rather than be satisfied with our own progress, we must be *better* than others! We experience envy and jealousy, as if all others are enemies to be “beaten,” because their success takes something precious away from us!



#### Examples

- A three year old child feels displaced and jealous of a newborn sibling
- A worship leader feels jealous of the new member with a beautiful voice.
- A Christian with a prophetic gifting feels rivalry with another church member who begins to receive accurate revelations...etc.

In each case we observe *fear and personal insecurity*.



**Satan’s Lie:** *If the other wins, I lose!*

**A Kingdom Mentality:** *We are on the same team! His success is my success!*

*We worship a God of abundance!*<sup>9</sup> The success of another in no way lowers or lessens me as a person, loved and called by God in my own way. We play for the same team – we fight in the same army against a common enemy – Satan himself. When my teammate scores a goal, or my fellow soldier makes a heroic conquest, I rejoice with him!



**Example – The Disciples were envious of other followers of Jesus**

<sup>38</sup> “Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.” <sup>39</sup> “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, <sup>40</sup> for whoever is not against us is for us. **Mark 9:38-40**

Why does John desire to stifle others who cast out demons?

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How do we observe the same kind of dynamic among churches and Christians now?

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<sup>9</sup> Covey speaks of an “abundance mentality.” Seven Habits...

***Moses – There’s enough anointing to go around! God is a God of Abundance!***

If another brother or sister receives a special anointing, does this mean that you become somehow less important? We observe how Moses responded when two men, Eldad and Medad, were anointed and prophesied separately from Moses and the larger group.

*<sup>26</sup> However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. <sup>27</sup> A young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” <sup>28</sup> Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses’ aide since youth, spoke up and said, “Moses, my lord, stop them!”*

*<sup>29</sup> But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!”* **Numbers 11:26-29**

Why does Joshua want to stop Eldad and Medad from prophesying?

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How is Moses’ perspective entirely different from Joshua’s?

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***John the Baptist – “He must increase, and I must decrease...”***

**Read John 3:22-30**

Why are the disciples of John worried?

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How does John respond? How could he have responded?

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To what does John the Baptist compare himself in relation to Jesus?

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Imagine a comparable situation in the life of our church. What might be a situation in the ministry of the church that could arouse jealousy between brothers and require that we demonstrate the humility and attitude of John the Baptist to cultivate peace?

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### *The Call to lift up our brothers*

#### *Barnabus – “Son of Encouragement”*

Barnabus understood that as Christians we serve on the same team – that we win when we help others to succeed. Consider how Barnabus helped *others* to be more successful than himself.



#### *The Case of Saul – The Art of giving someone a chance*

When Saul accepted Christ, everyone rejected him as a former persecutor of the church... except Barnabus!!

*<sup>26</sup> When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. Acts 9:26-27*

How is the reaction of the apostles towards Saul understandable? How do we observe the character of Barnabus on display in this incident?

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Think of your own life. Are you a Barnabus? Have you helped a new person in the gospel to become involved, grow, and perhaps become more influential in the church than yourself? Share the story? What happened?

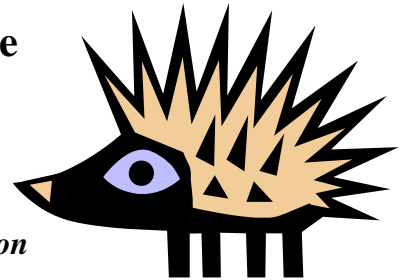
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### **Obstacle to Unity #3 – The Porcupine Syndrome Inability to Resolve Conflicts**



*The Porcupine fails to understand...*

- *That it is possible to resolve a conflict in a constructive fashion*
- *How to go about the process of resolving a conflict*
- *How to dialog effectively with those who have a different perspective*

***Cultivating Unity takes Work!***

*“...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:3*

What does the word “eager” mean for you? \_\_\_\_\_



### ***Cultivating Unity requires a Peace-making attitude***

*<sup>1</sup> As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **Ephesians 4:1-6***

According to these verses, what are some necessary *attitudes* for cultivating unity?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

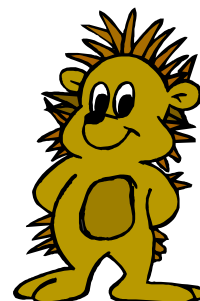
“Bear with one another in love” = Tolerance! We “tolerate” things that annoy us! Mention an example of something in another church member which you are learning to tolerate!

