

Servant-Leader

Workbook

**For Those
God Has Chosen
To Serve His Body**

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Preface

The Life Of The Servant Leader

It is almost an exaggerated understatement to say that God is doing a new thing in leadership for the decade of the 90's. It is new in light of the truth lamented by Jeremiah long ago.

"Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22,23)

God's mercy, compassion and faithfulness have been consistently new throughout all generations. His work in developing leadership is new to us, though He used the same process throughout the ages.

In our day, the call from the Father's heart to His disciples is the call to a walk of brokenness, humility and repentance. A casual study of any of the Biblical heroes who led His people in the past, reveals the call to this walk.

Though their settings, times and circumstances were often vastly different, each person was carefully led through a path that crushed, humbled and brought them to their knees. This was true for Moses, David, Paul, Peter and for Jesus, himself. (*Hebrews 5:7-9*) So it will be today for those who will know God and who will walk in the fullness of His anointing.

The process for their lives as well as for ours can be likened to the preparation of the anointing oils and incenses of the Old Testament tabernacle (*Exodus 30:22-25*) The most precious ingredients were gathered, such as myrrh, cinnamon, olives, etc. and given to the perfumer.

The perfumer crushed, ground and burned them, to bring forth the fragrances and oils. In their natural state they were precious, but of little value. After the process they were still precious, but now they were very useful.

If you can relate this to your recent experiences, take heart. God is at work, and it may intensify. It has been said that when Jesus bids a man to follow Him, He has called him to die. Through the pain of death, comes the power of the resurrection. The work of brokenness, humility and repentance produces servants who manifest the life of the greatest Servant.

*"We are pressed on every side, yet not crushed;
We are perplexed, but not in despair;
Persecuted, but not forsaken;
Struck down, but not destroyed;
Always carrying about in the body
The dying of the Lord Jesus,
That the life of Jesus also may be
Manifested in our body"
(2 Corinthians 4:8-10)*

Welcome to the life of a servant-leader!

WHAT EVERY SERVANT LEADER-TRAINEE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PEOPLE

THE WAY WE DEAL WITH PEOPLE AND THE EXPECTATIONS WE PLACE UPON THEM AFFECT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER. OUR JOB IS TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS THAT WILL NOT BE INTERRUPTED BY PERSONAL FRICTION.

Things To Keep In Mind When Working With Others:

1. Everybody is basically tuned to the same radio station: WIII-FM (What Is In It For Me?) This is not inherently wrong. Jesus said we are to love others as we do ourselves. He understood that self-preservation always has priority.
2. Everybody wants to get ahead. Some may feel incapable, but the desire is in them, nevertheless. If we let them know where they stand, how they're doing, they will have a realistic idea of what their futures will be. They need to know what we think of them.
3. Nobody likes uncertainty. Everyone wants to know that if he is the kind of person who can be counted upon there is a place for him to fill in the kingdom. God uses good, productive people, willing to say, "Yes, Lord!" Such people are not only welcome, they are essential to the kingdom.
4. Everybody wants to be up to date. We all need to know what is going on, and what to expect. We like to be in on the planning and execution of things that affect us. So keep your people up to date. Tell them what happens at staff meetings. Talk about plans. Listen to their suggestions and adopt the good ones.
5. Everybody wants pleasant surroundings. Work with your people to make your half-way house, or your home group area an attractive place they can be proud of. By setting a high standard, you stimulate your people to follow your example.
6. Everybody wants leadership. When we are new at leadership, we usually make one of two mistakes. Either we want everyone to like us, so we are too easy, or we want to establish our position fast, so we are too hard. This doesn't mean a good leader is always in the middle. We can be easy on some things and hard on others.

When we are always too easygoing, somebody else in the group will become leader because the group wants somebody to make decisions. If we are always too hard, we will again lose the group because we will be too difficult to work with.

7. Everybody wants security. This feeling extends to their immediate family responsibilities as well as to themselves. If they feel secure about their personal direction, they will see that their families are being considered also. When dealing with a married person, we must also never forget to include his concern for his family.

