

ETS 3/13

Date _____

Assignment Sheet

Name _____ Topic _____ Discipleship _____

Lesson Spiritual Reproduction _____ Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "Spiritual Reproduction"		
Bible Study		
Do "World Vision"		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
How to Know the Will of God		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Pray for 1 person to share the "Bridge" with.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Hebrews 11:6		
Romans 4:20-21		
Review previous verses.		

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

(The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to extreme blurring and low contrast. It appears to be a list or index of items, possibly names or titles, arranged in two columns.)

SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTION

Definition of Reproduction

Reproduction: The means by which all living things produce more of their own kind and keep their species alive.

God Ordained Reproduction Physical Reproduction

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

Genesis 1:11

When God created the earth and the living things upon it, He created once and for all. But He did bestow to every form of life the ability to reproduce itself. In this way, He ensured the perpetuation of each species' existence ad infinitum. Therefore, if a species becomes extinct through our neglect or mismanagement, it is gone forever. God will not re-create it. We will simply have to do without. God's creation was a one time only thing; but through the miracle of reproduction, life continued. Every living thing has seed within itself and is capable, under the right conditions, of reproducing itself.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 1:28

The first command God gave to man was to multiply and replenish the earth. God was the Creator, but He made us be the re-creators of the universe.

Mankind has been notorious for breaking God's laws, but this one command has been kept to the uttermost: we have been fruitful and have multiplied again and again. In fact, we have kept this command so well that we are in danger of overpopulating the world!

Spiritual Reproduction

God commands it

Just as God planned for every living thing to reproduce itself physically, He also has planned and commanded that we reproduce ourselves spiritually. In fact, spiritual reproduction is to be a mark of every disciple.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

John 15:8

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John 15:16

Most people do not need a great deal of instruction about how to reproduce physically. Somehow they just figure it out by themselves. It is like the song says: "doing what comes naturally."

Spiritual reproduction is also to be a natural outcome of our relationship with Christ. The Bible states:

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

I John 1:3

Spiritual reproduction, however, usually does require some help to learn. The exciting thing is Jesus has promised to supply the power and ability to do it. If you need a teacher, He will send someone to teach you. If you need courage, He will supply the inner strengthening of His Spirit. Whatever you need to reproduce spiritually, Jesus will supply--if you follow him.

And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Matthew 4:19

When Christ has taught us and empowered us, we will be able to witness (to tell what we have seen, heard, and experienced of Him) with a grace and naturalness that will flow.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 1:8

God promises it

Not only has God commanded us to reproduce spiritually, He has also promised that if we abide in Him, He will make us fruitful.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:5

It is not enough that we be fruitful, but that we bear much fruit. Jeremiah has the same message for us in the Old Testament.

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

We see here that we are never to stop bearing fruit. As long as God allows us to remain in this world, He desires us to keep reproducing spiritually.

Prerequisites to Reproducing

Abide in Christ

We must be walking in daily fellowship with Christ and in obedience to His Word.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:5

The word "abide" means to be in "constant contact with" or to "live with" the Vine, Jesus Christ. This means that on a daily basis, we are in continual fellowship with Him. It is through this fellowship that we are empowered to bear fruit.

The word "abide" also implies obedience to Christ. In the same chapter (John 15) we see that to abide we must keep Christ's commandments.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

John 15:10

The way we abide in Christ--both through fellowship and obedience--is to continue in His Word. There can be no true abiding without the Word of God.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

Be Totally Committed to Spiritual Reproduction

All reproduction is costly! When we have physical children, we must see to it that they are provided for and have adequate food, shelter and clothing. We are also called upon to give of our time and love to them each day. Spiritual reproduction also means we must be willing to pay the price to see others come to Christ. It will cost us our time, our prayer, and our love. We must be willing to lay aside selfish ambitions and desires in order to be spiritually fruitful.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

John 12:24

In Romans, Paul emphasized this kind of sacrifice--being dead to self but alive and available to do God's will.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1

Ask God for Fruit

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8

It is important that we go to God to ask for fruit. He will give good seed. Satan also wants to give us fruit--the kind who will dissipate our time and energy and never grow or reproduce. These are described in the Parable of the Sower:

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

Matthew 13:18-22

The good seed of God is the only kind that will really bear fruit for generations to come.

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Matthew 13:23

Consistently and Continually Work at It

So, naturally, we proclaim Christ! We warn everyone we meet, and we teach everyone we can, all that we know about him, so that, if possible, we may bring every man up to his full maturity in Christ.

Colossians 1:28 (JBP)

Like Paul, we must ever be working at the task of proclaiming the Gospel "naturally"--that is, it must be a part of our very lifestyle. Spasmodic sowing will never result in abundant harvest.

He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

Ecclesiastes 11:4-6

Hindrances to Reproduction

As we have said before, reproduction, both physically and spiritually, is part of God's plan. In fact, there are only four hindrances which can keep reproduction from occurring. They are parallel in both the physical and spiritual realms. Study the following chart.

Physical

Immaturity --Reproductive organs are not yet developed. When a child is immature, God prevents him from reproducing off-

Spiritual

Immaturity --Spiritual children who are either:
● New babes in Christ

spring which he cannot care for. However, in normal development the reproductive organs mature at puberty preparing the young person for parenthood. If puberty should not occur, the person remains physically immature and retarded--incapable of bearing children.

- Christians who have never grown spiritually.
- New babes in Christ who are just beginning their spiritual walk need to become grounded in the basics themselves before becoming spiritual parents. Otherwise they would not be able to adequately follow-up their converts.

However, there are other immature Christians who have simply not grown spiritually as they should have. Such people are described in Hebrews.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the work of righteousness; for he is a babe."

Hebrews 5:12-13

Disease--If sickness or disease attacks a person's systems or reproductive organs, he or she may be unable to have children. Many childless couples have discovered this to be the cause of their sterility. Unless the problem can be healed or corrected, conception can not take place.

Sin--The Spiritual Disease

Sin is the disease which attacks our spiritual life and can often prevent reproduction. Sin gives Satan the upper hand in our lives, blocks our prayers, and destroys our desire to share Christ with others.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Pslam 66:18

Prevention--In this case conception is blocked by some sort of human birth control method. People often block conception because they want to plan their family, because they don't want any more children, or because they don't want any children at all!

Prevention--Prevention of spiritual conception is caused usually by the poor testimony of carnal Christians. The non-Christian observing their lifestyle is repelled and says to himself, "If that is Christianity, include me OUT! Christians who hinder the Gospel by their poor testimony are described by the Lord as follows:

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

Matthew 5:13

Abstinence---Abstinence means the absence of any sexual union. Obviously in such a case, conception is impossible. Abstinence is to be the moral code of every believer until God draws him or her into a marriage union.

Abstinence--Christian men and women who abstain spiritually are those who know they have been commanded to bear fruit but refuse to do it. They refuse to share the Gospel with others. They abstain from obeying God's command.

Having examined these four causes of failure in reproduction, each of us must ask ourselves if we are truly fruitful or in reality spiritually sterile. Christ has promised that if we are abiding and obedient in our relationship with Him, we will bear fruit. If we are not reproducing, it means that we have chosen not to abide and obey, but are going our own separate

rate way in disobedience. The choice belongs to every individual Christian. It is not a question of being unable to reproduce, but of being unwilling to do so.

Remaining Fruit

Jesus has not only planned for us to bring forth fruit, but for our fruit to remain.

In the Old Testament we see that God established a pattern to perpetuate the faith. Each parent was to instruct and teach his own children.

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Deuteronomy 6:7

For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

Psalms 78:5-8

This pattern is not only to be followed in training our physical children in spiritual truths, but also in training our spiritual progeny. Paul instructed Timothy:

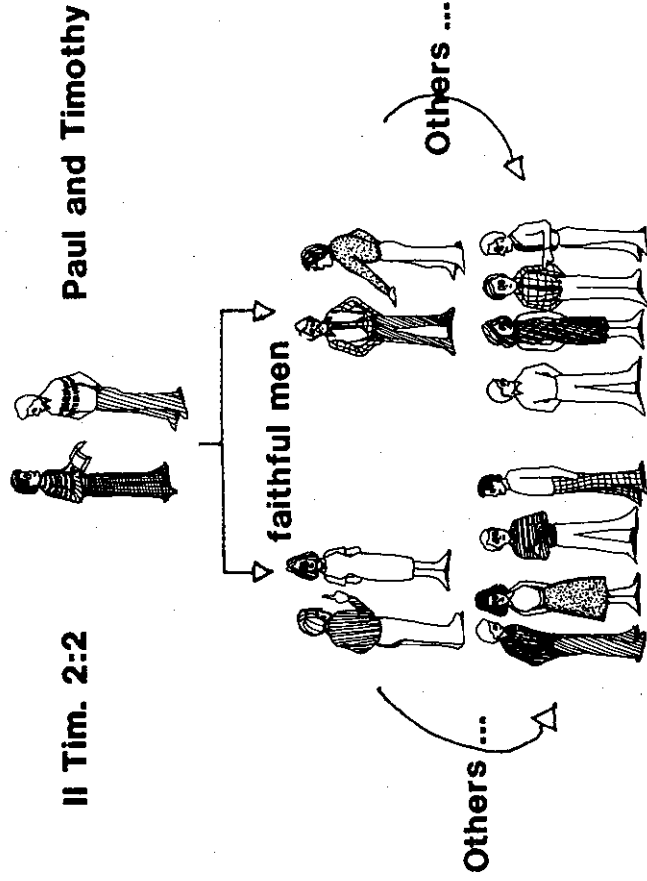
And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

II Timothy 2:2

This passage shows four generations of disciples.

- Paul
- Timothy
- Faithful Men
- Others Also

The key to abiding fruit is committing the Good News to faithful men who will go on to teach others also.



Notice in the previous illustration that if the faithful man is sterile spiritually and unable to reproduce, the entire chain will end at the third generation. This is why it is so important to see that each generation is able to do evangelism and follow-up so as to reproduce the next generation.

- Where is your Timothy, your faithful man?
- ...Every person who has gone this far in the course knows enough to get started.
- ...Ask God for a spiritual babe--either a young Christian that you can nurture, or perhaps a non-Christian friend that you can introduce to Christ.
- ...Get started now! Don't let it die with you. Reproduce the next generation.

WORLD VISION

God is concerned individually for all mankind. With the billions of people in the world today, you might wonder how it is possible to have an effective part in communicating God's love to so many. God's way for us to do this is to make disciples who will multiply and penetrate all the world.

GOD'S CONCERN FOR THE WORLD

World vision is getting on your heart what is on God's heart--the world.

DAWSON TROTMAN

1. How does John 3:16 show the breadth of God's concern for men?

2. To whom was Jesus' ministry directed?

John 8:12

Matthew 5:14

3. Jesus spoke of sowing good seed (Christians) in a field. What field was this? Matthew 13:38

4. In what different ways did Jesus state His "Great Commission" in these verses:

Matthew 28:19-20

Mark 16:15

Luke 24:47

John 17:18 and 20:21

Acts 1:8

It is certainly commendable to have the vision for reaching a neighborhood or community for Christ, or a factory, campus, military base--even an entire nation. But the Lord's concern is for the whole world, and this should be our concern as well. In the Great Commission Jesus gives Christians the responsibility of reaching every person of every nation in every generation with the gospel. All our major decisions in life should be made with the whole world in view.

THE WORLD TODAY

5. From these passages write summaries of how the Bible describes world conditions in the last days:

I Timothy 4:1-3

II Timothy 3:1-5

II Peter 3:3-5

Circle the conditions you listed which seem to be evident today.

6. What awaits those who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ?

II Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 20:12,15

Each second, several babies are born somewhere in the world--hundreds of thousands of them each day. Most of them will live out their entire lives without Christ. Hundreds of thousands of people also die each day, and most of them pass into a Christless eternity.

7. What is God's concern for all mankind? II Peter 3:9

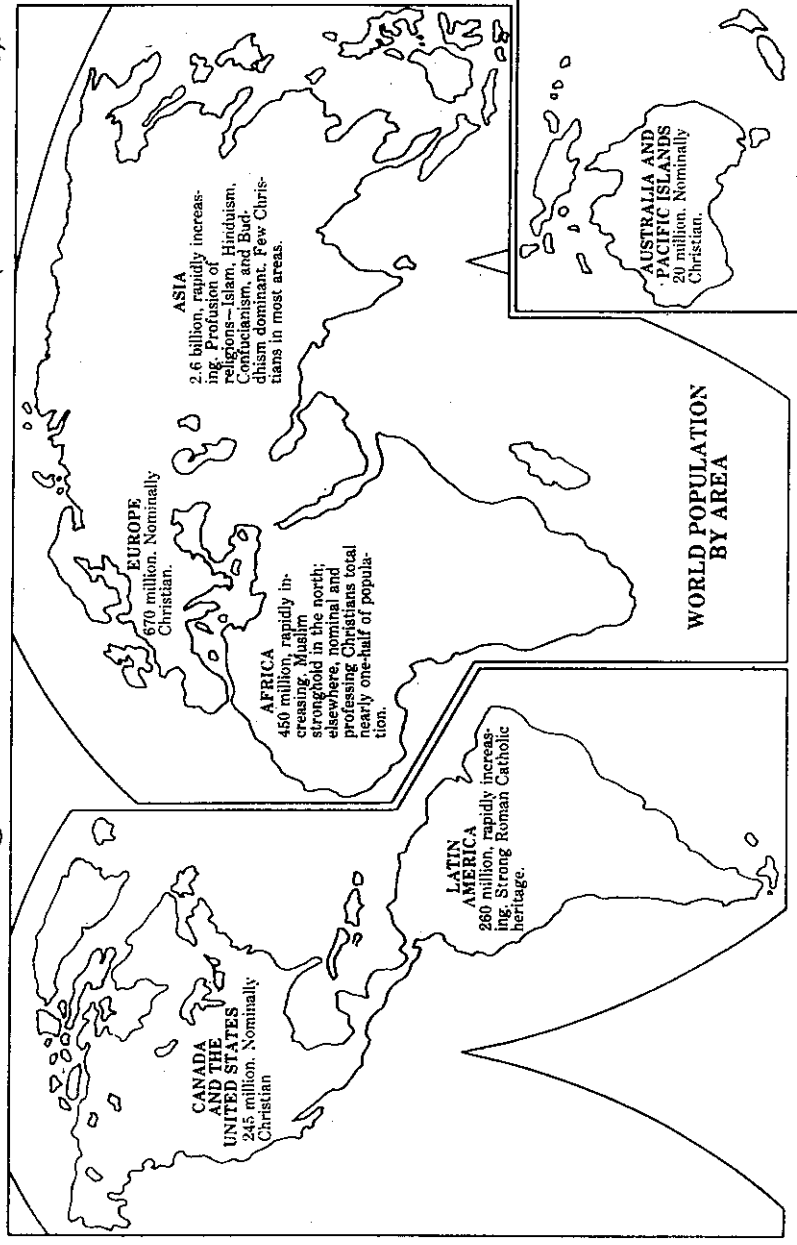
Explain in your own words what this means to you.

8. As Jesus looked on the needs around Him, what did He ask His disciples to pray? Matthew 9:36-38

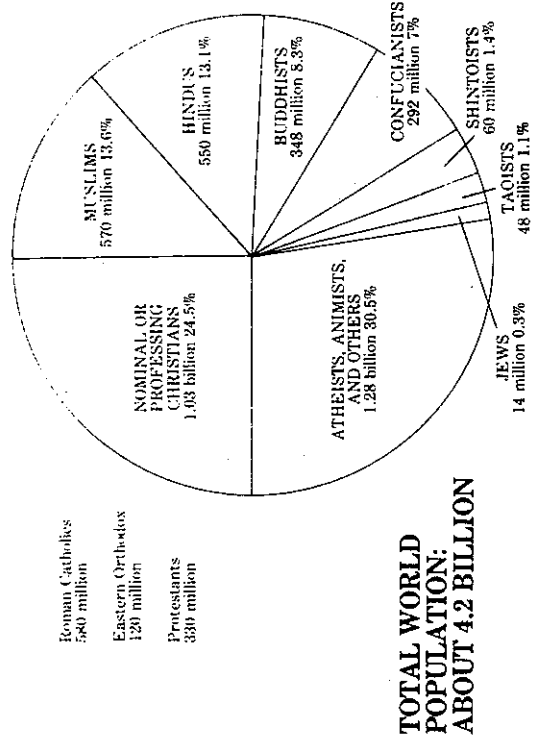
Do you not say, "Four months more and then the harvest"?
I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They
are ripe for harvest.