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### ***Cultivating Unity Takes Hard Work***

*<sup>25</sup> Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. <sup>26</sup> “In your anger do not sin”<sup>[a]</sup>: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup> and do not give the devil a foothold. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. <sup>29</sup> Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **Ephesians 4:25-32***



Based on these verses, mention five ways to cultivate unity between brothers and sisters.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Of these, which is most difficult for you?

\_\_\_\_\_.

### **The Call to Resolve Conflict**

In any team, family or army, internal conflict is inevitable. A mature Christians learns how to resolve such conflicts wisely and according to Biblical principles.

*<sup>23</sup> “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. **Matthew 5:23-24***

According to this verse, which is more urgent in the life of a believer, worshiping God or seeking reconciliation with an offended brother? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ***Read Matthew 18:15-20 – Steps in Conflict Resolution***

According to this text, list three critical steps in the process of reconciliation.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

We generally fail to follow these steps in their proper order. On the contrary, we manage conflict in exactly the opposite order of action steps than that which Jesus teaches. Generally, what is the first thing people do when in conflict with another?

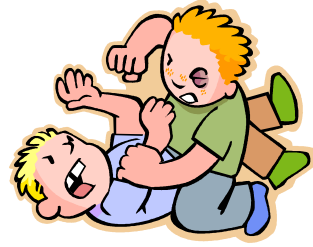
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## *Four Styles in Resolving Differences*<sup>10</sup>

Observe which way you generally use when in conflict with others.

### 1. **Dominate**: *I win – You lose* (Dominant Donald)

One can “win” an argument, but lose a relationship. We quash dissent and inflict divisions in the body. We become increasingly hardened, proud, and embittered.



### 2. **Yield**: *You win – I lose* (Amiable Amanda)

Some of us are simply too nice. We desire to avoid disappointing anyone and thus seek “peace at all costs.” We allow ourselves to be trampled by others as human “doormats.” While this strategy may seem more “humble” and Christian, in fact it can hamper unity and cause deeper problems in the long run. This person tends to sweep problems under the carpet and internalize anger, rather than resolve important differences. This “stuffing” process can produce bitterness, depression and passive aggressive attempts to sabotage the efforts of others in indirect ways.



Of course, at times this strategy is necessary and prudent. We must “choose our battles,” and yield in matters which do not merit our efforts, but generally this strategy does not produce relational health in the body of Christ.

### 3. **Vengeance**: *I lose – You lose* (Vengeful Vladimir)

Satan models this style quite well. Knowing that he is destined hellish destruction, he seeks to drag down as many others as possible with him out of sheer spite. On a lighter note, some sports fans feel relief if their hated rival loses, even if their own team also loses. In human conflicts as well, sometimes we do not care if we suffer, *as long as the other suffers as well!*



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<sup>10</sup> From Stephen Covey: [The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People](#). Adapted.



**4. Resolve: *I win – You win*** (*Winsome Winfred*)

In Christ, we can find solutions that meet the legitimate needs of both parties. *Both can “win!”* This strategy takes into account the needs of both parties. It requires effort, imagination, and emotional maturity!

- *Listening skills:* Genuinely hear the views of the other without interrupting
- *Empathy:* Put yourself in the other’s position
- *Understanding:* Truly grasp the perspective and needs of the other person
- *Courage:* Express your own perspective in a clear, respectful way
- *Creativity:* Seek solutions together that meet the legitimate needs of both parties

***An Example from the First Church – The Greek Widows v. the Hebrew Widows***

**Read Acts 6:1-7** Describe the problem.

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What are the legitimate needs of the Greek widows?

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What are the needs of the apostles?

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How was this problem resolved in a way that filled the needs of all parties?

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If they had solved this problem in this positive way, what could have happened? What could have been the negative consequences of their failure to resolve this conflict well?