HOW TO KNOW YOUR PEOPLE BETTER AND HELP THEM GET THE THINGS THEY WANT

1. Learn about their background, their personal interests and their families. You have to know some facts before you can show some genuine interest. Keep your sessions as natural and informal as possible.
2. Study their job performance. Find their strong and weak points. Let them know how they are doing whenever the opportunity arises.
3. Do what you can to see that everyone is properly placed. A person may be ineffective if he is in a Job that doesn't fit his abilities. Discuss the situation with him to be certain he is not simply being rebellious.
4. Know how people team up. See how each is influenced by the others. Sometimes informal groupings reveal the best work teams. People who have something in common tend to band together. Cliques must be avoided at all costs, but harmony in personalities usually result in the greatest production.
5. Be courteous. Remember, you set the example. Never criticize a person in front of other people. This usually occurs when you are angry and acting on impulse. You probably don't have all the facts, and you antagonize the person you are talking to as well as those around you.
6. Don't give advice on personal decisions. If someone has to make a personal decision, don't make it for him. Help him look at all the facts, pro and con, objectively. You may suggest that he needs additional information, and recommend where he might get it. Try to build his confidence so he can make the decision based upon the facts.

WHAT YOU MUST DO AS A LEADER

1. Learn how to delegate authority. Unless you do this, your time will be spent with endless details, paper work and minor decisions.
2. Study your people to decide what authority you can delegate and to whom you can delegate it. Remember the rule, that unless someone is a good follower, he will never make a good leader.
3. Train those to whom you delegate authority. This may seem to be a slow and cumbersome task, but unless you take the time to do this, you will find yourself following behind them, cleaning up their messes.
4. One of the strengths of delegation is that you build a group that is trained and able to carry on when you are absent.
5. When giving assignments:
 - * Explain what is to be done and why.
 - * Take time. Don't make the assignment when you are in too much of a hurry to explain it fully.
 - * Give just enough of the right details. Answer questions.

- * Be specific as to how it is to be done and by what time it is to be completed. Be realistic. Get the person's suggestions and comments.
 - * Incorporate a follow-up in the assignment. For example, "I'll check with you this afternoon to see how its coming."
 - * Follow up when you said you would. Make necessary corrections. Be constructive in your suggestions
6. Make the correction of an error an opportunity to explain the importance of a person's job. Some may think what they're doing is not that important. They need to see the contribution they are actually making.
 7. When someone makes an error:
 - * Don't put off the correction. If the error was not too serious, you may forget to correct it. Don't nag, and don't pick at unimportant things.
 - * Get the facts about the mistake. Take time to find out who is responsible.
 - * Talk to the person in private.
 - * Review the importance of the job.
 - * Explain the error and show the correct way. Make it a training session, not a blaming session.
 - * Ask the person for his suggestions.
 - * Tell him you will check with him to see how he is doing.
 - * Answer all his questions.
 - * Follow up.
 - * If the person continues to make mistakes, take time to retrain. Your goal is to avoid future mistakes as well as correct those already made.

HOW TO HANDLE PROBLEMS

1. At the first sign of trouble, take action. Don't wait until the problem becomes major.
2. Get the facts. Try to establish the cause for the problem. Before taking action, be sure to have the whole story. Don't over-investigate a small situation.
3. Weigh the facts and decide what should be done. Fit the parts of the situation together and consider their bearing on each other. Consider all possible solutions. Decide what you are trying to accomplish and weigh the possible solutions against your objectives.
4. Don't jump to conclusions.
5. Decide what to do and take action. Select the proper time and place.
6. Don't pass the buck, take the initiative. Be objective, fair and constructive. Focus attention upon the problem, not the person.
7. Check the results. Follow up to see if your solution is working. If it isn't working, review the facts, develop a new solution and take action again. If necessary, get help.
8. When working with a person, be sure to let him do some of the talking.

MY PERSONAL CHECKLIST

1. Do I know the name of everyone in my group?
2. Do I always use their names when speaking to them?
3. How long has it been since I have talked individually to each member of my group?
4. How long has it been since I have found something good about each member to give them a word of praise?
5. How many of my people have never received a display of interest or a kind word from me?
6. Have I really taken the time and trouble to get to know them?
7. Do I show favoritism in any way?
8. Do I ridicule or use sarcasm?
9. Do I keep promises?
10. Am I really willing to listen to suggestions, or do I usually resist or ignore them?
11. Are my people afraid to talk to me?
12. Do I hog authority or do I delegate willingly and wisely at every opportunity?
13. Am I so jealous that I take all the credit for what my people accomplish?
14. How well do I train people?
15. How long is it since I have had a meeting with my people?
16. Do I sincerely cooperate with others, or do I resist?
17. Am I willing to accept and admit blame when I have made a mistake?
18. Am I a driver or a shepherd?
19. How frequently do I criticize those above me in authority?
20. How would Jesus rate me as a Servant-Leader?