JOHN 4:35

“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:19).



“The field is the world” (Matthew 13:38).



"SOME PRACTICAL WAYS TO LOOK AT THE FIELDS"

- Use a world map and pray for countries around the world--that people living there would come to Christ.
- Correspond with missionaries. Learn of various mission fields and agencies.
- Read missionary biographies, books on missions, and missionary periodicals.
- Be alert to your own daily contacts with non-Christians.
- Give financially to a Christian worker in another country.

MULTIPLICATION

Praying and giving are two important ways of helping reach the world for Jesus Christ with His gospel. An even more direct way we can be involved is through our personal witness. Now is the time to begin reaching the world for Christ. We must not wait until we think we are fully trained, or even until we feel a personal call. As Christians we have already been called to this task!

9. For what ministry does the Holy Spirit empower us? Acts 1:8
-
-
-

Of course the world will not be reached by the witness of a single individual. God wants us to reach the world in the same way it is populated--by multiplication. Man has carried out God's command to Noah in Genesis 9:1--to multiply physically. In the same way, it is possible to multiply spiritually.

10. Read Paul's instructions to Timothy in II Timothy 2:2.

a. What did Paul tell Timothy to do? _____

b. What kind of man did Paul tell Timothy to invest his life in? _____

Communication passes from one person to another. In this verse, Paul's instruction was passed to Timothy, who was to pass it on to reliable men who would pass it on to others.

As you invest your life in one man and then see him invest his life in the life of another, you will become part of the spiritual multiplication process.

11. None of us knows how long we are going to live. But for the moment, suppose you will live until you are 70 years old. If this were so, how many years do you have left to invest your life in the lives of others?

A Christian should be able to help a younger believer grow at such a pace that in two years the person being helped is ready to help another grow as well. Every two years you would help someone else reach this point. Do you think this is reasonable for your life?

If it is, then in two years you and another person can have started the multiplication process.

- In four years there would be four people.
- In six years there would be eight people.
- In eight years there would be sixteen people, and so on.

Considering how many years you anticipate you can minister, calculate how many people you can affect during the rest of your life.

HOW DO YOU FIT IN?

Jesus loved the world and helped thousands, but He closely trained only twelve men. The ministry of multiplying disciples comes through ministry to individuals. This is the way Paul communicated his life to Timothy (see II Timothy 3:10). We reach the masses through the man.

12. Have you asked God to give you one person with whom you can put II Timothy 2:2 into action? You can help change the world for Jesus Christ by allowing God to reproduce his life through you in the life of another. Specifically, how will you allow God to use you in His plan of spiritual multiplication?

13. Are you investing your life, time, and money with the world in view? What can you do to become more involved in reaching the world with the good news of Jesus Christ?

Remember to pray. Many of us cannot reach other nations on our feet, but we can reach them on our knees.

14. Read II Timothy 3:16-4:8. Relate what Paul says here to your life and to world vision.

Remember These Points:

Using the chapter subtopics as an outline, write your own summary of this chapter.

[illegible]

HOW TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD

by Russ Johnson

Used by permission of the Navigators

How to Know the Will of God

by Russ Johnson

A certain church I know has elective Sunday School classes for their adults. Every three months they choose a new topic to study. The pastor tells me that if they can have someone teach on knowing God's will, they can run that class over and over, and still people sign up for it in droves.

I've spoken at many conferences where part of the afternoons are set aside for workshops on various topics. If you make one of the workshops "Knowing the Will of God," half the people sign up for it even if there are 20 other choices.

These and other experiences have convinced me of two things. People want to know the will of God, and they're confused about it. The Apostle Paul spoke to this dilemma when he wrote, "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is" (Ephesians 5:17). Yet it seems that the thing about which God tells us not to be foolish, is what we are most foolish about.

When God says, "Understand what the Lord's will is," that's a command. This means that we should be extra diligent on this matter of knowing the will of God. Three things are basic to an understanding of God's will. First, a person must be committed to doing God's will. Second, he must realize that God is working in him. Third, he must launch out. If we have those figured out, then everything else about knowing the will of God will line up.

Commit Yourself to Doing God's Will

God does not reveal His will to curiosity seekers. If you are thinking, "God, if you let me know Your will, I'll decide if I can do it," God will not allow you to see it. He doesn't work that way. Jesus outlined God's plan this way: "If a man chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own" (John 7:17). What Jesus is saying is that if you are willing to do, then you will know. This is something the whole of Scripture teaches. If you were to stack up all the verses in the Bible on doing the will of God in one place, and all the verses on knowing the will of God in another, there would be a giant pile of doing, and a skinny little stack on knowing. Because once you're committed to do, knowing comes easy.

One reason so many of us are afraid to commit ourselves to doing the will of God, is that we don't understand the goodness of God. There was a fellow once who had a real problem: he was in love with two girls and didn't know what to do about his dilemma. He thought God could help him out of his confusion, so he told Him, "God, I'll flip

a coin, and You direct it; 'head' it's Jane and 'tails' it's Judy." He flipped a quarter, looked at it, saw that it was "tails," and "OK, God, how about two out of three?"

Now it really doesn't work that way, because once you're committed to do God's will, God will let you know what it is. But it may not be an easy thing, because like the fellow with the two girls, we're afraid God will pick the wrong one. Jeremiah had this attitude, and he was an obedient, godly man. About to be carried off to captivity with the rest of disobedient Judah, Jeremiah told God that he didn't like the idea. He thought God was making a mistake. But God said, "Jeremiah, you will be in Babylon for a lifetime. But then, I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and bring you home again. For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:10,11,12).

God has that future and hope for everyone who is a Christian, for His will is "good, pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:2). Isn't it amazing that this is what God wants for us? You can figure out some things that are good, like ice cream, and you can figure out things that are pleasing, like doing well in your job. But there is no possibility apart from the will of God that you can figure out what's perfect. If I were to ask you if your current job was perfect, you'd have to answer, "I don't know, because I don't know what it would be like to do this or that or another thing." You don't know, but God does. He sorts through all the other options. If we seek to do His will, He says, "My will for you will be good, pleasing and perfect, because I know what the other options are."

The Bible has had much to say about what God's thinking is, and it's generally different from ours. I saw this demonstrated at a seminar recently. We asked everyone in the meeting, "If you want to know the will of God in some area of your life, write down the things about which you'd like to know it." We collected the responses, and the answers fell into two categories, vocation and location: What should I be doing and where should I be going? But those things are hardly mentioned in the Bible. God has a much higher goal for us than that. Paul gives us an idea of what God's plan for us is like: "He chose us in Him [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight...in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:4,12).

God is not as concerned about where we live or what we do for a living, as he is about what we are. You and I get this turned around. We think about programs; God thinks about people. The disciples had the same kind of problem when the neighborhood kids came chasing after Jesus. "Get those kids out of here," the distraught disciples cried. But Jesus said, "Wait a minute, let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14).

God has a different perspective on people than we do. Our big concern, often, is a career. We think about material things. But God is thinking about manifesting His Spirit in our lives, so that we

can have peace, joy, patience, and the other fruits of the Spirit. We think about power; He thinks about purity. We think about a career; He thinks about character. His thinking is totally different from ours because He is far more concerned about what we are.

You might say, "You can't just sit around and be holy and pure and wise, and sit in your room and never go out." That's right, you can't. But God has a plan for our lives that reaches everything we do, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). This seems to say it doesn't matter so much what you do, as what you are in the midst of your doing. If you specialize on being the kind of person God wants you to be, He will lead you into activities He has planned for you.

When you read the honor roll of faith in Hebrews 11, you discover many people who accomplished something. Did you know that only one of them was a preacher? There are farmers, kings, shepherds, even a prostitute, but only one preacher, Samuel, and he was asleep when he was called. God looks at the character of people, and when that is right in His sight, then He is pleased!

Once you decide you want to do God's will, there will be some fears, because we're generally afraid to commit ourselves to Him. We tend to think, "Man, if I tell God I'll do anything, He'll send me out to be a little, green, shriveled-up missionary in Africa." But if God would want you to do that, you'll be the happiest in that situation because His will is good, pleasing and perfect.

So commit yourself to doing the will of God.

Believe that God Is Working

"It is God who works in you to will and do what pleases Him." (Philippians 2:13). If you are committed to doing the will of God, you can conclude that God is working in you. I heard a man say once - that angels can do what they please, because what they want to do pleases God. In the same way, committed Christians can do as they please because God is working in them. God gives them the right desires, ideas and everything else. He is inside them, creating the power and desire to do His will. The psalmist knew this, "Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4).

Now that's liberating. And it's completely different from what we normally think. Most of us think we've got to grab hold of God and squeeze His will out of Him. But it doesn't work that way. God is revealing His will to us all the time.

For some people, God reaches down into the subconscious and brings up things. When Jesus said, "He, [the Spirit] will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you" (John 16:14), he spoke, among other things, of the Spirit making God's will known.

In another way, the Spirit has direct input into our lives through the Bible. When we read, study, memorize, meditate on it, or just hear someone preach it, the Spirit has direct input to our brains. While Daniel was in captivity, he was reading the Scriptures one day (most probably in Jeremiah) and discovered that Jerusalem would be in captivity for 70 years. After some quick calculations Daniel figured out that the 70 years were up, so he said, "I'd better do something about this," and began praying and fasting. God answered him through an angel, "Your request has been heard in heaven and was answered the very first day you began to fast before the Lord and pray for understanding; that very day I was sent here to meet you" (Daniel 10:12 LB). Because Daniel read it in the Scripture, thought about it, prayed about it and desired to do something, God started to work.

There are other ways in which God works that are just as important. You may be at a friend's house, and hear of a need, and start wondering, "Does God want me to do something about this?" That's what happened to Nehemiah. Nehemiah was a captive in a foreign land, and the king's trusted servant.

Some people came by from Judah, and being a faithful Jew, Nehemiah asked them, "How is it down there in Jerusalem?"

They replied, "Terrible. The walls are broken down, the gates are burned with fire, and the people are disgruntled."

Nehemiah thought, "Well, I'd better do something about this. So, he started to pray, and the whole Book of Nehemiah is about how he got God's leading, how the king provided the supplies and how Nehemiah went to Palestine and rebuilt Jerusalem's walls.

Another way the Spirit can lead you is through your seeing for yourself. "Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest," Jesus said to His disciples. They had been out among the people all that time, and just didn't see the needs. The burden that Bob Pierce has and the reason that World Vision was founded was that Bob took a trip to the Far East after World War 2 and saw the tremendous needs that were there. And he has spent his life trying to make people see the physical needs of the world.

Still another way is one that doesn't get much credit these days-- your own brain. Dawson Trotman, the founder of The Navigators, used to say, "The Lord gave you a lot of leading when He gave you a brain." But many people don't use it enough. It may seem to be unspiritual to say it these days, but try using your brain. If you're faced with a decision, make up a list and think through each alternative. Suppose you are married, and are trying to decide what vocation to get into. Your first question should be, "How can I support my family?"

A friend of mine was interviewing for a job in Jamaica with a banana processing plant. The personnel man, after a few preliminary questions, leaned over the desk to my friend, looked him straight in the eye, and said, "We're looking for people who will give their lives to bananas."

My friend leaned back, rubbed his jaw, and thought, "Bananas?...Nuts!" and that's what he told the interviewer when he turned down that job.

That may seem funny, but many people are giving their lives to much less. Think through your alternatives. Plug in the brain and ask yourself, "Is this what is needed? Is this what I should do?"

We would see wonderful results if we would just deal with the thoughts that continue in our minds in a godly manner. But most people don't. Let's suppose that a thought came to you that it would be nice to visit Israel and the Bible lands. You should then ask some questions-- "When should I go?" "What should I learn when I get there?" "What preparations do I need to make?" "God, who should I go with?" But, what is invariably our response to that thought? "I can't do that, I can't afford it." The thought is dismissed.

Or, how many people have thought more than once about going to the mission field for three months to see what it's like? How many of them have gone? If this is something you've been thinking about, start asking questions, because if God has put those thoughts into your mind, He probably wants you to do something with them.

I have a friend whom I asked to substitute teach a Sunday School class for six weeks. He said, "Russ, I'd really like to, but... well, let me tell you something. Two years ago my wife and I started thinking about things we'd like to do, and I told her and God that what I'd really like to do is be a teacher. So I prayed. And, Russ, maybe I shouldn't have prayed that. You can't imagine how busy God has kept me."

He started going to school, just two classes a week. Then the college found out he was so good that he's only taking one class a week now--and teaching the other. "Russ," he concluded, "I'd like to substitute, but I'm too busy teaching." So many of us have a desire in our hearts, but we never tell God that He has the right to go ahead and fulfill that in our lives. But He wants to.

When I was a senior at Iowa State University, a friend and I were walking down the sidewalk, and we asked each other, "Why don't we evangelize the whole campus before school is out?" Now that was January--our senior year. Since it was a long walk to our destination, we discussed it. How could we get to the off-campus students? The fraternities? The dorms? We just let ideas run wild. But when we got home, we wrote some of them down. Then we talked about them with some other Christians, and decided, "Let's do it!"

We didn't quite make it. But we did have 42 dormitory and fraternity meetings, and hundreds of students got to hear the Gospel. And we did it through other students. Now we could have said during our walk, "It's a good idea, but it will never work here. We don't have a full-time Christian worker, and we don't have the money." But as it turned out, once we committed ourselves to doing it, God raised up many workers, and all the money we needed.

As thoughts come into your mind and continue, ask God, "Do You really want me (or us) to do this?" Most of us just let those thoughts collapse--and God looks for someone else to stand in the gap.

Someone is sure to ask at this point, "Doesn't Satan bring thoughts into your mind?" Yes, he does, but they don't have to mislead us. If we are committed to doing God's will and grounded in the Word of God, we will be able to discern which thoughts are from God and which are from the devil.

Launch Out

Now that you are committed to doing the will of God and realize that God is at work in you by various means, what next? Launch out. Move out. Do it. Press forward. Take some action. Here's a little formula: P-P-P/A-S-K. Two ways of saying the same thing.

Pray--Peace--Press

The Apostle Paul said, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6). The first step to take in acting is to pray. And when Paul said pray about everything, that's just what he meant.

Second, after you pray, determine if you have peace. Paul also said, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:15). Another translation puts it this way, "Let the peace that comes from God be the umpire in your heart." An umpire is charged with the responsibility of deciding. He views whatever action takes place, and decides what effect this should make in the game. In the same way, once you have prayed about something and have peace, then act--launch out. If you don't have peace, then you'd better pray some more.

Third, once you've prayed, and have peace, then press ahead. Again Paul is our encourager in this. "One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me" (Philippians 3:13, 14). Some people say, "Do something, even if it's wrong." Perhaps a better way of saying it would be, "Do something, you might be right."

When you do launch out on something, one of two things will happen. One is that the opportunity will close flat. If that happens, you say, "Thanks, God, I guess it wasn't Your will." Then back up. The other possibility is that the door will open, and resources will be supplied for you to accomplish whatever you have launched out to do.