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## ***Rules (Guidelines) for a Fair Fight*** - (A “Fair Fight”)

***Words are not easily retracted – Like tooth paste!***

*A Christian camp counselor once led a group of kids in the following didactic game. He gave each one a small tube of toothpaste and asked them to squeeze the sticky paste out into their hands. Of course, the messy fun inspired laughter and squeals of delight! But then came the assignment: Return the toothpaste into the tube! Obviously no one could completely force all the paste back into the tube, but they certainly enjoyed the chance to smear and squeeze the stickiness all over themselves!*



*Our words are much the same! Once spoken, it is extremely difficult to take them back, and we usually make the mess worse! Therefore, we do well to take time to consider certain guidelines or “rules for a fair fight” which can help us resolve conflicts without inflicting lasting damage to the relationship.*

### ***Rules for a “Fair Fight”***

- Give the benefit of the doubt
- Assume good faith
- Focus on specific, concrete issues
- Do not accuse the person of malicious motives
- Seek to understand the perspective of the other person
- Remember that you are both on the same team, ultimately
- Don’t interrupt
- Don’t dominate the discussion
- Don’t speak when your blood pressure is high! Calm down before speaking
- Breathe
- Don’t try to resolve conflicts when you’re hungry or tired or in a hurry
- Speak *to* the person, not *about* them
- Avoid demonizing the person (exaggerating their wickedness!)
- Avoid subtle jabs
- Avoid passive aggression (“silent treatment” – “cold shoulder”)
- Don’t insult
- Don’t generalize, “*you always...*”
- Don’t interrupt
- Listen to the perspective of the other (repeating back their argument.)
- Use “*I feel*” rather than the more accusing, “*you always...*”
- Remember that there’s more to the situation than meets your eye
- Try to imagine how they feel – put yourself in their shoes
- Be self-aware – recognize how your own feelings of tiredness, insecurity, or frustration may be exaggerating your reactions
- Use “save draft” before pushing the “send” button on an email
- Focus on the problem, not the person

- Avoid including “baggage” from the past
- Don’t yell
- Don’t threaten
- Seek solutions rather than a person to “blame”
- Don’t trap a person – give them a way out.
- Don’t shame a person – protect their dignity
- Avoid bad words
- Don’t “stuff” anger until it explodes
- Don’t throw things
- *Never, never never, never* – use violence!

Of these guidelines, jot down three which are most difficult for you to follow when in conflict.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

***Above all ....***

*Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Pe. 4:8*

What does it mean that “*love covers over a multitude of sins?*”

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**Working in the Name of Jesus**  
***Cultivating Excellence in the Workplace***  
***Our Public Witness***



*17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17*

*“El que trabaja, ora dos veces...”*  
*“The one who works, prays twice...”*  
*(Spanish Proverb)*

***Are you giving a positive testimony on your “secular” workplace?***

- Based on your performance and work ethic, can your supervisor and co-workers tell that you are a Christian?
- Can your clients sense that you are a believer in your demeanor and ethic?
- Do you genuinely love your boss? Your co-workers? Your clients?
- Do you seek the anointing of the Holy Spirit in your workplace?
- Do you work with enthusiasm and creativity?
- Do you take initiative?
- Are you diligent, responsible and dependable?
- Are you punctual?
- How much of your workday is spent on non-work related internet activity?
- Do you feel a healthy pride in what you do?
- Do you complete projects with excellence, going in the extra mile?

***Our Goal: Apply Biblical principles of radical discipleship to our professional roles.***

- 1. Understand that all work is “spiritual”***
- 2. Consider what it means to work “in the name of Jesus?”***
- 3. To view ourselves as missionaries in the workplace***
- 4. To consider the qualities of a Christian worker***

***1. All work is “Holy” – WWJD at your workplace?***

***Jesus worked! What kind of Carpenter do you think he was?***

- *How did he treat his clients?*
- *What quality product did he deliver to his customers?*
- *How much did he charge?*
- *How do you think he responded to disgruntled customers?*
- *How long was a typical work-day? ... a typical work-week?*

- *If he had a supervisor, how did he interact with him?*
- *If he had employees, how did he treat them?*
- *How did he speak and behave when feeling tired, or under pressure?*

***“Business is business!” - the time-worn excuse for hypocrisy***

Most of us compartmentalize our lives. We make a distinction between our “spiritual” life and our “professional” roles. Whether explicitly or implicitly, we often feel the need to leave our Christian values at church so we can “get ahead” in the office or shop or place of business.

A truly radical disciple erases this distinction between that which is “spiritual” and that which is “professional.” He or she does everything – *everything* – in the name of Jesus.

## ***2. We are called to work “in the name of Jesus”***

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17*

***What does it mean to do something “in the name of Jesus?”***

***1. In his authority – by his power.*** Jesus has given us his credit card! All his spiritual riches and power stands at our disposal. He has given us full access through the authorization of his name.