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

What is a Servant-Leader? We will look first at the Bible to get some Biblical background, then we will look at the life of Jesus and other leaders.

When we try to identify leaders, we find that they fit many different roles. You see that a minister administrates and organizes and makes decisions and delegates responsibilities and makes plans for the future.

That is true of most leaders, but beyond that, even though they have those distinctions, the most important part of a leader is his heart. We need to discover the heart of a true Biblical leader, and the characteristics that make up that kind of heart.

When we look at the Biblical leaders, the basic distinction is that they were chosen to serve. They were chosen to be servants. A leader of God's people must have the inner attitudes and motivations of a servant. He must be willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish what God has set before him, whether it is a minor task, or something great.

All the other distinctions are important, the responsibilities and duties, but it is the depth of the heart that really matters. Most all of us who want to be leaders would like for God to use us in some great capacity. We look forward to the time when God will move through us and multiply and bring forth all sorts of good things.

Before that can happen, we have to be put through the proper preparation. That is where some of us drop out. We aspire to be leaders and we want to function effectively for God, but we are quick to drop out when we realize the price that has to be paid.

There has probably never been another time in history when God has purged and prepared people as he is doing right now. He is not going to let people stay in leadership who don't have character. He is purging the uncommitted, those of us who have been living off our natural talents, rather than letting God do a deep work in our flesh so we can become men of character.

When we study the leaders of the Bible, we can see that God prepared each one, individually. He prepared them Himself, before He turned them loose to do what He had called them to do. For each person, He had a different program.

Joshua's program was different from Moses' program. David was anointed as king at the age of seventeen, but he underwent thirteen years of preparation before he actually became ruler. He spent those thirteen years in the wilderness, in caves, going from place to place, running from King Saul. He was being prepared for his kingship.

Some were in preparation longer than others. Moses was prepared for almost eighty years before he went forth to accomplish God's ordained purpose for his life. Joshua was a little younger than that. Each leader experienced different circumstances in their lives before they could fulfill what God wanted them to do.

Every leader, from Abraham through the Apostles, was called a servant of God. That distinction was given to them. God prepared them to be servants to His people. They weren't necessarily called to be great rulers, or great leaders, they were called to be servants.

That is the difficult part of the process. There is a process that goes on in the life of every leader. For those of us who are called to lead, it started at salvation.

1. The seed of ministry is planted at the point of salvation. When we are born again, when we receive the Spirit of God, that is when the seed of ministry is also born within us.

Hopefully, that seed will be nurtured and brought forth in our lives as we become discipled to Jesus. At some point in our lives, we will step into a new dimension, a dimension which the Bible identifies as:

2. A call upon our lives. We begin to hear clearly from God that He is calling us to His purpose. He may call us into a specific ministry. This comes as a result of the nurturing of the seed. It develops into the birth of a ministry.

This can take many forms, such as pastor, teacher, director, or whatever else God may have in store for each specific person.

3. At that point, we enter a time of preparation. It is a time in which we struggle, because testing is involved. The Bible talks of approximately fifteen different tests God puts His leaders through. We may touch on that subject in a later segment. One of the tests is our willingness to become servants.

Will we be faithful in another man's house? Jesus taught that. If so, we can be faithful in our own house. Will we be faithful with another man's money? If so, God can bless us with money of our own. Will we be faithful with another man's tools? These questions are part of our testing.

There will be times of dryness, when we will hear nothing from God and we wonder what God is doing. It is a test to see how we will handle the situation in which we find ourselves.

4. After the period of testing, the ministry is launched. When we have reached a certain state of maturity, we will be ready to step into the fulfillment of the ministry. That is when God will open His hand and begin to use all the preparation and testing to produce fruit through us.

During this time, God has been training us to understand what it means to be a servant, to follow the example of Jesus and the other men of God.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1. <u>Leader's Salvation</u>
(ministry planted
as a seed) | 2. <u>Leader's Call</u>
(ministry birthed
as a sprout) | 3. <u>Leader's Preparation</u>
(ministry tested as
a plant) | 4. <u>Leader's Function</u>
(ministry matures as
a fruit-bearing plant) |
|---|--|---|---|

WORDS AND MEANINGS: Old Testament:

1. **Ebed.** This Hebrew word is used in the Old Testament almost 750 times. About 25 or 30 of the most well-known Bible characters are identified by that word. It means "a servant of the Lord." Almost every leader in the Old Testament was identified with that word. There are several ways in which Ebed is actually used.