Many people hesitate at the point of action because they have an ungrounded fear that they will get out of the will of God. But when God closes a door, that's leading, not a lack of leading. If you've told people what your plan is, and they ask you what happened to it, just smile and say, "It wasn't the will of God." If anything, only your pride will be hurt, and that's no great virtue to cultivate anyway.

Making a mistake is no sin. Sin is sinful, but mistakes aren't. When you're committed to doing God's will, and you have prayed and have peace, then press ahead.

Ask--Seek--Knock

Jesus gave His disciples some guidelines on knowing and doing the will of God that correspond to Pray--Peace--Press. He said, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Luke 11:9). Ask--Seek--Knock.

First, ask. This is prayer and remembering what you pray. Usually, people advise you to pray, and leave it at that, but consider what happens whenever you forget what you pray.

Gideon was hiding from his enemies when God said to him, "Gideon, I've chosen you to deliver Israel from the Midianites" (see Judges 6:14). Now Gideon didn't know quite what to make of this pronouncement, so he decided to ask God to confirm to him that it was He who was calling him. "I'll put a fleece outside, and tomorrow if the floor is dry but the fleece is wet, I'll know that it's you." Suppose Gideon forgot what he prayed. Suppose he mixed up the order, "Let's see, was the floor supposed to be wet, or the fleece?"

Sometimes you forget what you pray because the circumstances change so drastically that you may think, "I didn't pray that." I used to sell real estate on a part-time basis. One year business was especially slow--I was working hard, but producing little. So I decided I would seek God's will about quitting. I prayed and told God, "If You bless this month, I'll quit at the end of it." That was May, and as it happened, I sold more in May than I sold in the whole previous year.

At the same time, negotiations for buying out our company were in progress. The potential new owner asked me, "If I buy this company, will you stay?"

I said, "Oh, no, I've already quit."

He said, "What?"

So I told him, "I told God that if He blessed the last month, I'd quit."

The man said, "Well, you got the wrong word. That's a leading to stay." But it wasn't. God had shown me His will clearly by answering what I'd asked.

Second, "Seek and you will find." I believe this means seeking information. This is where you use your head again. We are advised, "By the wise counsel thou shalt make thy war, and in multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 24:6 KJV). That word safety can also be translated "rescue, deliverance, victory." Now most people think that counsel is good for guidance, but this verse says "safety," because information is a safety factor.

At first glance, almost every opportunity you will come across will look golden. If you're disgruntled, don't like your job, or don't

like your Christianity, things look pure roses on the other side of the fence. Any opportunity will look like a bowl of peaches to you. But you know what's inside peaches--pits. So you need to investigate those pits before you bite into the fruit. You need a balance of information--get both sides of the story before you accept it.

I know scores of Christians who have told me of the great deal they've found--a pyramiding company. They figure that by working two years, they can start money coming in that will keep coming while they go to the mission field. Sounds good, but I don't know one of them who have made it to the field. In fact, I only know one man who has even made a living at it, let alone have it support him after he quit. So, those are the facts, right? No. They're only part of the facts. What you need to do is go beyond the appearances--ask questions that will give you the two sides of the story. If you get some well-balanced information, you'll decide "no" before you ever have to launch.

Now if you're going out to seek information, go to the people who have what you want. In many cases this means going to the person who is what you want to be. For example, if your pastor has never been in business, I wouldn't ask him for advice about going into business. On the other hand, I wouldn't ask the most successful businessman in town to advise you on growing spiritually if he isn't a Christian. Figure out who has the best information, and go to that person.

Some people are afraid to ask advice from unbelievers, but I think that they can often come up with as good or better information than many Christians because they get information everywhere. And information is amoral. It's neither right nor wrong; it's just there.

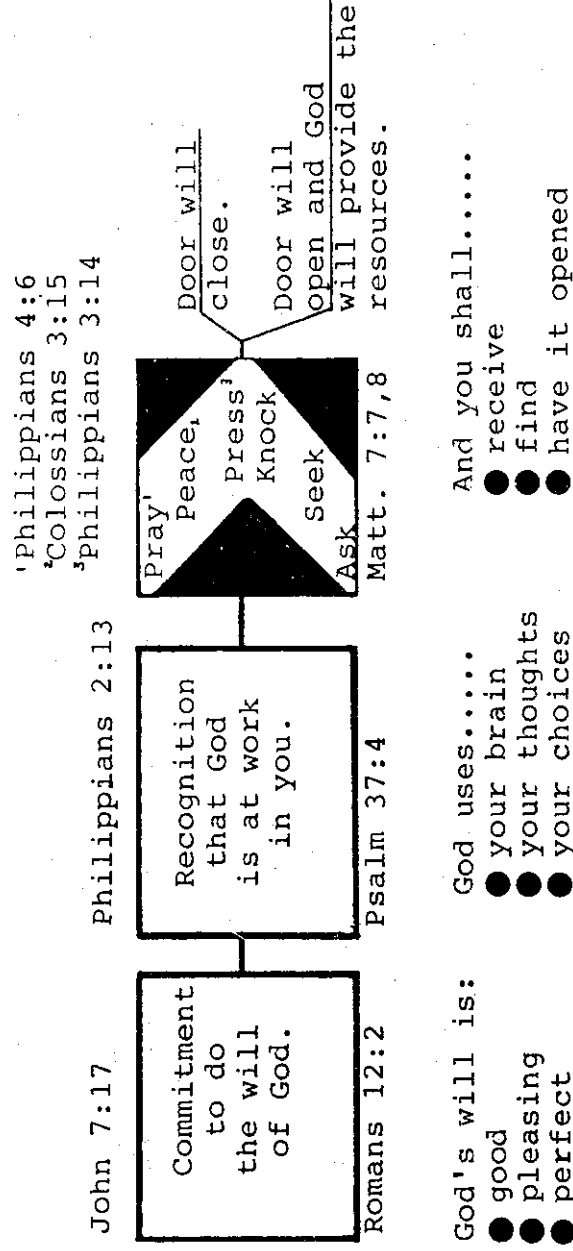
Information does not cancel out God's role. Solomon said, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). Lean is translated from the Hebrew word which means to "support one's self." The meaning of the verse could well be, "Do not support yourself with [make decisions based on] your own understanding [yourself alone]. Allow God the decision-making power; He'll close the door if He wants to.

Third, Jesus said, "Knock and the door will be opened to you." Once you've sought information, the time comes to knock. Moses and the children of Israel were stuck on the banks of the Red Sea. In front of them was an impassable obstacle. Behind them was Pharaoh's army. Moses declared, "Relax, folks; never again will you see those Egyptians." Now the Israelites had no weapons. They didn't even know how to fight. They'd been in slavery for years. How many of us would have advised them to stop praying while they were in that spot? But God said to Moses, "Quit praying and get the people moving" (see Exodus 14:1, LB). The time comes to move out. After you've prayed and sought information, launch out. You'll never know if it was the will of God unless you do it.

Taking initiative in a thing as crucial as doing God's will would be a frightening thing if God were not watching out for us. So one of

the things I've done before God is to tell Him that I always want to be in His will. "God, if You have a file that you look through whenever You think about me, put a red card in there that says, 'Russ wants to be in Your will.'" No matter what I think at the minute, or what trials or troubles come my way, there's one thing I want and that's to be in Your will." So I go ahead with the confidence that He will protect me.

What we have looked at so far can be seen in perspective in the following chart.



What to Do with the Unexpected

What do you do when totally out of the blue something comes along and upsets your well-balanced Christian life? When you're trying to make a decision, it's relatively easy to see where you are, but when something happens that you don't expect, then you find yourself off the chart. Every time you start to think about the facts, you realize that you don't want any.

I came home from work one day, and my wife told me that our neighbor had been fired from his job. His wife had been over and she was lower than a duck's instep. She didn't know how to cope with her husband's setback. I went down to their house after dinner, and there was gloom everywhere. "Did you like the job?" I asked him.

"Yes," he replied. "I've been there for five years, and it's the best job I've ever had. A couple weeks ago another fellow was talking about quitting and I thought to myself how much of a mistake that would be for me. I could see the company growing and I was growing with it. But the boss suddenly walked in today and said I was fired. With hardly any explanation either."

So how do you fit that into God's will? You don't--He does. I asked this man, "Do you believe that all things work together for good for those who love God?"

He answered, "Yes, I guess so."

I said, "OK, God has allowed this to happen. The Bible also says, 'In everything give thanks' (1 Thessalonians 5:18)."

I continued, "Now even though you don't know how this is all going to turn out, you at least know it is God's will that you give thanks. So every time you think about it tomorrow, and you'll think about it a thousand times, say, 'Thanks, God,' because He is allowing it to happen as part of His good and perfect plan. Then you also ought to be honest with your friends. If people ask you what you're doing, tell them you got fired. Then tell them you believe it is all part of God's perfect plan, and it's going to work out for your good because God promised it."

The next day, my neighbor's boss called me up and told me that he was amazed at this man's attitude--it was completely changed. He was actually thankful and rejoicing, and the boss couldn't understand it. So I had to explain it all to him.

Later, my neighbor sold his house at a nice profit at a time when it was difficult to sell homes, moved, and God gave him a new job in the same field that was far better than the one from which he had been fired. God's will is good and perfect.

This can be the experience of your life as well. Whether you have plenty of time to consider alternatives in making a decision and can go through the process, or whether it is a sudden happening, you can know the will of God. But I'd like to warn you--sudden things are going to happen to you. Determine now that you will believe that God has a better plan for you than any boss, professor, organization or person.

Commit yourself to doing the will of God; realize that God is already working in your life; then press forward, launching out in what seems best after prayer and seeking His peace, thanking God for whatever comes that His will for your life is good, pleasing and perfect.

ETS 3/14

Date _____

Assignment Sheet

Name _____

Topic _____ Discipleship

Lesson _____ Interpersonal Relationships

Class _____

	Completed	
	Yes	No
Lecture		
Review "Interpersonal Relationships"		
Bible Study		
Do "Introduction to Thessalonians"		
PSMA		
DO 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Acceptance		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Share Gospel with non-Christian.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Galatians 6:9-10		
Matthew 5:16		
Review previous verses.		

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Standard for Interpersonal Relationships

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus sets forth His will and standard for our relationship to others. If I am to be His disciple, I must be willing to conform to His standard in my interaction with other people.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 5:43-48

In comparison to our daily experience, this standard seems very high. Most of us who are honest have to admit that there are people we simply do not like. As long as they keep their distance, we can get along pretty well. But Jesus says that this is not good enough. We are to do the following.

- Love our enemies
- Bless those who curse us
- Do good to those who hate us
- Pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us

Notice these words above--they are action words. We are not to simply avoid our enemies passively, but

actively seek their good, loving them, praying for them, speaking kindly of them and doing acts of kindness for them. This is the way of discipleship.

Let me ask you--are you loving, blessing, doing good to and praying for those you do not like or relate well to? Or are you simply waiting passively for the other person to make the first move? Are pride and the fear of losing face more important to you than obeying God?

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 13:34-35

Love--A Mark of Disciple

Jesus makes it very clear in this passage that an unmistakable mark of discipleship is love for one another. As long as there is friction and unrest between Christian brethren, we cannot call ourselves his disciples. Love is to be the hallmark--the outstanding identification mark--of the disciples of Christ.

I John puts it even stronger.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him that he who loveth God love his brother also.

I John 4:20-21

Love--A Command

Love, therefore, is not a feeling--it is a command. It is an act of the will to obey Christ. When we begin to act in loving ways to others, we will often find that our emotions follow, and we begin to genuinely like them.

Remember: To act toward others as Christ has commanded when you do not feel like it is not hypocrisy. It is obedience.

If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you

still angry--get over it quickly; for when you are angry you give a mighty foothold to the devil.

NOTES

Ephesians 4:26 (LB)

This passage says that when a problem with my brother is more than 24 hours old, I am in sin. If we are to be disciples of Christ, we must begin to actively deal with our interpersonal relationships daily.

How to Solve Relationship Problems

The First Move is My Responsibility

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Matthew 5:23-24

Here Jesus commands that if I remember that a brother has been hurt by something I have said or done, I must first go to him and be reconciled before I continue my service to God. It is my responsibility to take the initiative when I have hurt someone else.

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Matthew 18:15

It is also my responsibility to take the initiative when I have been hurt by someone else. This is often where many people begin to protest. They rationalize that if the other person offended me, then he should make the first move. Often the injured person sits and sulks for weeks, months, or even years waiting for the other to initiate a reconciliation. Meanwhile, bitterness and bad feelings continue to grow.

Watch out that no bitterness takes root among you, for as it springs up it causes deep trouble, hurting many in their spiritual lives.

Hebrews 12:15b

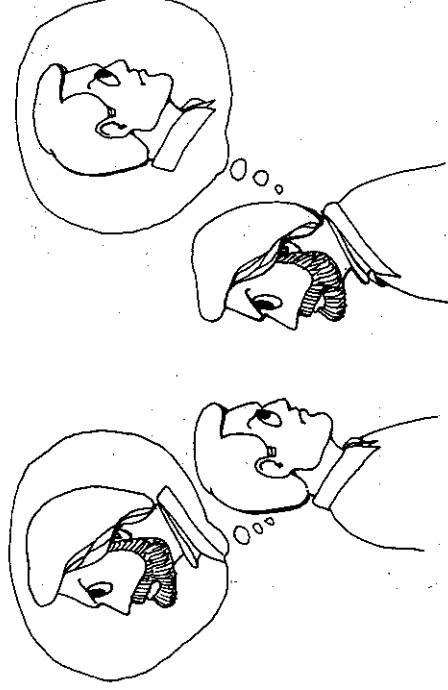
Jesus' will, therefore, is that even if my brother sins against me, I should take the initiative and make the first move toward reconciliation. This is

often very hard on our pride. Confrontation is not easy. But the disciple is commanded to always make the first move.

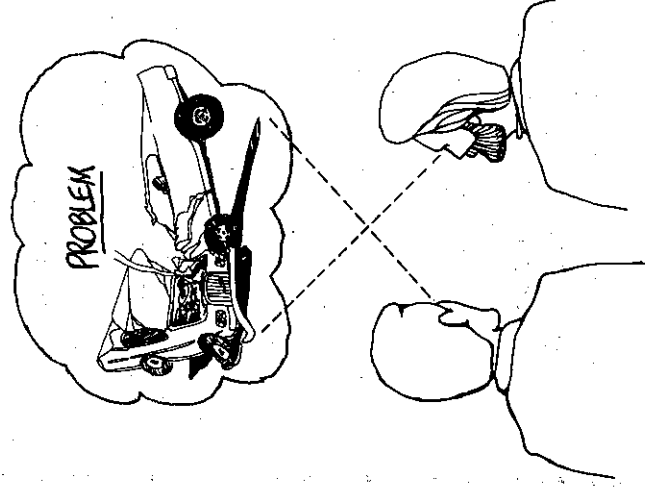
NOTES

Get the Proper Focus on Problems

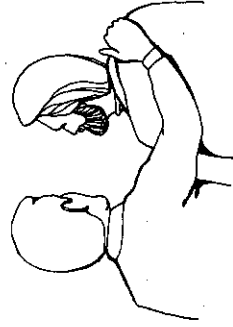
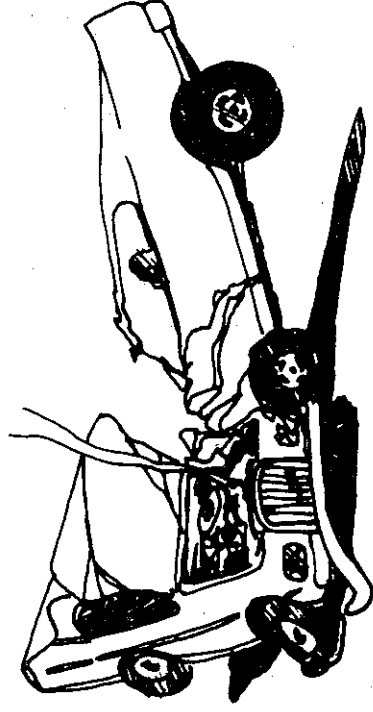
People often see each other as the problem--this is wrong. It is usually something someone has said or done or even because of what he represents. We must learn to separate people from the offense and deal with the offense.