***2. For his glory in the world*** – We are ambassadors of Christ! We represent the king and His kingdom in our daily setting. All that we do, or neglect to do, reflects upon the reputation of the one we represent as we act “in his name.”

***3. To please him*** - We live to make him smile! Do it for Jesus!



***Work is Worship!***





***What does it mean to paint a wall in the name of Jesus?***

If I decide to paint a wall “*in the name of Jesus,*” how would I do it? *Let’s imagine...*

What does it mean to paint a wall *with the power of Jesus?*

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What does it mean to paint a wall *for his glory in the world?*

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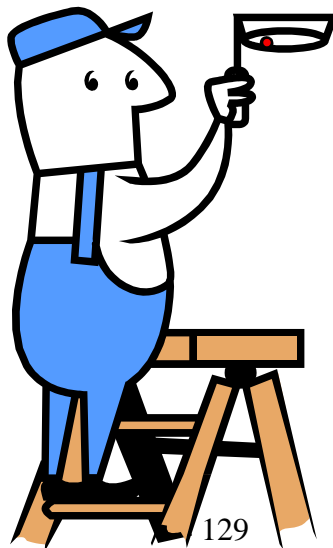
What does it mean to paint a wall *to make Jesus happy?*

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***Can people tell that a Christian painted the wall?***



### ***3. We are missionaries in our work-place!***

Every workplace is a mission field! Let's imagine that you work as a member of a hospital staff (medical professional, housekeeping, maintenance, translation...etc.) Brainstorm some ways to evangelize as a worker in this setting.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### ***The Christian worker gives testimony through the quality of work***

***The Christian worker should be different! Thing about...***

- How would a Christian *plumber* be different from others?
- How would a Christian *secretary* be different from others?
- How would a Christian *lawyer* be different from others?
- How would a Christian *teacher* be different from others?
- How would a Christian *student* be different from others?

*If you were an unbeliever...*

- Could you receive the preaching of a hairstylist who leaves you looking like a monstrosity?
- Could you accept an invitation to church from a mechanic who does a hack job?
- Could you accept the testimony of an employee who never shows initiative?

### ***Giving testimony to "the boss"***

*<sup>22</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. <sup>25</sup> Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism. **Colossians 3:22-25***

Based on this text, what are some qualities of a Christian worker?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

According to this text, what is the reward of a Christian attitude at work?

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#### 4. Qualities of the Christian worker

1. *Works with spiritual anointing*
2. *Works with integrity*
3. *Work with love*
4. *Work with diligence*
5. *Shows initiative*
6. *Reliable*
7. *Works with excellence*
8. *Perseveres*



.... All for the glory of God!

##### 1. Works with Spiritual Anointing – Powered by the Holy Spirit

*Ohaliab and Bezalel were anointed for craftsmanship*

<sup>1</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, <sup>3</sup> and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— <sup>4</sup> to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, <sup>5</sup> to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. (Exodus 31:1-5)

Imagine you have a friend who feels very far from God while at work. You know that there are certain practices that can help him “walk in the Spirit” while going about his workday. What are they? Mention three ways that your friend can cultivate communion with the Spirit while working.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

##### 2. Works with Integrity – No “double life”

*So many excuses to compromise our integrity*

- “Business is business, after all”
- “Everyone does it this way”
- “It’s always been done this way”
- “I need the money”

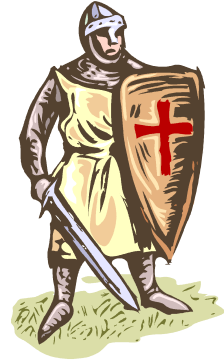
In your workplace, what is a way that employees sometimes lack integrity? What excuses have you heard for such behavior?

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***Some occupations are generally associated with lack of integrity***

- *Some used car salesmen* mislead potential customers
- *Some politicians* enrich themselves through bribery and corruption
- *Some accountants* embezzle money from businesses in subtle ways



One might ask, “Is it possible to be a Christian and do these jobs?”

It was no different in Jesus’ day. Some professions were known for their lack of ethics, *especially soldiers and tax collectors*. These professions relied upon extortion to pad their salaries. Put simply, they used their position *to steal* from others.