- a) A person who is at the complete disposal of another person. (*Genesis 24*) Abraham had put everything in his house under the control of his servant. He trusted his servant even to the point of finding a bride for his son, Isaac. This tells us that, as a servant-leader of the people of God, we must be at the complete disposal of the Lord, and also at the disposal of the people He calls us to serve.
- b) A person who works for a master as a paid slave. (*Deuteronomy 15:12-18*) If we are going to be leaders in the house of God, we must be people who work for the Lord Jesus. Paul tells us many times that we should do our work as unto the Lord.
- c) A slave who has given up all his personal rights to serve his master. The Bible calls this person a bond slave, or love slave. (*Deuteronomy 15:12-18*) To be a church leader, we must relinquish all our personal rights in order to serve our Master, and to serve those He has called us to serve.
- d) A slave in the service of a king. (*1 Kings 1:9,47*) We are also servants of the King of kings and Lord of lords. A Christian leader must be a love-slave to Jesus.
- e) A person who serves in the temple. (*1 Samuel 3:9*) All of us who want to become leaders in the Lord's service, know we need to serve Him in His house, and all that means.

Some well-known Bible characters for which the word "Ebed" is used as a title of distinction are:

1. Abraham (*Genesis 26:24*)
2. Jacob (*Genesis 32:4*)
3. Moses (*Exodus 4:10*)
4. Caleb (*Numbers 14:24*)
5. Joshua (*Deuteronomy 5:15*)
6. Samuel (*1 Samuel 3:10*)
7. David (*1 Samuel 3:18*)
8. Solomon (*1 Kings 1:19*)
9. Elijah (*2 Kings 9:36*)
10. Jonah (*2 Kings 14:25*)
11. Job (*Job 1:1*)
12. Isaiah (*Isaiah 20:3*)

2. **Abad.** This word applies mostly to work. A slave who does things in the realm of work. It also has applications which help define church leadership.

- a) A person who tills the ground. (*Genesis 2:5; 3:23*) This is the distinction given to Adam. One of Adam's roles as a servant of God was to till the ground. It was a privilege for Adam to be

called a servant of God. He was chosen to take care of God's garden. It is the same for us, God has given us a privilege.

When we see people struggling with a negative attitude, it is our privilege and responsibility to break up the fallow ground of the hearts of those people, so they can receive the Spirit of God. It is a prophetic role in the body of Christ to confront and exhort and encourage our brothers and sisters.

- b) A person who dresses or keeps a garden. (*Genesis 2:15*) Not only the actual tilling of the ground, but also the dressing, or landscaping of the ground. As leaders, we are called to dress and to keep the vineyard, which is the church, the body of Christ. When we help a person deal with his bad attitudes, we trim off some of his dead branches. We are being used as a part of God's pruning process.
- c) A priest who serves the people. (*Numbers 18:7, 23*) We are set apart to serve God's people. As Christian leaders, we must be willing to lay down our lives in sacrificial service to those whom God has called us to serve.

3. **Sakiyr**. Generally means a slave or household servant. He receives wages, paid either by the day or by the year. He is a hired servant.

- a) As a hired servant, this man was not allowed to eat of the Passover of his master's family. (*Exodus 12:3-45*)
- b) A leader of the church should forsake the attitude of being a paid professional. God does not want us to serve His body as a paid professional. We are there because of our love for Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. We are in relationship with Him as a bond-slave, rather than someone who is performing for money. We must be able to eat of the true Passover, the lamb of God.
- c) A hired slave is not a love-slave, or bond-slave. (*Leviticus 25:39-42*) As leaders, we must come to the place where our total selves are given in exchange for Christ.
- d) A Sakiyr servant was worth only half as much as a love-slave. (*Deuteronomy 15:18*) If leadership is motivated out of a sense of money, it is worth half as much as leadership motivated out of love.
- e) A Sakiyr could also be a stranger, or sojourner in the land, taken into the house as a slave. (*Leviticus 25:6*) As leaders of the church we need to recognize that we were once wandering strangers before Jesus bought us with His own blood, and placed us in the house of God.

4. **Sharath**. A person used to do menial and insignificant tasks in the service of another.

- a) A priest who ministered and served in his priestly office was often called a Sharath (*Exodus 28:35-43*). As leaders in the church, we must perform seemingly insignificant tasks to fulfill our roles as a servant-priests.