Focusing on the problem and not the person is a step in the right direction, for now we are not blaming the person, but concentrating on the problem. However, this still is not completely satisfactory because each person normally tries to defend his side of the problem.



The best focus is to try to see the problem from the other person's point of view and solve it through apology and forgiveness as brothers in Christ.



Examine Your Own Life for Uncommitted Rights

If there are areas of my life that have never been surrendered to the Lord, they will continually surface as problems in interpersonal relationships. For example, if I have not surrendered my time to the Lord, every interruption or demand upon my time by my boss, my wife, or my children becomes a potential point of friction. However, if I have surrendered this area to the Lord, it becomes His prerogative to sovereignly use my time as He wills. I know He will not allow any interruptions that are not from Him and I do not resent people.

Have a Spirit of Humility and Restoration

In Paul's letter to the Galatians, he admonishes them to gently correct those who were having difficulties. We should humbly go to our brother or sister in Christ with a desire to restore him or her to fellowship. To belittle them with a superior attitude won't accomplish anything. Paul warns us to be careful because one day we may face the same problem.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Galatians 6:1

Priority Relationships

NOTES

God

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

Colossians 1:18

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matthew 6:33

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 15:7

Jesus is to have pre-eminence, His kingdom is to be our first priority, and we are to be found daily abiding in Christ. This is the kind of relationship God wants us to have with Him.

Husband/Wife

This is the world's most important human relationship because it is the building block of society and is to show the world a picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church. The human family is God's plan for building His Kingdom. The husband and father is to be the head of the home. The wife is to be the help-meet and in submission to her husband's authority. Together they are to bear children and bring them up in the fear of God--thus adding to his Kingdom.

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.

Ephesians 5:25

For the relationship to succeed, there must be only one head--the man. He must rule his household in love so that his wife finds it pleasant to give herself to his authority. Problems need to be identified and resolved--not checkmated. Next to God, this relationship is to have top priority.

I Timothy 3:5 says that if a man cannot rule his home, he is not to rule the church. A Scriptural home is a prerequisite for leadership in the Kingdom of God.

Parent/Child

Children, obey your parents in the Lord:
for this is right.

Ephesians 6:1

Honor thy father and mother, which is the
first commandment with promise.

Ephesians 6:2

And ye fathers, provoke not your children
to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture
and admonition of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4

A child's concept of God is greatly influenced by the kind of relationship he has with his parents since they are the authority God has placed over them. If a child is not taught to live under the authority of his parent's biblical commandments, it is not likely that he will live under God's commandments when he grows older. If a child is not loved and cared for by his parents, he will probably have difficulty understanding and receiving God's love as an adult. So it is of utmost importance that the parent-child relationship be healthy and Scriptural.

A child is someone who is not a mature adult. God has therefore placed him under the protective authority of his parents and has commanded him to obey his parents in everything short of apostasy. When a person becomes an adult, he is free to make his own choices, but he is still commanded to always show respect and honor to his parents.

The parent-child relationship works best when both parent and child are willing to play their Christian roles; but even if one party is not fulfilling his role, this does not alleviate the responsibility of the disciple to fulfill his part of God's command.

Employer/Employee

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto

Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Ephesians 6:5-9

God commanded man, "Six days shalt thou labor." Working is one of God's commands. Now He tells us the kind of standard we are to have for our work.

Employees

- Obey the boss.
- Singleness of heart--Wholeheartedness.
- Work as unto Christ, not men-pleasers.
- God will reward you.

Employers

- Treat employees as you would want to be treated.
- Remember--you have a Master in heaven.

You should be the best employee the boss has--or if you are an employer, you should be an example of fairness and kindness to all under you. If Christian principles are operating in our lives, our working testimony should be very effective in winning others to Christ.

Remember: God has us in the business world and we are to be as much of a testimony in the way we work as we are in speech.

Christian/Non-Christian

- A Christian should work on developing friendships with non-Christians.
- Be interested in the whole man and not just his soul.
- Lift him up rather than let him pull you down.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, where-with shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

Matthew 5:13-16

Christian/Christian

See the first two points listed above concerning relationships within the Body of Christ.

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 13:34-35

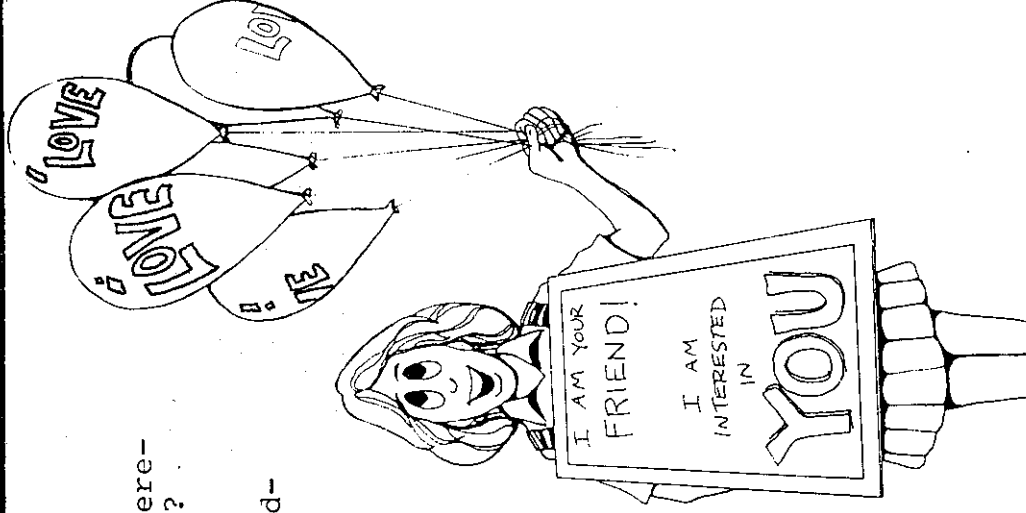
Male/Female

Treat the older women as mothers, and the girls as your sisters, thinking pure thoughts about them.

I Timothy 5:2 (LB)

This verse shows us that until God gives us a life partner, we are to have brother-sister relationships with members of the opposite sex--caring for them in Christ and conducting ourselves with purity. Below are some points to remember in boy-girl relationships.

- Treat young women (or men) as you would want someone to treat your sister (or brother).
- Ask God for a life partner of His choice.



NOTES

- Keep yourself pure for the one God has chosen for you.
- Make sure the one you marry is a believer.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

II Corinthians 6:14

- Study principles on "How to determine the will of God."

EPISTLE TO THESSALONICA

Most New Testament books are letters ("epistles") written to a person or a church. In order to have the best understanding of an epistle, as well as its chapters and verses, you should get the background-- find out who wrote the letter, to whom it was written and its general theme. This first study covers these points.

WHERE WAS THESSALONICA?

Begin to develop the habit of locating places mentioned in Scriptures on a map (many Bibles have a map section at the back) or a small Bible atlas. On the map of ancient Greece, (known then as Macedonia in the north and Achaia in the south) look for Thessalonica. Thessalonica (now Salonika) was located on a great northern highway stretching all the way from Rome to the eastern Mediterranean countries. It was a leading city of Macedonia in Paul's day (Paul lived until about 66. A.D.).

HOW THE CHURCH BEGAN

Bible historians tell us that this church was founded about 50 or 51 A.D. The story of its beginning is found in Acts 17:1-9, 13. Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions.

1. When Paul arrived in Thessalonica? (Acts 17:1-3)

Where did he begin to preach? _____

What was his message? _____

2. Describe the response to Paul's preaching. (Acts 17:4) _____

3. What did the unbelieving Jews accuse Paul and Silas of doing?

(Acts 17:5,6) _____

4. What did these Jews do when they heard the Gospel was being

preached in Berea? (Acts 17:13)

5. In spite of this persecution, how did some of the Thessalonians respond to the message Paul preached? (I Thessalonians 2:13)
-
6. How did Paul describe this church which began in the midst of persecution? (I Thessalonians 1:6,7)
-

WHO WROTE THE EPISTLE AND WHY?

Author: The Apostle Paul wrote this letter to a new, struggling church which was suffering much persecution. Because of deep concern for them, Paul had sent Timothy to Thessalonica to strengthen these young Christians. Timothy brought word that the church was doing well, but there was grief and confusion about believers who had died. Paul writes to further instruct them on Christ's coming, to assure them of his interest and prayers and to urge them to live worthy lives. He probably wrote from Corinth in 51 or 52 A.D.

Theme: Live godly lives, expecting Christ's return.

THE OVERALL VIEW

An understanding of the overall teaching of this letter will make each verse more meaningful as you study. Read the entire book through once or twice--each time at one sitting. As you read, list below the verses in each chapter which encourage godly living and those which refer to Christ's second coming. You may want to add the main thought of the passages you list.

Verses on the
Second Coming

Main Thought

Verses encouraging
Godly Living

Main Thought



NINTH MONTH

FIRST YEAR		NEW TESTAMENT		SECOND YEAR
DATE	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT		OLD TESTAMENT
SEPT				
1	II SAMUEL 3	PHILIPPIANS 2:1-13	JEREMIAH 18,19	
2	4,5	2:14-30	20,21	
3	6	3	22	
4	7	4	23	
5	8,9	COLOSSIANS 1	24	
6	10	2	25	
7	11	3	26	
8	12	4	27,28	
9	13	I THESS. 1	29,30	
10	14	2	31	
11	15	3	32	
12	16	4	33,34	
13	17	5	35	
14	18	II THESS. 1	36,37	
15	19	2	38,39	
16	20	3	40,41	
17	21	I TIMOTHY 1	42,43	
18	22	2	44,45	
19	23	3	46,47	
20	24	4	48	
21	I KINGS 1	5	49	
22	2	6	50	
23	3	II TIMOTHY 1	51:1-33	
24	4	2	51:34-64	
25	5	3	52	
26	6	4	LAM. 1	
27	7:1-26	TITUS 1	2	
28	7:27-51	2	3	
29	8:1-34	3	4,5	
30	8:35-66	PHILEMON 1	EZEKIEL 1,2	

TENTH MONTH

DATE	FIRST YEAR		NEW TESTAMENT		SECOND YEAR	
	OCT	OLD TESTAMENT			OLD TESTAMENT	
1		I KINGS 9	JOHN	1:1-28	EZEKIEL 3	
2		10		1:29-51	4,5	
3		11		2	6,7	
4		12		3	8,9	
5		13		4:1-26	10	
6		14		4:27-54	11	
7		15		5:1-24	12	
8		16		5:25-47	13	
9		17		6:1-24	14,15	
10		18		6:25-34	16	
11		19		6:35-71	17	
12		20		7:1-9	18,19	
13		21		7:10-31	20	
14		22:1-23		7:32-53	21	
15		22:24-53		8:1-38	22	
16		II KINGS 1		8:39-59	23	
17		2		9	24	
18		3		10:1-30	25	
19		4		10:31-42	26,27	
20		5		11:1-37	28	
21		6		11:38-57	29,30	
22		7		12:1-36	31	
23		8		12:37-50	32	
24		9		13:1-20	33	
25		10		13:21-38	34,35	
26		11		14	36	
27		12		15	37	
28		13		16	38	
29		14		17	39	
30		15		18:1-14	40	
31		16		18:15-40	41	

ACCEPTANCE

by Walt Henrichsen

Used by permission of the Navigators

Acceptance

by Walt Henrichsen

Acceptance is one of today's popular terms. But it is not a new subject. Paul's message to the Roman church in Romans 14:1-15:1-7 deals with three relationships which involve acceptance. These three intertwining relationships are as relevant today as they were when Romans was written.

First, there is my acceptance of myself--an extremely difficult thing. Second, there is God's acceptance of me--an incomprehensible thing. And third, there is my acceptance of others--a matter of the will. These three are inseparable.

Paul discusses these three relationships in terms of convictions (Romans 14:1-12), consideration (Romans 14:13-21), and concern (Romans 15:1-7).

Convictions

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God (Romans 14:1-12).

There are two categories of things in the economy of God--essentials and nonessentials. The first are absolutes and the latter are relative. Absolutes are part of the moral mandate of God. The Christian

can have only one response to absolutes--conformity to the commandments of God. There is no question--there is no argument--there is no debate. Obedience has been commanded.

In the other areas Scripture says let everybody be persuaded in his own mind. In Romans 14 the Apostle Paul is talking about this relative category when he says, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean."

There is absolutely nothing wrong with having personal convictions regarding nonessentials. I can have strong convictions in any area that is nonessential in God's economy of things.

The Apostle Paul lists some of these areas. One is eating. Some people say you can't eat any meat, only herbs. Others say you can eat anything that comes your way. Paul says it's all right to have either conviction.

Another example Paul cites is the observance of certain days. Some say every day is alike, while others say certain days are special. Drinking wine is another example. Some are convicted of the need for total abstinence. Others believe a little wine for medicinal purposes is good.

Paul admonishes the Romans to let everybody be persuaded in his own mind.

One of the fruits of acceptance is the right to have these convictions in the nonessentials. However, the Apostle Paul warns of a difficulty. Christians must be careful not to make things that are nonessential moral mandates for others. Christians must avoid insisting that other people adhere to their convictions.

This is a very real problem in the Body of Christ. It is a very real problem in my own life. I have a tendency to confuse the things which are essential with the things which are not essential. For example, I don't drink. I have certain convictions regarding drinking. But I must be careful in my convictions that I don't bar the Lord Jesus Christ entrance into His own church. It was the Lord Jesus who made wine out of water and, in all probability, He drank wine during His ministry here on earth. The Bible says there is nothing wrong with my having convictions regarding drinking, but I have to be very careful not to make moral mandates out of them.

Another example is baptism. I have personal convictions regarding infant baptism. But I have to be careful that I don't insist that you have the same convictions and that I don't make baptism an issue of fellowship. God wants me to accept you even though we differ in the nonessentials.

The Apostle Paul asked, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand...But why dost thou

judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:4,10,12). It is all right to have personal convictions regarding the nonessentials, but Christians must not allow them to be the criteria for accepting one another.

Consideration

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:13-23).

In this passage the Apostle Paul points out that convictions have to be tempered by consideration for others. If a brother who is weaker in the faith (younger in the Lord) than I has genuine hang-ups regarding some things I do, then the Bible says that I must abstain. This is his point in verse 21, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." If my brother is offended by the fact that I eat pork, then Paul says I've got to stop. Or, if he is offended by the glass of sherry that sits on your table, then you've got to stop, because you have to take your brother into consideration.

At the time of Paul's letter to Rome there were pagan temples all over the city. Small groups of believers met together in homes. Some people in these churches were monotheistic--they had worshipped one God all their lives. In the same church might be some people who had been polytheistic all of their lives, but now had come into a proper relationship with the one true God.

Imagine the person who is a little more mature in the Lord and who has always viewed God as one God going to the meat market and finding that beef is \$2 per pound. Then he sees that the temple is selling

the meat that had been offered as sacrifices to its gods for only \$1. So he marches over to the temple where he buys a slab of beef at half price. As he walks out of the temple, a new Christian--just converted from the temple--comes walking by. He is horrified to see that this Christian, a member of the same church, is going to eat meat offered to idols. As a result he has all kinds of problems.

Paul says, "Now, listen. We know that those gods sitting in the temple are no gods. There's only one God--Jehovah God, the Creator of heaven and earth. It is just stone they are offering meat to. There is nothing wrong with eating that meat."