***Biblical Advice to Soldiers and Tax Collectors – Luke 3:12-14***

<sup>12</sup> *Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”*

<sup>13</sup> *“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.*

<sup>14</sup> *Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”*

*He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”*

According to these words of John the Baptist, how was it possible to be a Christian tax collector or soldier?

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**3. Work with love – “I’ll do it as if it were for my own mother!”**

Love should be the defining characteristic of a Christian – not only at home and in church – but *at work* as well!

***Love my boss?!?*** - At your job, how can concretely *love your boss!*

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**Love your co-workers** – How can you concretely show love to your co-workers?

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**Love your clients** – In your job, how can you practically show love for your clients?

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#### 4. Diligence

<sup>3</sup> *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord,*  
**Col.3:23**

**Proverbs: Prosperity and Sweat go together!**

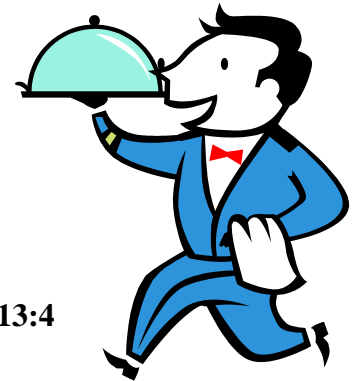
<sup>11</sup> *Dishonest money dwindles away,  
but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow.* **Prov. 13:11**

<sup>4</sup> *Lazy hands make for poverty,  
but diligent hands bring wealth.* **Prov. 10:4**

<sup>24</sup> *Diligent hands will rule,  
but laziness ends in forced labor.* **Prov. 12:24**

<sup>4</sup> *A sluggard's appetite is never filled,  
but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.* **Prov. 13:4**

<sup>5</sup> *The plans of the diligent lead to profit  
as surely as haste leads to poverty.* **Prov. 21:5**



**God wants prosperous children – but won't abide lazy ones!**

**Illustration of a student "of prayer"**



*Imagine the following scene. A Christian student neglects to study for an entire semester and then finds himself under pressure at the last minute, with a ten page paper due the following day. He prays...*

*"Lord, I have faith in you. I believe that it's your desire to prosper me. So I ask you to write this essay for me. That way I can spend more time with you this summer, serving your kingdom rather than wasting time with schoolwork..." He lays hands on his computer and prays in tongues...*

*Suddenly something amazing happens. Without touching a single key on his laptop, the printer on his desk begins to hum and beep, obviously processing some sort of transmission. Stunned, the student sees a sheet of paper begin to feed through the printer! In joyful awe, he grabs the sheet and begins to read the following words from God...*

*“My beloved child. I have heard your prayer. We will indeed spend much of time together – in summer school!”*

If you want easy, instant results – go to McDonald’s – not the Lord!

*God wants prosperous children, but won’t abide lazy ones!*

#### **4. Take Initiative – Follow the “internal captain”**

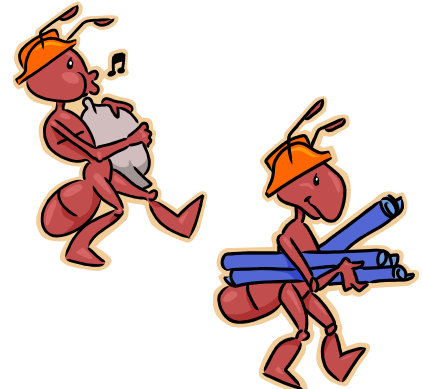
***Do you take initiative – or do you tend to be passive?***

- Do you wait to be told what to do before taking action?
- How do you use your free time? Do you “kill time?”
- Do you do tasks efficiently, or “milk” them at times?
- Do you often do the minimum necessary to “get by,” or do you think of new ways to prosper the mission of your employer?

***Taking initiative is...***

- Being self-motivated
- Being pro-active rather than passive
- Not waiting to be asked before doing what needs to be done
- Having a “spark”
- Being entrepreneurial

***Proverbs 6:6-11 – The Ant – The ultimate self-starter!***



<sup>6</sup> *Go to the ant, you sluggard;*

*consider its ways and be wise!*

<sup>7</sup> *It has no commander,*

*no overseer or ruler,*

<sup>8</sup> *yet it stores its provisions in summer  
and gathers its food at harvest.*

<sup>9</sup> *How long will you lie there, you sluggard?*

*When will you get up from your sleep?*

<sup>10</sup> *A little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to rest—*

<sup>11</sup> *and poverty will come on you like a thief  
and scarcity like an armed man.*

How is the ant an example for us?