- b) A priest who ministers continually before the ark of the covenant. (*1 Chronicles 16:37*) As leader, we are responsible to continually receive power for service by entering into the presence of the Lord with praise and worship.
- c) Joshua was a Sharath to Moses. (*Exodus 24:13; Numbers 11:28*) As leaders of God's people we have authority only to the degree that we are in submission to the authority of those over us. For forty years, Joshua was a Sharath, the right hand man of Moses. By functioning as a Sharath, Joshua was preparing himself to become a bond-slave to God.

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE OF SERVANTHOOD: (*Genesis 24:1-67*)

- (Verse 2) True servants have a record of longevity.
- (Verses 3-9) True servants have integrity in both word and deed.
- (Verses 10,11) True servants are faithful stewards.
- (Verses 12-15) True servants depend upon God.
- (Verses 16-25) True servants wait upon the Lord to work.
- (Verse 26) True servants are worshippers.
- (Verse 27) True servants are led by the Spirit.
- (Verses 28-32) True servants are blessed by the Lord.
- (Verses 33-49) True servants represent their Master with powerful words of testimony.
- (Verse 50) True servants are received as being from the Lord.
- (Verses 51-61) True servants help prepare the Bride for the Bridegroom.
- (Verses 62-67) True servants lead the Bride to the Bridegroom.

WORDS AND MEANINGS: New Testament:

1. **Diakoneo.** A verb which means to be an attendant, to wait upon, or to minister to. It is the action of a servant, what a servant does.

The following scriptures show how the word is used to describe the different examples of serving in the New Testament:

- (*Matthew 4:11*) "Angels came and ministered unto Him."
- (*Matthew 8:15*) "She arose and ministered."
- (*Matthew 20:28*) "Came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."
- (*Matthew 25:44*) "In prison and did not minister."
- (*Matthew 27:55*) "Many women ministering unto Him."
- (*Luke 10:40*) "My sister has left me to serve alone."
- (*Luke 12:37*) "Servants will come forth and serve them."
- (*Luke 22:26*) "He that is chief, as he does serve."
- (*Luke 22:27*) "I am among you as he who serves."
- (*John 12:26*) "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me."
- (*Acts 6:2*) "Leave the Word of God and serve tables."
- (*Romans 15:25*) "To minister unto the saints."
- (*1 Timothy 3:10*) "Let them use the office of a deacon."

2. **Diakonia**. A noun which means the "office" of service or ministry. It identifies the role of the one serving.

The following scriptures show how the word is used to describe the role of ministry:

- (Acts 1:17) "Having obtained part of this ministry."
- (Acts 1:25) "He may take part of this ministry."
- (Acts 6:1) "Neglected in daily distributions."
- (Acts 6:4) "But to pray and minister the Word."
- (1 Corinthians 12:5) "Are differences of administrations."
- (Ephesians 4:12) "For the work of the ministry."
- (Colossians 4:17) "Take heed to the ministry."
- (1 Timothy 4:12) "Putting me into the ministry."

3. **Diakonos**. A noun used to describe the person who serves.

a) It is translated into three different English words:

- Minister
- Servant
- Deacon

b) It indicates the setting apart of a man for a specific role.

c) Most ministers are not trained to be servants because they do not understand the true meaning of the words as they are used in the New Testament.

The following scriptures show how the word is used to describe the three different roles:

<u>Minister</u>	<u>Servant</u>	<u>Deacon</u>
(Matthew 20:26)	(Matthew 23:11)	(Philippians 1:1)
(Mark 10:43)	(Matthew 22:13)	(1 Timothy 3:8)
(Romans 13:4)	(Mark 9:35)	(1 Timothy 3:12)
(Romans 15:8)	(John 2:5,9)	
(Ephesians 3:7)	(Romans 16:1)	
(1 Corinthians 3:5)	(John 12:26)	
(Colossians 1:25)		
(Galatians 2:17)		
(1 Thessalonians 3:2)		
(2 Corinthians 3:6)		
(2 Corinthians 6:4)		
(2 Corinthians 11:15)		

d) The true New Testament understanding of the role of deacon is different from modern understanding. In most churches today, deacons perform menial tasks. But the early church appointed men to be deacons when they showed the qualities of a deacon, as outlined in Acts 6:3. Modern churches appoint men to the office and expect them to function. The New

Testament church did not recognize men as deacons until they were already functioning in the requirements of the office.

e) Any leader must first be a deacon (servant) in the true sense of the word. On the basis of his servanthood, he is able to lead. The ministries of Jesus and the Apostles were all founded on the basis of a servant's heart. As His leaders, we must desire to serve, not to be served. We are to give, not take.

f) God calls us to be:

Servants of God (2 Corinthians 6:3)
Servants of Christ (1 Timothy 4:6)
Servants of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 11:23)
Servants of the New Covenant (2 Corinthians 3:6)
Servants of the church (Colossians 1:25)

g) He desires that we, as servants, perform any task the Spirit gives us, whether it appears to be menial or monumental.