However, the person who is younger in the faith doesn't have that scoped out yet. He may not understand that there is only one God. He may be at a stage in his Christian life where Jesus is the best God, and He is the One Who has to be served. It would be offensive to this brother to eat meat sacrificed to idols. So Paul says don't do it. Don't offend your brother. Don't destroy the work of God for the sake of a piece of meat. Verse 15 says if a brother is grieved with your meat, then you're not walking in love.

In verse 14 Paul says that there is nothing that is wrong in itself. Inanimate objects are neither good nor bad. A glass of alcohol is neither good nor bad. It's amoral. So is a piece of meat. It is how it is used that makes the difference. I am admonished to make sure I am considerate toward the other person as I deal with these things.

However, the Apostle Paul goes on to say that as a mature believer, I have no right to be offended when I see someone else walking out of the temple with a slab of beef under his arm. If it offends somebody else, I can't do it. But if I see somebody else do it, I can't be offended. This is a double-edged sword of responsibility. It's a sword that cuts both ways. If I am offending somebody else, I must stop. Nevertheless, I must not be offended by somebody else's actions in the nonessentials. Whichever way I look at it, I am responsible according to God.

Concern

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me, For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God (Romans 15:1-7).

One of the objectives of Christians is the good of the brethren. The Apostle Paul admonishes the Romans to see things from the other person's point of view--to have his best interest at heart. He cites the Lord Jesus Christ as an example. "For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me" (Psalms 69:9). I was the buffer, says the Lord Jesus. I stood between you and the things that came your way to make sure they didn't hit you. Paul says these things were written in the Scriptures, for understanding. "Wherefore, receive ye one another, even as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (v.7). Paul is saying that there is never any cause for not receiving a brother except when he violates the essentials. Then he should be treated as instructed in Matthew 18. But in the nonessentials there is never any reason for Christians not accepting another and receiving him as a brother in Christ. I am to accept other people in my relationship with them just as God has accepted me in a proper relationship with Himself.

It is hard for me to comprehend how it is possible for me to find acceptance in the presence of God. I know that when I first came to the Cross of Jesus Christ that was my biggest hang-up. I think I kept the fellow that led me to Christ up for about four or five hours talking on that one point. Charles Wesley, the hymn writer, put it this way: "And can it be that I should gain an interest in my Saviour's blood? Died He for me who caused His pain? For me who Him to death pursued? Amazing love. How can it be that Thou my God shouldst die for me?" When you meditate on and ponder this fact it is really in the final analysis, an incomprehensible thought. But notice how God treats it.

Hebrews 4:3 refers to Moses' wilderness experience when God took him out of the land of Egypt and brought him to the land of promise. Kadesh-barnea was the first threshold of entering the Promised Land. The spies went out and came back with an evil report. It was a good land but the sons of Anak were giants. The children of Israel complained and said, "Oh, we wish we could die in the wilderness. What will happen to our children?" God said, "Request granted. In the wilderness you'll die and I'll take care of your children." So for 40 years they wandered around. One by one Moses buried his own generation. In Hebrews 3, Paul says that the reason they didn't go in to the Promised Land was their unbelief. Then he writes, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Hebrews 4:1).

The issue at Kadesh-barnea was not salvation. The issue was fellowship. That is what the Bible calls "the rest of God." Unbroken fellowship with God on a day-by-day basis. God says that they had broken fellowship with Him for one reason--they didn't believe His words.

One of the things that really angers God in the Scriptures is a lack of faith. Unbelief. He can tolerate a lot, but when He comes across

boldfaced refusal to believe His Word, He really gets angry. This is evident in the ministry of Jesus with His disciples. "Where is your faith?" Unbelief really bothers Him. In Hebrews 4:9-11 Paul says that there is a rest for the people of God today. There is still a rest for twentieth-century Christians. That's fellowship with God on a day-by-day basis.

In Hebrews 4:10,11 the writer admonishes Christians to do two things. First, "For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works..." That's the first thing Christians have to do to get into the rest. They have to cease from their own works. It seems to me that that's the work of self-effort--building my own ladder into the Kingdom of heaven. The second thing he says seems to be antithetical to that, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest..." In one verse he says to stop working and in the next he says to labor. I think the labor of verse 11 is the labor of belief. The labor of faith. It is hard for me to believe God. I don't know why but I have to work at faith. These are the two prerequisites for entering into His rest. I have to stop the work of my self-effort and I have to labor to walk by faith.

Then he says, "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:12,13). For a long time I couldn't understand those verses. I wondered what they were doing in a passage pertaining to rest?

But then I began to understand. Suppose I were able to read every thought you have in your mind. As I look eyeball to eyeball, you know that I know exactly what you are thinking. I know every motive, every intent and every purpose of your heart. How would you feel around me? Well, chances are excellent that you would feel around me that same way I'd feel around you if I thought you could do that with me. I'd pack up and leave. I'd try to avoid you.

The Bible says that that's exactly the way it is with God. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." What the Bible is saying is that the jig is up. God sees you the way you are. You are exposed. There is no place to hide. There is not a thought you have ever had, there is not a motive you have ever had, there is nothing that goes on deep inside that the living God doesn't know about. Now, why don't you try to avoid God? If I were able to have that kind of relationship with you, you would try to avoid me. Why don't you try to avoid God? The writer to the Hebrews says there are three reasons.

The first reason why you don't have to be embarrassed and seek to avoid the presence of God is because you have Jesus Christ as your high priest. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our

profession" (Hebrews 4:14). Probably the best example of the role of a high priest in today's culture is that of the defense lawyer who stands selflessly before the judge and pleads the cause of the defendant. That is the role that Jesus plays for you in the presence of God. He is your defense attorney.

The second reason you don't have to feel embarrassed and flee is that Jesus empathizes with you. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). There has never been a temptation that has entered into your life that Jesus Christ hasn't gone through. Not a one. He knows your plight.

The third reason is that you are completely accepted into the presence of God. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). In the ancient courts only two people had the privilege of entering unannounced into the presence of the monarch--the court jester and the heir apparent to the throne. He was the firstborn son, the one who was to take over when the monarch died. You are accepted into the presence of God on the same basis as the heir apparent to the ancient throne was accepted. You can enter and leave the presence of God unannounced on a day-by-day basis. God completely accepts you the way you are. You do not have to feel embarrassed even though God sees you as you are. He understands what you are going through. You have complete acceptance in His presence.

Summation

"God accepts me the way I am." God accepts you the way you are. Do you really believe that? God accepts you just the way you are. He doesn't accept you the way you'd like to be, or the way you feel he'd like you to be, but just the way you are. That's a hard one to grab ahold of.

"I, therefore, must accept myself the way I am." If it's hard for me to comprehend that God accepts me for the way I am, then it is really hard for me to accept myself. I don't know if you have a problem with that but I do. I have a problem accepting myself, because I know myself. I make me sick. Now, I wish it weren't so, but that's the way it is. I'd be lying if I told you otherwise. When I get a good hard look at the way I am, I get sick inside. There is not a vile sin in the Bible that I am not capable of committing. My heart is black. I find myself thinking some of the most horrible thoughts. I find myself motivated toward doing some of the most horrible things. Things passing through my mind make me blush. How much more so the Holy God!

But if God accepts me the way I am, I am forced to accept myself the way I am. How dare I set up a standard of excellence that is higher than God's? How dare I come to the living God and say, "Okay, God, Your standard of acceptance can be here, but mine's going to be here." Who am I to stand before God and make a bold, foolish statement such as that? If God accepts me the way I am then I have to accept myself

the way I am. Otherwise I am in essence saying to the living God, "God, Your standards of acceptance are much lower than mine." I have no right to do that.

"I must accept others the way they are." I must accept others the way they are because God accepts them the way they are, God accepts me the way I am, and God tells me to accept them the way they are. That's the essence of Romans 15:7.

Another conclusion is that others have to accept me the way I am. That is a relief. What is true for you is also true for me. How dare you set up a standard of excellence that is higher than that of God? If God accepts me, how dare you not accept me? You have to. The whole thing is related to your concept of who God is and what He has done.

I have really wrestled with this in my own life. When I was in Kalamazoo, Michigan on my first Navigator assignment, I got really discouraged. Nothing went as fast as I thought it should. Everything seemed to go wrong. Introspection. Discouragement. You name it, I had it. I really went through the valleys in those days. During that time of deepest discouragement, there was a misunderstanding in my own mind with the leadership. I thought I wasn't understood. I thought nobody would accept me. This added to my discouragement.

During this time God taught me something. He said, "Henrichsen, when I speak, obey. When somebody else speaks, listen carefully and evaluate it according to the Word of God. When somebody speaks about you to somebody else, forget it. Because if people can't accept you the way you are, then it is their problem, not yours."

The load left. It really made a difference in my life. The reason I can be myself is because of this truth. Otherwise I have to wear a facade, a veneer, a sham. The only reason I am afraid to be myself in your presence is because I fear if I reveal myself to you, you won't accept me. That is a spiritual problem on my part.

It is necessary to differentiate between accepting and condoning. You have to accept me for the way I am, but you don't have to condone what I do. Just as God accepts me the way I am but does not condone many of the things I do. The two are not synonymous.

Let me draw three conclusions from Romans 15:7, "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

Conclusion Number One: There is a difference between accepting a man and training him to be a disciple. Christians who desire to make disciples must be careful not to communicate rejection to those who are unwilling to meet a training standard or who are unqualified for particular training as far as their gifts are concerned. A lot of people get turned off because they don't feel they qualify. What they mean is they don't feel that others are willing to accept them for the way they are. I think the fault rests with those doing the

training. There are certain demands people must meet if they want training. But even if they want to forget the training or if they are unqualified--every disciplemaker still must have arms that are long enough and a heart that is big enough to accept and receive them as they are.

It is my firm conviction that my ability to accept these people and create an atmosphere whereby they feel accepted is in direct proportion to my ability to accept myself. It is a horrible truth, but a person reproduces after his own kind. Let me ask you--do you feel you can be yourself? Do you feel you can let down the guards? Let down your hair, so to speak? Or is there a veneer in front of you? Can you be yourself? If not, then the chances are that others can't be themselves around you either.

Conclusion Number Two: The objective of training is to get a man to conform to his own standard of what he knows God wants him to be. If he is man of God who wants to please God and if a disciplemaker's standards are in the essentials and not in the nonessentials, there will be no problem. the two then are synonymous. When helping another person, a disciplemaker should major on helping that person become what he knows down in his heart he should be.

If you don't feel comfortable and others don't feel comfortable around you, one of two things is wrong. Either you are asking for conformity to nonessential standards--to those things whereby the Scripture says everyone has the right to form his own conclusions, or the man's standard of acceptance is higher than God's.

Conclusion Number Three: Acceptance is a relationship of grace. Anytime I think I am more usable or that God is blessing me because of what I do or what I am, I take away from the concept of grace. I am usable and acceptable in the Beloved by grace alone. When I try to add anything else, I open myself to the onslaught of the enemy.

Let me illustrate this for you. I'm a sinful and black-hearted man. I have impure motives. I'm an undisciplined individual. I could go on and list sins that would make Paul's list of sins in Romans look small. I recognize that's the way I am. I wish I were some other way and I'm working on the problem. But in the meantime, that's me. That's Walter Henrichsen. I have to accept myself the way I am because God accepts me the way that I am, but I still don't have to like what I see. Therefore, I take steps to check myself so that these vile, ugly, evil, wicked things don't come to the surface. I take whatever steps are necessary to make sure that I do what I know God wants me to do. For example, we don't have a television set in our home. The reason is not that we are stronger than those who have television sets in their home, but because we are weaker. I know that if there were a television set sitting in my home, I'd watch it. I'm not that disciplined. There are some things on television I'd like to see, but I know that the price of having one is greater than the price of not having one. So I check myself. I wish I were stronger than that. I wish I could say I could take it or leave it, but I'm not--so I leave it all together.

Bible study is another example. I've talked six men into meeting with me every Sunday morning at 6 a.m. for Bible study because that's the only way I'll get that Bible study done. I wish I could say that I am a self-motivated, self-disciplined man, but I'm not. The embarrassment of those men arriving Sunday morning and finding me unprepared motivates me to do the study.

I take whatever steps are necessary to make sure I get done what I know God wants me to do.

Running is another example. I run now. You know why I run? Not because I like it. It's not because I'm an athlete or a motivated, disciplined man. I run because a doctor took me aside and said, "Henrichsen, count on dying before the age of 50. You are not taking care of yourself. You are beating your body and it just won't last. Just plan on it."

I said, "Well, Doc, suppose I want another option?"

So now I run.

That's not a very noble motive for running. That's not a very noble motive for meeting in Bible study. Granted, I'm not a very noble man.

But I've discovered I'm forced with a decision, I either have to act right with the wrong motive or do nothing with the wrong motive. So I realized, "At least I'm doing right. God, forgive me for the blackness of my heart. I wish it weren't that way, but at least doing the right thing is better than not doing anything at all. So, let's press on and get the job done."

I have the same problem when it comes to giving. God says to me, "I want you to contribute to the support of that man." "Okay, Lord." Then I have all kinds of thoughts about those passages that say you give and you get more. I think to myself how much more God is going to give me because I've given. What a terrible reason for giving. Maybe I shouldn't give. It tears me up inside. I wrestle with it. I have wept over it. Chances are excellent you have that problem too. The Bible says that there hath no temptation taken me but such is common to you. So I decided I'll do what is right. In 1 John 3:20 God says if your heart condemns you, He is greater than your heart because He knows all things. That is really helpful.

I wrestle with why I do what I do. Oftentimes what I do is not born out of pure motives. For example, Lorne Sanny, president of the Navigators, is coming to my area. Oh, good grief. Clean the windows. Have all the troops over. Get the lawn mowed. The garage--I remember Sanny preached on cleaning garages--get the garage cleaned. I have all this junk. What am I going to do with it? I'll put it in the closet. So Sanny comes over.

"Let me hang up your coat."

"Oh, I can do it."

Oh, no, no. Coronary.

So, I'm out there scrubbing the windows knowing what my inner reaction is going to be, "Henrichsen, you wretch." Then I ask myself, "Is it right? Should the windows be clean?" Then clean the windows and God help me with my motive.

Now I don't want to communicate that motives aren't important. They are important. It's necessary to work on them. I'm working on mine. But when you are in the pit of discouragement and when morbid introspection begins to take over, that is not the time to be working on the motives. That's the time to say, "God, forgive me" and press on.

Then when you have gained a little altitude and everything is going well, and you can face yourself in the mirror when you shave or brush your hair, then work on motives.

God does not accept me because my motives are pure. Sanny does not accept me because my windows are clean. God accepts me because of grace. Sanny accepts me because God tells him he has to. I accept myself because God has accepted me. I find, in the final analysis, that I have no right to set a standard of acceptance higher than what God has already set. So, I learn to live at peace with myself and with others.



ETS 3/15

Date _____

Assignment Sheet

Name _____ Topic Leadership

Lesson Introduction to Leadership Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "Introduction to Leadership"		
Bible Study		
I Thessalonians 1		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Marks of a Disciple		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Pray for 1 person to win to Christ.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Update Follow-Up Guide for Convert.		
Update Evaluation of Objectives.		
Scripture Memory		
Write in 2 verses you memorized.		

[The page contains extremely faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side. The text is organized into several columns and paragraphs, but no specific content can be discerned.]

LEADERSHIP

- **Introduction to Leadership**
- **Biblical Leadership**
- **Leadership and Planning**
- **Leadership and Organizing**
- **Leadership and Leading**
- **Leadership and Evaluating**
- **Leadership and Motivating**



INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP

The Strong Natural Leader

When you think about the subject of leadership, you usually picture in your mind some individual you know who has strong leadership qualities. He or she probably is aggressive, dynamic, poised, and knows what to do in almost any given situation. Such an individual is called a Strong Natural Leader or a S.N.L. The S.N.L. has a God-given ability to lead others and tends to take charge of a task or a group if no one else has been designated as leader. The group naturally looks to the S.N.L. for direction since he always can come up with some sort of plan for any occasion.