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*Describe a waiter who manifests initiative. (three specific examples)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



*In your job, what are some ways to take initiative?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## **5. Responsible and Reliable – *Follows through!***

*Are you responsible?*

- Do you sometimes make excuses for not completing a task
- Do you sometimes hear the question: “*Where were you...?*”
- Do you often blame others or your circumstances for your own lack of success?
- Do you arrive on time? If you are supposed to arrive at eight....?
- Do others sometimes not take you seriously when you say you’ll do something?

*Being responsible is...*

- Being reliable – You can be counted upon!
- Being consistent
- Being conscientious
- Coming through on promises and commitments
- Executing rather than simply “talking”
- Arriving on time
- Not making excuses nor blaming others
- Seeking replacements when not able to fulfill a particular responsibility
- Relieving your boss of burdens



***Anointing without reliability spills to the ground!***

<sup>26</sup> *As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,  
so are sluggards to those who send them. **Prov. 10:26***

<sup>6</sup> *Sending a message by the hands of a fool  
is like cutting off one's feet or drinking poison. **Prov. 26:6***

***Describe the habits of a responsible student. (3 examples)***

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

***How can you be more responsible in your job?***

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**6. Excellence – For the Glory of God**

***Do you work with excellence?***

- Are you proud of what you do?
- Which is more important for you; doing something well or earning money?
- Do you sometimes say, “good enough,” in spite of preventable imperfections?
- Do you work with enthusiasm, or simply do enough to “get by?”
- Do you seek advice from others about how to improve in what you do?
- Do you do “continuing education” to improve in your job? (books, seminars, etc.)
- Do you sometimes seek the “path of least resistance,” regardless of the way quality suffers.

***To God be the Glory = SDG (Soli Deus Gloria)***



<sup>9</sup> *Do you see someone skilled in their work?  
They will serve before kings;  
they will not serve before officials of low rank. **Prov. 22:29***

The composer, Johann Sebastian Bach always signed his manuscripts with three letters “SDG” – “Soli Deus Gloria.” Can you do the same?



**Excellence**

- Does above and beyond that which is necessary or expected
- Is detailed and complete
- Never willingly leaves something “half baked”
- Is creative
- Shows enthusiasm
- Seeks to improve always – never satisfied
- Sweats!
- Plans, rather than relies on improvisation



*Describe the qualities of a “creative” or “excellent” teacher you once had (3 examples)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*If your job involves cleaning houses, how can he be “detail oriented?” (3 examples)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



*Describe a hair stylist who works with enthusiasm and creativity*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*How can a child-care provider seek to become more excellent in his job?*



1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



Is it sinful to be “proud” of our work? What’s the difference between healthy and sinful “pride” in this context?

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What is the difference between *perfectionism and excellence*?

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## 7. Persevering – *Never give up!*

*Do you persevere?*

- Do you wait to “be in the mood” to work?
- Do you sometimes give up half way through a project?
- Do you get frustrated easily when a project encounters setbacks?
- Do you get distracted easily?
- Do you give up when things don’t work out the way you wanted?

*The Persevering Christian...*

- Starts strong; works hard; and *finishes strong*
- Gives 150%
- Sweats
- Concentrates
- Is not led by feelings
- Keeps on, in spite of tiredness or frustrations



*Perseverance “walks the walk” as well as “talks the talk”*

<sup>23</sup> *All hard work brings a profit,  
but mere talk leads only to poverty. Prov. 14:23*

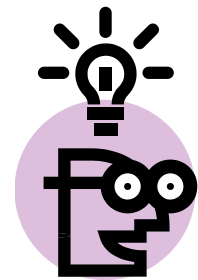
Thomas Edison (inventor of the electric light bulb), said...

*Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration*

**Read 2 Timothy 2:1-6 – Examples of Persevering Work**

Paul, as a great mentor, teaches Timothy what it means to have a good work-ethic. Which are the models that Paul presents for Timothy to emulate?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



***Perseverance overcomes Distractions and Frustrations***

What are some distractions that can interrupt or affect your work?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Mention a frustration you face in your work.

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What do you do when you encounter this frustration?

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***Conclusion:***

Note four specific ways you can improve your way of working “in the name of the Lord.”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_