4. **Doulos**. Generally signifies bondage, but most commonly applies to a servant who has willingly bonded himself to a master.

a) This word is used 122 times in the New Testament. Many times Paul used the word to describe the depth of his heart relationship to Jesus:

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." . . . (Romans 1:1)
"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." . . . (Philippians 1:1)
"Paul, a servant of God." (Titus 1:1)
"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." . . . (Philemon 1:9)

b) "Doulos" ties in with the Old Testament word "Ebed." (*Deuteronomy 15:12-18*)

c) The key is that it involves a person's free choice. A true love-slave is a slave by choice.

d) *"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more." (1 Corinthians 9:19)*

e) *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19,20)*

f) It is as if we have been on a slave block. The devil has bid for us, but Jesus steps up with blood on His hands and He says, "This one is Mine." That is what it means to be redeemed. Jesus has paid the full debt. He has redeemed us out of the hands of Satan. The result is that we really do belong to Jesus. When we understand that, we should rush to take the position of bond-slave. It should be a choice of our heart, done out of our gratitude for His overwhelming love.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A BOND SERVANT (SLAVE):

1. A bond servant is disciplined in study and obedience to the word of God.
(1 Peter 2:2)
(2 Peter 1:3-11)
(James 1:21)
2. A bond servant has a humble, broken spirit and a repentant heart.
(Matthew 5:3,5)
(Matthew 11:29)
(Psalm 34: 18)
(Psalm 51:17)
3. A bond servant lives by grace.
(1 Corinthians 1:25-31)
(2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
4. A bond servant embraces the circumstances in which he finds himself.
(Romans 8:28-39)
(1 Peter 1:6-8)
(1 Peter 4:12)
(James 1:2-4)
5. A bond servant is submissive in character.
(Ephesians 5:18-21)
(1 Peter 2:13-18)
(Hebrews 13:17)
6. A bond servant lives in covenant relationship with his Master.
(Romans 15:14)
(Ephesians 4:1-6)
(Colossians 3:12-16)
(John 17:22,23)
7. A bond servant lays down his personal rights.
(Exodus 21:5)
(1 Corinthians 9:4-19)
(1 Thessalonians 2:4-13)
(2 Thessalonians 3:7-9)
(2 Timothy 2:24,25)

Chapter One . . . Introduction

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 139)

1. What characteristics must a leader of God's people have?

2. What do we discover when we study the leaders of the Bible?

3. What is one primary characteristic of an "Ebed" type servant?

4. As an "Abad" servant, how do we till the ground of the hearts of God's people?

5. In what way is every servant-leader called to be a "Sharath" type servant?

6. Why should every servant-leader take the attitude of a deacon?

Chapter Two

SERVANTHOOD AS SEEN BY JESUS

The best model and the best teacher in the area of servanthood is Jesus.

One of the clearest and strongest statements made by Jesus came in *Matthew 20:20-27*. There are probably a dozen different incidents in which Jesus taught about what it meant to be a servant. Servanthood was to be the heart of all His followers, especially His leaders.

Anyone who would seek to lead the way for the people of God. would necessarily have the heart qualities of a servant. Not only did He teach that concept, He also lived it.

- . . . *"But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.*
- . . . *Yet it shall not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you let him be your servant.*
- . . . *And whoever desires to be first among you let him be your slave;*
- . . . *just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'* (Matthew 20:25-28)

With those words, Jesus gave the framework for the requirements to be a leader in His kingdom. Think about the day in which He was on the earth. He was giving an illustration in contrasts between the rulers of His day, the Herods, the Caesars, the Pilates.

Those men had ruthlessly made their way into power. Herod killed people in his own family to take the throne. Many of the Caesars did the same thing.

There is a saying that 'Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' Power can utterly destroy a person unless he has the strength of God to enable him to deal with it. Jesus was telling His disciples to look around them and observe those in power.