Leading by Intuition

In spite of the strong leadership attributes which the S.N.L. has, he can often out live his usefulness very quickly. Because he is naturally gifted, he tends to know what to do intuitively and can operate by his instincts rather than by well-thought-out procedures. For a limited time when the enterprise is small, this works very well. But under strong leadership, most things grow and before long the enterprise is too big for the S.N.L. to handle by intuition alone. Then, because he has never had any formal leadership training, he is unable to handle an increased load and soon the project stagnates.

Leading by Principle

It has been said that true leadership is an art as well as a science. It is a science because it has basic principles which can be learned and applied by anyone who is charged with leadership responsibilities. It is an art because it requires great skill to apply the principles in such a way that the objective can be accomplished.

It is important to realize that anyone can learn the principles of leadership and apply them. Some can do it more skillfully and with less effort, but anyone can do it. If you are not an S.N.L. it means that you must learn the principles of leadership to get started. If you are an S.N.L., you must still discipline yourself to learn the principles of leadership so that you can increase your capacity. If you are willing to learn and apply these principles, and if you ask God for an opportunity to use your skills, He will help you to develop in the area of leadership.

Definition of Leadership

Webster defines a leader simply as "someone who leads." Someone else put it this way:

Getting things done through the efforts of other people.

While both of these are good definitions, we will choose another to use in this course which will better identify what we are discussing.

Leadership is organizing and activating manpower and resources into the most optimum relationship so as to accomplish the objective.

By the above definition, we see that a leader has at least three things which he must keep in balance:

- He has a goal;
- He has manpower; and
- He has resources.

If he is successful, he will be able to translate the goal into reality by utilizing his manpower and his resources.

Responsibilities of a Leader

Accomplishment of the Objective

A leader is charged with the responsibility of accomplishing the objective of the group. If he does not do that, he has failed as a leader. He may be a wonderful person, have a tremendous personality, and be well-liked, but if the objective is not accomplished, he has failed his job. The accomplishment of the objective is the top priority of the leader.

Maximum Satisfaction of Followers

NOTES

Of equal importance to the accomplishment of the objective is the satisfaction and morale of the group. If the leader accomplishes the objective, but causes great stress to those who are working with him, he has still failed to be the leader God intended. This is where the real art of leadership enters in. The leader must work to keep his followers contented and satisfied as they continue to work toward the objective. One of the best ways to do this is to create the concept of "group ownership of the goal." The followers must feel that the objective is not only the leader's, but theirs as well.

Minimum Undesirable Side Effects

A leader realizes that no decision will fully suit every person on his team. Somewhere a member of the group will feel the pinch of a decision the leader makes. Therefore, the leader must be sensitive to the members of the group and work to assure them that he is taking their feelings and opinions into consideration as he makes his decisions. Usually, if the team members are assured of the leader's love and sensitivity to them, they will be able to endure the conflicts that arise along the way. However, if the leader views his followers simply as boxes on an organizational chart and treats them insensitively, he will soon find himself engulfed with personnel problems which will strangle the accomplishment of the objective.

Maximum Production

A leader must always aim to produce the maximum in whatever area he is working. In the secular realm, this may mean the maximum production of a certain product. In the church, the leader may be aiming for a certain amount of money to be raised for missions, a certain number of Sunday School teachers to be recruited, or a certain number of people to attend for an evangelistic outreach. In all of these goals, the leader must be careful to aim for maximum quality production and not just activity. Too often the church's best efforts are disappointed because people become involved in excessive activity without productivity.

Minimum Expenditure of Resources

A leader must always be looking for better and cheaper ways to do the job. This is what is referred to in business as the cost/result ratio. Church leaders of-

ten discover that they are spending great amounts of money on evangelistic activities, youth programs, etc., with very few visible results in terms of converts or disciples being produced. With a little creativity, the leader may be able to achieve the same or better results without an extravagant budget.

Reproduction of Leadership

It is the responsibility of the leader to be on the lookout for people with leadership capacity who can be recruited and trained for future leadership positions. This does not mean that the potential leader must be an S.N.L.--although an S.N.L. is usually easy to pick out in a group. A future leader must simply have a heart to learn and to apply leadership skills. Under a more experienced leader, a younger person is able to develop, applying his skills as he goes along. It is very important that the older leader allow the younger one to have the opportunity to lead in increasing spheres of responsibility as he learns. If the older one feels threatened or intimidated by the growing skills of the younger, he may stifle his development. However, if the leader can successfully train his own replacement, he will ensure the progress of the enterprise for many years to come.

Qualities Essential for Leadership

Vision

This means that the leader sees what needs to be done and has the heart or the vision to accomplish it. Far too often people are voted into offices who have no vision or heart for the job. They are forced into a leadership position and try to get by with doing the very minimum. Under such leadership, it is not long before the followers lose heart and the enterprise also fails.

Where there is no vision, the people perish:
but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Proverbs 29:18

Courage

It often takes a great deal of courage to make the ultimate decisions which belong to the leader alone. Some decisions may effect a great many others; some

decisions may involve a great deal of risk both to the leader and his team. But when all the facts have been considered and all the followers have been heard, the leader must make the crucial decisions. Some leaders simply cannot cope with such great responsibility. Their courage fails and they fear the displeasure of others or the possible consequences. If no one makes the hard decisions, the objective is sure to be thwarted. Of course, courage is ultimately linked to faith in God. Without a close walk with Him and a sense of His leading, few of us would have the courage to make the difficult decisions of leadership. But when we do walk with Him, He commands us to have courage, just as he commanded Joshua.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua 1:9

Decisiveness

Closely related to the quality of courage is that of decisiveness. Decisiveness is necessary in the small decisions as well as the big ones. Some leaders are hesitant rather than decisive. They procrastinate rather than decide and get moving. Their followers are forced to wait for them to make up their minds and often when the decision is finally made, it is too late to be effective.

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said,
How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

I Kings 18:21

Discipline

A leader must be willing to discipline himself to see that the objective is reached and that decisions which are made are carried out. This often requires a great deal of self-control and self-sacrifice for there are many small and sometimes very mechanical chores which must be done or delegated to ensure that the goal is accomplished. If a leader cannot discipline himself, he cannot help to discipline others working for him. Consequently, no one in the group meets the short-term goals, and the long-term goal is eventually sacrificed.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.

I Corinthians 9:26-27

Wisdom

Wisdom is a combination of knowledge and skill. A leader must have both information and experience in applying the information to accomplish the job. Many times in business as well as Christian organizations a person who is good in one job is promoted to a higher ranking job for which he is not qualified. The person who was very qualified and acted in wisdom in the previous job is now incompetent because he has neither the information nor the skill for the new job. We as leaders must make sure that both we and the junior leaders under us are equal to the responsibilities we are given.

A young man asked a wise and wealthy elder the secret to his success to which the man replied: "The secret of my success is making wise decisions." The young man then asked, "But how do you learn to make wise decisions?" "Very simple, son. You learn to make wise decisions by making unwise ones and learning from them."

Of course, no leader can be completely qualified in every field. But he must be wise enough to tap the resources of those around him who have the knowledge he needs. One who does will both lead others wisely and grow personally in the process.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:5

Motivation

An effective leader is one who can inspire or stimulate other people to action so that all are moving toward the objective. Motivating others involves enthusiasm about the project and the ability to communicate that enthusiasm to others. This is perhaps the most difficult part of leadership. An entire lesson will be devoted to this later in the course.

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works...

Hebrews 10:24

Executive Ability

Every leader should try to personally develop his executive abilities. If he does not have them, he can acquire them through reading or even through courses on the subject. We owe it to God, to our teams, and to ourselves to develop executive skills which can maximize our time and minimize the frustrations we encounter as we progress toward the objective.

Grace Factors for the Spiritual Leader

There are several characteristics which Christian leaders ought to have. It is possible to function without them, but the leader who possesses them will become far more proficient than one who does not.

Patience

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient...

II Timothy 2:24

People who are in places of leadership are usually the most capable in their job. Those who work under them are often less skilled and require more time to complete a task. If the leader grows impatient with their slower pace, he will not help the job get done sooner. If anything, his irritation may upset the worker and cause the task to slow down.

Humility

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time...

I Peter 5:5-6

Many leaders in the world tend to be proud or even prima donnas in their attitude toward their followers. Such pride and arrogance is unbecoming and detracts from anyone, but most of all to a servant of Christ. Jesus said:

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant...

Matthew 20:25-27

Tactfulness and Diplomacy

As a leader or boss, you can demand your rights and speak without thinking carefully to those on your team. However, kindness and love are simple, uncostly lubricants which will make the wheels of your task move ever so smoothly and effectively. Each of us in leadership positions must develop a style of leadership; tactfulness should be woven into the very fabric of that style.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold
in pictures of silver.

Proverbs 25:11

Styles of Leadership

There are basically three kinds of leadership in the world today. They are called by many names but are basically the same three groups in function. Each style of leadership is different than the others and each has its own strengths and weaknesses. One is not necessarily better than another; they are different and apply effectively in different situations.

Autocratic

Autocratic leadership is centered around the leader. He normally makes all the decisions and passes them down to his subordinates to be carried out. Sometimes such a leader is referred to as a dictator. Autocratic leadership produces obedience on the part of the followers but often at the expense of initiative. Autocratic leadership functions best in a

crisis situation or where there is insecurity in the group. In such cases the dictator who takes charge and gets things straightened out is greatly appreciated.

Democratic

This leader is group-centered and looks to the members of the group for the decision that is to be made. Democratic leadership produces cooperation but may cause wasted time or stagnation in reaching objectives. Democracy functions best in accomplishing objectives which need to be achieved through group effort.

Free Rein

This leader is also called the "laissez-faire" leader. In this system, decisions are made by each individual in the very loosely-knit group. Each decides for himself the best way to handle problems and proceeds individually. Free rein leadership produces initiative, but often at the expense of coordination. It functions best when working with highly skilled individuals or very creative people who need liberty to seek out solutions to things they are working on. Free rein leadership is also very effective in training individuals who may later be leading others because it forces them to make decisions and live by them.

Again, please note that no one style of leadership is superior to any other. A good leader may tend toward one of these styles of leadership, but he must also understand the others and employ them as the situation demands.

Principles of Leadership

There are two basic sets of principles which every leader must master to be effective. These are stated in the two acrostics OATS and POLE.

- **OATS** - We have already learned one of the acrostics in our Personal and Spiritual Management. The letters stand for:

Objectives - The intent

Activities - What needs to be done

Timetable - Evaluating the time we have available

Schedule - Writing the activities into the time available

- **POLE** - The second acronym is POLE. It stands for:

Planning

Organizing

Leading

Evaluating

These principles must be mastered in leading others. During this semester, we will be examining each component of POLE and the various sub-components under each.

Evaluation of Leadership

To evaluate a person's effectiveness as a leader, refer to the five points under "Responsibilities of a Leader" above. Use these as a basis for evaluation of leadership.

NOTES

1 THESSALONIANS 1

PRELIMINARY STUDY

You're now ready to dig into the first chapter of this personal letter from Paul. First, read it through. Then read it again. Imagine yourself in the Thessalonian church...the letter has just been received from Paul and is addressed to you, your family and your friends. Read the Chapter 3 to 5 times, until you have its contents well in mind.

You may find it helpful to read it once or twice in another translation. Reading another translation often increases your grasp of the ideas the Holy Spirit is teaching. Some of the translations you could use are:

- The Authorized Version (King James Version--1611) 16th & 17th Century English
- The American Standard Bible, New Testament (1963) Accurate modern English
- The Berkeley Version in Modern English (1945-59) Zondervan Publishing House Whole Bible in reliable modern English
- The Revised Standard Version (1946-52) Smooth modern English

(These are available at Bible bookstores, or can be ordered by any bookstore.)

Number of times chapter read _____

DEFINITIONS

Knowing the meanings of the words listed below (from the King James Version) will help you understand the chapter. Sometimes another translation will clear up the meanings of words that are new to you. An ordinary dictionary is also helpful, or a Bible dictionary. Here are some definitions of words in I Thessalonians 1:

Verse 1	Grace	God's favor and blessings given freely to those who don't deserve them.
Verse 4	Election	Choosing by God.

Verse 6 Affliction Suffering (in this case inflicted by Jews antagonistic to the Gospel).

Verse 7 Ensamples Examples.

Be sure to look on the map for Macedonia and Achaia.

WHAT DOES THE CHAPTER SAY?

Before deciding what a passage of Scripture means, you must know and understand what it says. One way to grasp what it says is simply to paraphrase the passage (to restate it in your own words). In paraphrasing, be careful not to change the meaning of a passage, but merely to rephrase it in new words.

Example: John 3:16. God so greatly loved the people of the world, that He sent and sacrificed His only specially-born Son, so that anyone who trusts Him as his Saviour will not be doomed to eternal separation from God, but instead will have eternal life.

Compare the following paraphrase of I Thessalonians 1:1-5 with your Bible.

Verse 1 I Paul, with Silvanus and Timothy, am writing to you believers in Thessalonica. You have your spiritual standing in God and in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are praying that Their grace and peace may be yours.

Verse 2 We continually thank God for all of you as we pray for you.

Verse 3 We constantly remember the practical outworking of your faith, your loving service and your patient, confident expectation in Christ--as you live your lives in God's sight.

Verse 4 We're assured, dearly loved fellow-believers, that God has chosen you.

Verse 5 For we remember that as we preached the good news to you, it wasn't preached with mere words, but the message was preached and received in the Holy Spirit's power and with great certainty. Also remember what kind of lives we lived among you in order to be of the greatest help to you.

Now paraphrase the rest of the chapter in the same way. With a little practice you can do it, though it may seem difficult at first. Use a dictionary to find definitions and synonyms when you can't think how to say it.

Verse 6

verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Read over each of your paraphrases and compare them with your Bible.
Have you included the complete thought?

WHAT DO OTHER SCRIPTURES SAY?

What truths in Verse 10 do you also see in Titus 2:13, 14?

MARKS OF A DISCIPLE

by Lorne C. Sanny

Used by permission of the Navigators



100

Trial	Control (n=10)	MCI (n=10)	AD (n=10)
1	85	75	65
2	85	75	65
3	85	70	60
4	85	65	55
5	85	60	55

2

Condition	Control (%)	MCI (%)	AD (%)
1	95	85	75
2	90	80	70
3	85	75	65
4	85	75	65

100

Condition	Control (%)	MCI (%)	AD (%)
A	~95	~85	~75
B	~90	~75	~65
C	100	80	60
D	~95	~85	~75

Figure 1

Marks of a Disciple

by Lorne C. Sanny

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Matthew 28: 18-20

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," or as another translation puts it, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

Jesus came to this earth to be an example. He came here to show us the Father. He came here to take our sins in His own body on the cross and He came to destroy the works of the devil. And while He went about His ministry, along the way He also gathered up people to follow Him--called disciples.

Jesus was popular. "And there went great multitudes with Him" (Luke 14:25). Yet He told them, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26,27). He also said, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 24:33).

He turned to the crowds that were following Him and three times He said to them, "...cannot be My disciple," "...cannot be My disciple," "...cannot be My disciple." It's as if He said, "I am not looking for crowds; I'm looking for disciples."

Columnist Walter Lippmann once said, "There are only two kinds of people in the world that really count today, and they are the dedicated Christians and the dedicated communists." And Time magazine reported that the French communist Roger Garaudy feels that there are only two major forces in the world today--communism and Christianity.

And I know that among the Christians, the ones who really count are the disciples. As a friend of mine, a Christian leader, said, "Lorne, you don't find many disciples. But when you find one, there's almost no limit to what God can do through him."

How do you recognize a disciple? What does he look like? What are his characteristics? Are you a disciple? Am I a disciple?