Even the tax collectors used their power to impose higher taxes and fill their own pockets through extortion. In the world, those in authority tend to use that authority for their own personal gain. And as part of the process, they use their authority to lord it over others.

Jesus is also saying, "All of you will have positions in My kingdom, all of you have been given a spiritual gift. But if you are going to be effective in My kingdom, it will not be in the way of the Gentiles."

The gifts and positions He gives each of us are not given for us to lord over one another. They are to be laid at the feet of each other, with a heart that says, "Brother, I have come to serve you with this." You are to serve the body of Christ through your gift or your position. That is an attitude which has to be developed within us. It does not come naturally, it has to be learned.

Many of us, when we are spiritually immature, run into problems as we exercise our spiritual gifts. We use them to control and to hurt people, simply because we don't understand how to use the gifts. But that is not from the wrong heart motive. In referring to the Gentiles, Jesus is talking about their heart motive.

The heart motive of a servant of God will be to lay his gifts and his position at the feet of others, to serve them, just as Jesus did. The servant will not seek a preferential position. James and John had fiery personalities. Jesus called them sons of thunder. The other disciples knew that if James and John were placed in positions of authority they could create some problems.

Notice that Jesus did not disqualify their gifts and personal abilities. He asked them if they were able to drink of the cup. They assured Him that they were able. He then told them, "You will indeed."

James was the first martyr of the Christian church. He was killed in the honor of the Lord. John survived all attempts to kill him, and was finally exiled on the Isle of Patmos, where he received the vision which we call the Book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible.

In *Acts 15*, at a time when the Gentiles had begun to receive the Spirit of God, and had begun to do the things the Jews were doing, concerning all the rules of the church, they called in Paul and Barnabas and other leaders. They got into a heated confrontation.

The Jews wanted the Gentiles to conform to the old laws, but the Gentiles had received the Spirit of Christ without any of the old laws being applied.

The two factions had reached a point of trying to compromise, when James stood up and gave them a concise plan of how to pull the whole thing together, and bring harmony between the two groups. He had grown in the grace of the Lord. He was no longer a son of thunder, he ended up serving the body. He became one of the main leaders of the church, and he led with wisdom and compassion.

In *Matthew, Chapter 10*, Jesus called the twelve disciples apart from the multitude and chose them to be His apostles. He gave them power, anointing them to go forth and do the same things He had done. This was the point at which He was sending them out. We are given an opportunity to observe some of His teaching to these special men.

In *Verses 24 and 25*, He tells them, "*A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he should be like his teacher, and a servant like his*

master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!"

Beelzebub was one of the demonic names they were calling Jesus. He told His disciples they could expect similar treatment.

Two other scriptures in which Jesus compares leadership and servanthood are *Matthew 23:11, and Mark 9:35*. It is interesting that the kingdom of God appears to be one big paradox. It is always opposite from the way of the world.

To have life, we must die. To receive, we must give. If you want to be first in the eyes of the Father, set your heart on being last. Paul said the logical mind cannot comprehend the things of God, because they are against the logic of man.

An interesting parallel of servanthood can be found in *John 13, and Philipians 2*. The parallel involves what Jesus lived out His last night in the upper room, and what Paul is saying to us in *Philipians, Chapter 2*. What Paul taught, Jesus had already acted out.

- . . . *"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God,*
- *. . . rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about.*
- *. . . Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them*
- *with the towel with which He was girded." (John 13:3-5).*

As we saw, in *Luke, Chapter 22*, the disciples had been quarreling with each other at this same table about who would be the greatest. They were real men, with real issues and real problems and attitudes. In the midst of all that fussing, Jesus stood up and began the process of washing their feet.

- . . . *"So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you?*
- *. . . You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you say well, for so I am.*
- *. . . If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.*
- *. . . For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done unto you.*
- *. . . "Most assuredly I say unto you a servant is not greater than his master, nor is he who is sent greater than He who has sent him.*
- *. . . If you know these things, happy are you if you do them." (John 13:12-17).*

Notice that Jesus knew He came from God, and He knew He was going back to God. One of the first things we should deal with as servant leaders is where we have come from, why we are here, and where we are going. Jesus is saying, "I know where I came from, I know why I am here and I know where I am going."

Jesus laid aside His garments and girded Himself with a towel. He put off His Lordship, and took on servanthood. This was an expression of His humility. He also knew His hour had come, the fulfillment of His ministry on earth.

Let's look at the parallel in *Philippians 2*. Here we see Jesus living out the life of a servant.