I have studied seven or eight passages in the Scripture having to do with the characteristics of a disciple. They can conveniently be boiled down to three marks of discipleship. When you see these three, you have a disciple.

Identified with Christ

The first mark of a disciple is that he is someone who is identified with the person of Jesus Christ--someone who will openly admit that he belongs to Christ. Now whatever else you may think about baptism, it is a public identification with Jesus Christ. When you are baptized, you are saying I take my stand with, I am on the side of, I belong to Jesus Christ.

A friend of mine told me of a Jewish man he led to Christ in Dallas. A few weeks later my friend told another Jewish man, a non-Christian, about the first one. Immediately the second man asked, "Has he been baptized yet?" When my friend said, "No he hasn't," he replied "Well, he'll never last." It was later, when the first Jew was baptized, that his family cut him off. He had made open identification with Jesus Christ.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9,10). An open identification with Jesus Christ. Jesus promised, "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

A friend told me that when he went with Billy Graham, who was to speak to 500 men at the Jewish Rotary Club of New York City, he wondered what in the world Mr. Graham would speak on to a Jewish Club. When the time came, Billy stood up and spoke on "Christ, the Fulfillment of the Old Testament Prophecies." At the close they gave him a standing ovation. He had identified himself unashamedly with Jesus Christ.

On one occasion Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ" (Mark 8:29). It seems everything in His ministry led up to this.

But the thing that strikes me is that then "He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). A little later He called the multitude and His disciples to Him and said, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me...Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:34, 38).

Some years ago when I was with the Billy Graham team in a crusade, a business man came forward one night and received Christ. The following Sunday night he went to a church that he sometimes attended. After the service he walked up to one of the leading elders in this church and told him, "I was at the Billy Graham meeting last week out at the ballpark. I went forward and received Christ."

"I heard about it and I am delighted," the elder replied.

Then the businessman asked the elder, "How long have you and I been associated in business?"

"About 23 years, I think."

"Have you known Christ as your Saviour all those years?" the man asked the elder.

"Yes, I have," he answered.

"Well, I don't remember your ever speaking to me about Christ during those years," the man said. The elder hung his head, and the man continued, "I have thought highly of you. In fact, I thought so highly of you that I felt if anyone could be as fine a man as you and not be a Christian, then I didn't have to be a Christian either."

The elder had lived a good life before his friend, but he had not taken the added step of openly identifying with the One who enabled him to live that kind of life. Here was a fine man, but he did not have this first mark of a disciple of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus asks you to deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow Him, what do you think it means? Whatever else it means, I think it means to be identified with Christ, not only when it's popular but when it's unpopular. Not only when it's the thing to do but when it seems as if it's not the thing to do. I like the way the New English Bible puts Revelation 1:9. John writes, "I was on the island called Patmos because I had preached God's Word and borne my testimony to Jesus."

I once talked to the Chief of Police of Stockholm, who was a Christian, and discovered he had been a delegate to Panmunjom back when the Korean truce was first signed. He had interviewed some of the Chinese soldiers as to whether or not they wanted to be repatriated. He told me about a soldier who came through one day and gave his testimony to the interrogators concerning his faith in Jesus Christ. There in the Red Chinese Army was a disciple.

A friend of mine traveling by train from Finland to Moscow tried to smuggle in three suitcases full of Bibles. But the Russian colonel at the border took rather unkindly to this idea. In fact, he was a little upset. My friend Jack asked him, "Well, what are you so worried about? Why do you get so upset about someone bringing a Bible into your country?"

"It's a fairy story, nothing but fairy tales," the colonel replied.

"Don't you have fairy story books in Russia?" Jack asked.

"Oh, yes."

"Well, what's the matter with another one?"

"Ay," said the colonel, "if they believe that Bible, then they won't believe in communism."

So after warning him not to preach and scaring him a little bit, Jack says they let him go on his way.

A few hours later a couple of conductors came by and began to engage Jack and his friends in conversation and to sell them on the merits of communism. It wasn't long before Jack couldn't stand it any longer. He began to preach back to them. After he'd preached to them for a little while, one of the conductors pointed to another conductor at the other end of the car and said, "Now, he's one of yours. That conductor, he's one of your kind."

Later Jack talked to this conductor. Sure enough, he was a born-again Christian. They asked him if he had a Bible. He replied, "No, the last Bible in our town was owned by my grandmother. She tore it up into small segments and distributed it to Christians around the town so it couldn't be confiscated all at once."

They asked if he'd like a Bible. (The colonel had confiscated only two of the suitcases of Bibles they had with them.) When they handed him a Bible, he wept and kissed it. Then he wrapped it in newspaper to take it off the train so it wouldn't be taken away from him.

I believe the striking thing about this story is that not only was there a Christian conductor on that train, but the other conductors knew he was Christian. There was a disciple, identifying himself with the person of Jesus Christ.

Do you take an opportunity to admit that you are a follower of Jesus Christ? Why not determine that at the first opportunity this week you will quietly, graciously, but openly identify yourself with Jesus Christ? I believe this is a mark of a disciple.

One morning I spoke to the SWAP (Salesmen With A Purpose) Club in Colorado Springs. They call in various speakers to tell how selling applies to their business. I spoke on how it applies to the Gospel. In the process I explained the Gospel. After I had spoken, they introduced the guests. One of them was a friend of mine, Will Perkins, a Plymouth dealer. It was his first time there. When he was introduced he stood and said, "Gentlemen, two years ago I heard a presentation similar to the one you heard this noon. I bought it, and it has changed my life." Then he sat down. I thought to myself, how many Christians would have taken that little opportunity to identify themselves with the person of Jesus Christ?

Obedient to the Word

A disciple is not only a believer who is visibly identified with the person of Christ, he is also obedient to the Word of Christ--to the Scriptures. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

"Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Jesus said, "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed" (John 8:31). If you observe it and apply it to your life, then you are My disciple.

Luke records what happened one day when a crowd of people listened to the Lord Jesus preach. One woman in the crowd was probably middle-aged or a little beyond (I'm interpreting a little bit here.) As she listened to Jesus, something welled up within her. Perhaps she had a son who was wayward, and as she looked at the Lord Jesus, she wished her son were like Him. Or maybe she had never had a son and had always wanted to have one. Anyway she spoke up--she sort of burst out--and said, "Happy is the woman who was Your mother" (Luke 11:27).

Jesus' answer to her was significant. He said, "Yea rather, blessed are they, [or happy are they] that hear the word of God, and keep it (Luke 11:28). That's real happiness. That's real blessedness--to hear what God has to say and to do it.

I enjoyed reading a book by the late Sam Shoemaker, Extraordinary Living for Ordinary Men. In it he says that Christians who are half-committed are half-happy. But to be really happy you need to go all the way in commitment. And this means to be obedient to the Word of Christ.

Obedience is necessary also for stability. The greatest sermon ever preached was the Sermon on the Mount. And notice how Jesus concluded it. He said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

What made the difference between the wise man and the foolish one? It wasn't knowledge, because they both heard the same sermon. They went to the same conference; they had the same knowledge. They both heard the Word. Not only that, they had the same circumstances. It says that the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and beat upon the house of the wise man. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and beat upon the house of the foolish man. The circumstances were the same. One couldn't say, "Well, you don't know how tough it is where I come from." "Well, you don't know what kind

of a family life I've got." "You don't know how I suffer down at work." It wasn't their circumstances that made the difference. One thing made the difference between wisdom and foolishness. One obeyed the Word; the other one did not.

Jesus said, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). What does that mean? It means Jesus will make Himself real to him. To whom? To the one who has His Word and keeps it.

So a disciple does more than attend meetings. He does more than take notes. (He does that, incidentally, in my opinion, though I don't have any Scripture to prove that.) But he finds out what the Bible says and does it. Suppose he's going through Proverbs in his morning quiet time, and he comes to Proverbs 3:9,10, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

Early in my marriage, a Christian doctor in Seattle said, "Now let me make a suggestion about handling your family finances. Honor the Lord with your substance, and with the first-fruits of all your increase. Set aside money for the Lord before you pay the rent. Before you buy the food. Even when you think you don't have enough money left to pay the rent and to buy the food. You watch. God will see to it that you have money for the rent and for the food."

Now will He or won't He? Well, the Word promised that He would, and He did.

A friend of mine was looking over the family bills and they looked pretty big. He and his wife prayed and decided that the first thing they ought to do to get out of debt was to increase their giving. And they are out of debt. They proved that God can fulfill His Word.

Another illustration of the truth that a disciple must be obedient to the Word of Christ is in these words of Jesus, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23,24).

When was the last time you went and made something right with someone else? When did you admit to your wife or your children that that fit of temper was sin? It's amazing to me when couples say that neither one has ever asked forgiveness of the other. If you don't find some time when you've got to make some things right, you're about ready for heaven right now. A disciple has a conscience void of offense toward God and man.

Let's go back to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." I don't know why it is that some people think the day of missions

is over. In one recent year, independent missions in America, not denominational, just independent missions, needed 4,000 missionary candidates that they didn't get. Have you ever considered the possibility that obedience to the Word of Christ might mean leaving your business?

Bob Potter owned a supermarket down in Oklahoma City. If he and his wife hadn't sold it and gone into the Lord's work, maybe God would have used someone else. But many people have been blessed through the ministry of Bob Potter through The Navigators.

The Navigators could use double our number of representatives right now. But don't apply. We don't take applications. Many times as I've gone around with the Billy Graham Crusades, young fellows have come up and said, "Mr. Sanny, do you know of any openings in Christian work?"

"Yep, I do."

They'd ask, "Where?"

And I'd say, "Right where you live. Your neighborhood. Where you go to school." I find that God usually leads you to the next step after you take this one. That's where you start.

I'm not speaking of going to the mission field because you're so sick and tired of the office you can't stand it, or because the boss has bugged you for two years and any change would be an improvement. I'm speaking of obedience to the Word of Christ, wherever it may lead and when the going is tough. That's a mark of a disciple.

After Moses died, Joshua had the job of taking three million people into the Promised Land. That included women, children and livestock. God gave him some instructions. You'd think the Lord would say, "Now, look, here's how you'd handle this problem, here's how you do this, here's how you do that." But, no. He said, "Joshua, one thing above all else is going to take a lot of courage--and it's not leading all these people and facing all the enemies that are in the land. That isn't what's going to take courage." But, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law" (Joshua 1:7).

You may think it doesn't take courage to be obedient to the Word of God. But I wonder how obedient we really are to the Word. We live in a Christ-rejecting world, and anyone who is going to live in obedience to this Book is going to come into conflict with it. That's how you recognize a disciple. He does more than hear the Word. He puts into practice what he's heard.

The Navigators are kind of rabid on this subject. Year after year you will hear us beat certain drums all the time. One is that we need to come to know the Bible and apply it. That's why we publish Bible study courses and Scripture memory programs. We need to make up our minds that God helping us with the power of the Holy Spirit,

we are going to be obedient to the Word of Christ. That's a mark of a disciple. He seeks to follow the Bible and do what it says.

Fruitful for Christ

So a disciple is one who is openly identified with the person of Christ. Second, he is obedient to the Word of Christ. And third, he is bearing fruit in the work of Christ. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8).

Now it seems to me that there are two kinds of fruit here. First, the fruit of character, the fruit of the Spirit--love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22,23). And second, there's fruit by way of influencing the lives of others for Christ. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16).

I really threw a curve ball to my Sunday School class one Sunday morning. I intended to. We were talking about Jesus sending out the twelve two by two. He gave them authority over unclean spirits. They went out and preached that men should repent. They cast out demons and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them. Then I asked, "Do you think Judas did this? Do you think Judas went out and preached to people to repent? Do you think Judas cast out demons and healed the sick?"

Some feel they can prove that Judas was never saved. Let's assume they're right. Did Judas then preach that people should repent? Did he cast out demons? Did he heal the sick? Could he have?

Look at Jesus' words: "On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you evildoers!'" (Matthew 7:22,23).

My point was that we get so carried away with the spectacular that we think the spectacular is the supreme evidence that we are real disciples or Spirit-filled. But the real evidence is shown in our character--love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. We're considering here the character of a disciple.

I've heard it said that the Apostle Paul before he was converted, would pray something like this every day, "God, I thank You that I am not a Gentile, that I am not a slave and that I am not a woman." But look at how God changed his attitude. In his first letter he wrote, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Here is evidence of the fruit of the spirit in the way of character.

This is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. It includes one's whole attitude, outlook, character and relationship to others. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you can work great miracles? No. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

When Jesus talked about His ministry and what He came to do, He quoted from Isaiah 61:1,3, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound...to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Take this world in which we live with all of its glitter, its tinsel and its veneer. Strip all of this away, and how would you characterize the real world underneath? Brokenhearted, captive, bound, anxious, sad, depressed.

A disciple is one who gets involved in that kind of world, who is bearing fruit in the work of Christ. He shows the fruit of the Spirit in a Christlike character--love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. How we need that in the world in which we live!

The Greatest is Love

What did Jesus say was the greatest identifying mark of all in a disciple? Love. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples." If you do what? "If ye have love one to another."

One of the greatest illustrations of this that I have seen was on the television special "James Emory Bond." It was an entire one-hour interview with a black man who was an ex-truck driver. He was in his seventies at the time of the interview. Apparently he lived in Baltimore. One night he watched a panel discussion with some of the city leaders, mayor, chief of police and others on television. They discussed the race and juvenile delinquency problems in Baltimore. As he watched, his heart was really moved.

The next day he went down to the television station. He wanted to talk to somebody because he had been so moved by their discussion. He said he knew the answer, but he didn't know whom to tell. At the station they had the good sense not only to interview him, but also to videotape it. All you saw was this grey-haired gentleman as he answered questions coming from off camera.

He said, among other things, that when he was a young fellow growing up on the edge of Baltimore, the white boys would throw rocks at him as he was on his way to school. He began to hate white people. As a young man he started working as a truck driver. One morning when he saw the milk truck go by, he thought how nice it would be if he could just have a little milk before he went to work in the morning.

He stopped the milkman, who was a white man, one day and asked him if he would leave him a quart of milk. He said, "No, I don't deliver milk to niggers."

"So," Bond said, "I called up the milk company, and I asked the man I talked with if this was true, that they didn't give milk to black people. He said, 'No, that's not right. We do deliver milk to black people, and we'll see that he delivers the milk.'"

"So," he said, "the milk came, a quart each morning. Several weeks went by and I realized that he wasn't leaving me a bill, and I wanted to pay for it. So I stopped him one morning and said, 'I want you to give me a bill so I can pay for this.' And the milkman said, 'Well, I don't take money from niggers.' So I said, 'Well, I've got to pay you, you've just got to let me pay you.'"

"'Well,' the milkman said, 'tell you what you do. You put the money on the fence post.'"

James Emory Bond said, "I thought I'd have a little fun with him, so I said, 'Now I won't feel like I paid you unless I put it in your hand.' Nossir," he said, 'Put it on the post.' So I said, 'O.K.' And I put it on the post. When the milkman reached out to take the change, I just laid my hand on top of his. And he jerked it away."

Then he said, "Later on, one of God's servants by the name of Billy Sunday came to our town, and he told how Jesus Christ died on the cross to take away man's sin and his enmity of heart toward his fellowman. As I heard that, I realized that I needed this, and I walked the sawdust trail. And you know, God took the hate out of my heart for the white man. He put love there."

Apparently a few days later, unknown to him, the milkman went to hear Billy Sunday. He went forward in the meeting, received Christ, and a couple days later pulled up in front of James Emory Bond's little place. With tears streaming down his face, he apologized for the way he had treated him. And this dear old black man said, "I have loved him, and he has loved me ever since."

Now that's what discipleship mans. There is a mark of a disciple. Bearing fruit in the work of Christ. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." When we begin to see more disciples sprinkled around America and around the world, what a difference it will make! Real genuine disciples who will turn the world upside down. There are many already, and we ought to be praying for them.

But not only is there the fruit of Christlike character, but also the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of others. Jesus said, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16).

Go and bring forth fruit. Paul wrote to the Romans of his desire, "That I might have some fruit among you also" (Romans 1:13). I think he meant lives influenced for Christ.

Once while I was thinking about this, two events took place that drove the truth home to me. One was something I read about Dr. Charles F. McKoy of Oyster Bay, Long Island. After fifty years of fruitful ministry as a pastor and evangelist, this 71-year-old bachelor began looking around for a retirement home. A bishop from India came to his church to plead for missionary help for India. Dr. McKoy prayed earnestly that God might lay it on the heart of someone in the congregation to respond to this call and go to India. After the third message the bishop turned to Dr. McKoy and said, "I don't think God is looking for someone in the congregation. I think he is looking for the man in the pulpit."

Dr. McKoy could hardly believe his ears. He said, "Bishop, are you losing your mind? I'm 71, I've never been overseas; I've never been on the ocean. The thought of flying terrifies me." But soon a new missionary was on his way to India, green and seasick, but on his way--at age 71. Fifteen years later Dr. McKoy died. Between the ages of 71 and 86 he had gone around the world nine or ten times winning people to Christ in India and Hong Kong, in the opium dens and in the most difficult places. He was a real disciple in old age also. And I think one reason it struck me was that I was reading in Psalm 92:14, "They still bring forth fruit in old age, they are ever full of sap and green." Your life can be fruitful to the very end.

The same week, we received word from Virginia that a young fellow named Teed Radin, 23 years of age, a graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, who would soon be on the Navigator staff, had been in a head-on collision. Teed was killed instantly and his fiancée died within the hour. One of the fellows wrote that while at V.P.I. Teed had led 25-30 men to Christ. Among them, five were dedicated, trained, effective men of the Cross who, according to this person, would be willing at a moment's notice to die for the cause of Christ.

Dr. McKoy--an old man, a disciple to the end. Teed Radin--a young man, a disciple early in life. In fact, there's no better time to become a disciple than right now. But deep down in our hearts--that's where real business is done with God--we must determine that by God's grace and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will be true followers of Jesus Christ.

Let's ask ourselves. Am I a true disciple?

Am I willing to be openly identified with the person of Jesus Christ?

Am I seeking to be obedient to the Word of Christ, in my everyday life?

Am I bearing fruit in the work of Christ--by way of Christlike character and by influencing the lives of others?

I want to be a disciple. I want to have these marks and characteristics in my life. The only thing I'd like to do beyond that is to help make disciples and to get them to help make others. That's what Jesus wants done. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

FOLLOW-UP CHECKLIST

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

NAME _____

As part of your Equipping The Saints training, you are to ask God for two persons to evangelize:

NAME _____

NAME _____

	DATE	CHECKED	DATE	CHECKED
Prayed For				
Testimony Shared				
Bridge Presented				
Accepted Christ				

Furthermore, ask God to give you one person to disciple:

NAME _____

DATE COMPLETED

CHECKED

	DATE COMPLETED	CHECKED
Date of Decision		
Assurance of Salvation		
Complete BWC		
Consistent Quiet Time		
Complete TMS		
Complete Bible Study Book SCL/DFD		
Put Christ First		
Attending Church Regularly		
Baptized		



EQUIPPING THE SAINTS PERSONAL EVALUATION FORM

DATE _____

LIFE OBJECTIVE	
Objectives	
Present Position	
Obstacles	
Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
Plan to Implement	

SCRIPTURE MEMORY	
Objectives	
Present Position	
Obstacles	
Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
Plan to Implement	

BIBLE READING	
Objectives	
Present Position	
Obstacles	
Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
Plan to Implement	

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

PERSONAL EVALUATION FORM

BIBLE STUDY	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

PRAYER	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

WITNESSING	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

PERSONAL EVALUATION FORM

FOLLOW-UP		Objectives	
		Present Position	
		Obstacles	
		Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
		Plan to Implement	

EXERCISE & SLEEP		Objectives	
		Present Position	
		Obstacles	
		Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
		Plan to Implement	

FAMILY RELATIONSHIP		Objectives	
		Present Position	
		Obstacles	
		Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
		Plan to Implement	

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

PERSONAL EVALUATION FORM

CAREER/STUDIES	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

USE OF RESOURCES	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

ETS 3/16

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

Name _____

Topic Leadership

Lesson Biblical Leadership

Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "Biblical Leadership"		
Bible Study		
I Thessalonians 2		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Pray for 1 person to win to Christ.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Hand in Follow-Up Guide for Convert.		
Hand in Evaluation of Objectives.		
Scripture Memory		
Write in 2 verses you memorized.		



BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

The Biblical Roles Defined

Leadership is never really defined in the Scriptures. Yet on almost every page, we see the leadership of God demonstrated in His creation. The Bible describes it in terms of roles and responsibilities that God has given to various individuals. As you study the Old and New Testaments with their teaching and observations about leadership, there emerge three distinct roles and responsibilities.

God's leaders are to be the following.

- Servants of God's Person
- Stewards of God's Resources
- Shepherds of God's People

Everyone who is placed in a position of spiritual leadership is responsible for fulfilling these three functions. These distinct characteristics set Christian leadership in a category of its own where fulfilling the objective is balanced with the needs of the people.

As maturing disciples of Jesus Christ, most of us will one day find ourselves in a role of leadership somewhere in the body of Christ. It is therefore expedient that each one of us understands these three functions and works to make them a part of our lives. As these become a reality, God will begin to place us in a position of authority and give us increased responsibility in the fulfilling of Christ's Great Commission.

A Servant of God's Person

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:6-7

Jesus Christ is the perfect example of a spiritual leader. First and foremost, He saw Himself as a servant of God. He came into the world not to do His own will but the will of God. Since He was totally committed to serving God, He became a usable vessel in His hand.

Definition

The dictionary defines a servant as "one who serves others; one who must work for and obey another."

The Hebrew word for servant is ebed: "one who is at the disposal of another; the worker who belongs to a master; a slave". Throughout the Old Testament, the leaders of God, as well as the coming Messiah, were described as the ebeds of God.

In the Greek, there are two words for servant: Doulos and Diakonos.

Doulos

Doulos means slave or bond servant and refers to someone who has no rights but to serve the desires of his master.

Diakonos

Diakonos emphasizes the servant's activity rather than his relationship to his master. It means to help, serve, or to minister. It is from this word we derive the New Testament word deacon.

Illustration

In Philipppians 2, Jesus describes Himself as the doulos, the slave of God. He saw His primary role as a leader, to be the servant of God, responsible for obeying His commands. Jesus taught His disciples this new concept by His life as well as His teachings.

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Matthew 20:25-28

Application

- "Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them."

Authority was the mark of success and greatness.

- "But it shall not be so among you."

Jesus rejects and forbids this idea.

- "Whosoever will be chief, let him be your doulos."

Service is God's mark of success and greatness. These concepts of leadership epitomized the life of Jesus Christ. He said in Mark:

For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark 10:45

Dr. V. Raymond Edmonds, the past president of Wheaton College, once said, "It is our job to train servants. It is God's business to choose from among our servants His leaders."

If being a servant and serving is offensive to you, it is not likely you will be called to a place of spiritual leadership.

A Steward of God's Resources

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

I Peter 4:10

Throughout the New Testament, we are reminded that every man has received certain gifts, talents and abilities from God. These gifts are not self-engendered, but are gifts bestowed by God. We are stewards of these things and will one day give an account to God for our stewardship of these gifts.

The dictionary defines a steward as "one called to exercise responsible care over possessions entrusted to him."

In the Greek, two words are used:

Epitrophos Epitrophos means guardianship of persons.

Oikonomos

Oikonomos is defined as a head servant appointed to manage the household and resources of his master.

So a steward is one who is charged with responsibilities to manage the affairs of another person.

Jesus is the personification of this in the New Testament. He was the faithful steward who managed the affairs of His Father on earth.

The Scriptures highlight several facets about stewardship which we need to understand as God's stewards.

Cares for possessions entrusted to him

All that we have has been given to us and we are merely stewards.

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

I Corinthians 6:19-20

This body which we call ours is God's temple and belongs to Him. We are only stewards. This has far-reaching implications, and we need to heed this warning of instruction such as the case may be.

And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

Not only is your body not your own, but also whatever wealth or possessions you have. God gave you the ability to get it. (Read the context of this passage and study it--Deuteronomy 8:10-20). We are only stewards.

In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

Whatever we have or own was created and given to us by God; we are only stewards.

Exercises responsible care

NOTES

Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful.

I Corinthians 4:1-2

Are we faithful as stewards or are we so busy with looking after our own affairs that our stewardship of God's resources are neglected? "Faithful" speaks of being diligent in caring for the things of God. It means our stewardship has a priority, and we consistently attend to the affairs of God.

Faithfulness also has a moral quality that speaks of integrity as we handle the affairs of others. So faithfulness has to do with consistency and integrity or honesty.

It would appear that we have four possibilities in our stewardship.

- Managed to the best of our abilities
- Neglected
- Not managed
- Mismanaged

How would you rate yourself?

And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Luke 16:12

So one of God's requirements for spiritual leadership is faithfulness in stewardship.

Uses resources to accomplish task

I glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work (objective) which thou gavest me to do.

John 17:4

During Jesus' life, not only was He aware that He was a steward of God's resources and that He was to be

faithful in investing His resources, He also knew that He had a specific task that He was to accomplish. In the garden He said that the work was finished; the objective had been accomplished.

Jesus' last command to His disciples was given to us in the form of the Great Commission.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Matthew 28:19-20

This is to be our objective. This is the task over which we have been made stewards. The resources of our life, possessions, and ministry, are to be focused on accomplishing this task.

Gives account of his stewardship

The study of the talents is told in the parables. The master gave His servants (stewards) certain resources and then departed into a far country, but eventually returned.

After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Matthew 25:19

Two were faithful and were rewarded. One was slothful and was punished.

One day Jesus is surely coming. When we answer for our stewardship, what will the verdict be? Check one.

Managed	
Neglected	
Mismanaged	
Not Managed	

How are you doing as a steward of God's resources?

Shepherd of God's People

NOTES

He also chose David his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: from the care of the ewes with suckling lambs he brought him, to shepherd Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them with his skillful hands.

Psalms 78:70-72 (NASV)

The dictionary defines a figurative shepherd as "one charged with the religious care and guidance of others."

Raah

The Hebrew word for shepherd is raah: literally, one who pastures, tends, or grazes domestic animals; figuratively, it is one who rules, teaches, or cares for people.

The Old Testament prophets, priests, and rulers are repeatedly called raah and held accountable for shepherding responsibilities over the people.

Poimeno

The Greek word for shepherd is poimeno: literally, one who pastures, tends, or grazes domestic animals; figuratively, to guide, rule, protect, nurture and care for people. This figurative reference to human leaders is the predominant New Testament use of poimeno and its derivatives.

Jesus the Shepherd

Not only does the New Testament repeatedly refer to Jesus as the Shepherd of those He leads, Jesus also referred to Himself as a shepherd.

- The Lord knows His sheep.

I am the good shepherd and know my sheep,
and am known of mine.

John 10:14

- The shepherd is willing to protect the sheep.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd
giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:11

- The Lord provides for His own.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psalms 23:1

- The Lord makes His followers shepherds also.

He said to him again; Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He said unto him, Yea, Lord. Thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

John 21:16

This passage and I Peter 5:1-4 tell us as undershepherds that we are to feed and nurture the flock of God.

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Matthew 9:36

Jesus saw the lost and knew they needed a shepherd.

The great need of the 20th century is for shepherds who will tend the flocks of God. It is only when we have shepherds' hearts that God will be able to meet the needs of His people. Are you a shepherd?

Three Roles in Harmony

Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant....

II Corinthians 3:5-6 (NAS)

The three leadership roles overlap. All three relate to God, His purposes, and His people. However, each highlights a different basic responsibility.

- **Servant** spotlights obedience to God's Person
- **Steward** emphasizes faithfulness to His purpose
- **Shepherd** highlights love for His people

The skilled maturing leader therefore, is one who persistently obeys God, uses His resources to accomplish

NOTES

his God-given task, and lovingly nurtures the people God has provided. Thus, servant, steward, and shepherd are three leadership roles that must function harmoniously to provide a distinctively biblical leadership. These roles and their corresponding responsibilities exist in dynamic--often competitive--tension. God's leaders are therefore completely dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide them through each particular leadership situation.



1 THESSALONIANS 2

PRELIMINARY STUDY

Can you remember the contents of I Thessalonians 1? Review your paraphrase and notice that the beginning of I Thessalonians 2 continues the trends of thought started in chapter one--Paul's ministry among them and its results. (The original New Testament manuscripts had no chapter or verse divisions--these were added later for convenience.)

Read the second chapter 2 to 4 times, including once or twice in another translation.

Number of times read _____

DEFINITIONS

Vs.1	Entrance in	Our visit to you.
Vs.2	Entreated	Treated.
Vs.3	Guile	Impure motives or trickery.
Vs.5	Covetousness	Greed
Vs.14	Judea	Consult map.

WHAT DOES THE CHAPTER SAY?

While you are learning to paraphrase verse by verse it will be helpful to notice possible paragraph divisions in the chapter. Studying paragraphs is a step in learning to summarize or outline a chapter.

For this study, I Thessalonians 2 has already been divided into paragraphs and the first verse of each paragraph has been paraphrased. Complete the paraphrasing.

Paragraph No.1--Verses 1-8

Vs. 1 Brothers, you know personally that our visit among you was not fruitless.

Vs. 2 As you well know, we were badly mistreated in Philippi before coming to you. Nevertheless, in God's strength we fearlessly proclaimed His good news to you in spite of great opposition.

Vs. 3 _____

Vs. 4 _____

Vs. 5 _____

Vs. 6 _____

Vs. 7 _____

Vs. 8 _____

Paragraph No.2--Verses 9-12

Vs. 9 You will recall how hard we labored. We worked day and night, so that we wouldn't be a financial burden to you as we proclaimed God's good news.

Vs. 10 _____

Vs. 11

Vs. 12

Paragraph No.3--Verses 13-16

Vs. 13 We also thank God continually for the way you responded to our preaching. You accepted it not as human teaching, but as it really is, the message of God Himself--words that continue to produce results in the lives of you believers.

Vs. 14 For you began to follow the example of the Judean groups of believers in Christ. You were persecuted by your fellow citizens as the Judean Christians were by their fellow Jews.

Vs. 15

Vs. 16

Paragraph No.4--Verses 17-20

Vs. 17 Although we have been absent from you for a little while, dear brothers, our hearts have been with you and we have eagerly wanted to see you again.

Vs. 18

Vs. 19

Vs. 20 _____

Reread your paraphrase and compare it with the chapter in the Bible. Check to see if you have covered the thoughts in your own words.

PROJECT

Another important theme in I Thessalonians is follow-up. Review chapter two and list verses that refer to helping Christians grow.

Verse

Key Thought

Also be on the lookout for references to follow-up principles and examples in the following chapters.

"Decision is 5%. Following up the decision is 95%."

--Dawson Trotman

WHAT DO OTHER SCRIPTURES SAY?

1. What was their mistreatment at Philippi, mentioned in verse 2?

See Acts 16:23,24 _____

2. Compare Paul's statement in verse 4 with Galatians 1:10. Why was he careful to please God in his preaching? _____

3. What relationship marks Paul's concern in verse 11 and in I Corinthians 4:14,15? _____

4. Compare verse 12 with Colossians 1:10. What accompanies a worthy life? _____

WHAT WAS THE GREATEST BLESSING?

Prayerfully review I Thessalonians 2 and express in a sentence or two what fresh truth you saw, or what responsibility you need to carry out.