- . . . "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,
- . . . who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,
- . . . but made Himself of no reputation (emptied Himself), taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men.
- . . . And being found in the appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even to the death of the cross." (*Philippians 2:5-8*).

He was in the form of God, He knew who He was. But He emptied Himself, laid aside His glory, His Lordship, just as He took off His outer garment in the upper room, and took the form of a servant. He then humbled Himself, even unto death. Jesus lived out, in His flesh, the life of being a servant. He not only taught it, He lived it by example.

Symbolically, as He took off His garment that last night and replaced it with a servant's towel and knelt at the feet of the disciples, He showed them, by example, what He was doing in the plan of salvation. He had left the form of God, emptied Himself, took on the form of a man, and humbled Himself, even to death.

If Jesus was the ideal servant, He has shown us that an ideal servant will know his identity, he will know where he has come from, why he is here, and where he is going. That is received through the good news of the Gospel. If we don't know our identity, there is no way we can serve in the full capacity of what God has called us to do.

Otherwise, our identity will stay confused, just as it has been all our lives. We will be serving for the wrong reasons, we will be caught up in performance. But when we know who we are, we are free to serve the Lord in every way He would have us serve Him. We will be free from the compulsions which have driven us to seek approval from men.

Also, ideal servants empty themselves. We empty ourselves of all our rights, privileges, reputations and everything else which would keep us from taking on the form of a servant. Even though these things are rightfully ours, we lay them aside willingly to serve the Lord.

Ideal servants also live to serve others. Jesus lived His whole life to serve others. He had no desire for personal gain or false glory. He lived His life unto the Father.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SERVANT-LEADER, AS OUTLINED BY JESUS:

The Beatitudes, or attitudes to be: (*Matthew 5:3-12*)

Notice that Jesus is talking primarily to the 12 disciples, although a multitude had gathered. Some have said the Sermon On The Mount contains the principles of kingdom life. The beatitudes are the characteristics God looks for in His people today. They are the kind of heart attitudes to be found in those whom God will use mightily today.

This is not a buffet presentation from which we can pull the characteristics we prefer, it is a presentation of building blocks. We start at the beginning, allow that to be worked into us, then

we go on, with each characteristic building upon the other, until we finally come to the end, which is persecution. Persecution is the final result of a life which has been lived for Jesus Christ.

- . . . "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- . . . Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*
- . . . Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*
- . . . Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.*
- . . . Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*
- . . . Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*
- . . . Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*
- . . . Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- . . . Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My namesake.*
- . . . Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:3-12)*

Notice two things: First, Jesus said, "Blessed are they..." Jesus begins with a specific characteristic, then He gives a promise for each of those qualities. As we allow God, by His Spirit, to work these characteristics into us, we receive the blessing that goes with it.

1. **"Poor in spirit"** appears 24 times in the Gospels, and 34 times throughout the New Testament. It has three basic meanings:

1. To bow down, timidly;
2. To be destitute;
3. To beg.

It is not speaking of physical poverty. It speaks of poverty in the spirit, or poor in reference to the spirit. Jesus is referring to an absolute attitude of humility. It is a portrait of one who sees himself as being spiritually bankrupt. He realizes he deserves nothing, but He turns to the heavenly Father with total trust and obedience, with the faith that He is the only One who can supply what we lack.

That is how we must come to God, realizing we have nothing of ourselves to give to Him. This is a contrast to the attitude we see in the Pharisees as we read the Gospel. Those who were in leadership in Jesus' day were self-righteous. But the servant of God knows he has nothing within himself to justify himself before God. He can only cry out for mercy.

Throughout the ministry of Jesus, He consistently emphasized the contrast between His disciples and Himself. He rebuked them for their worldly ideas, their lack of faith, their judgmental spirits.

Notice the promise. Most of us have come to the place where we have realized we have nothing spiritually, and we cry out to God for salvation. When we cry out, we receive the gift of life, the gift of the kingdom of heaven.

2. Once we recognize that we are "poor in spirit," we begin to "mourn" our condition. This word describes someone who breaks forth in tears. It is a passionate grief, coming from deep within

a person, a true, Godly sorrow. This is not referring to someone who has realized he has been caught in a sinful act. It is the kind of mourning which comes from a repentant heart.

It is a true servant's attitude to realize our own sinfulness and unworthiness, and God's grace being lavished upon us. It also fills us with compassion. As we live with this reality, we develop a sincere caring for others. True servants are compassionate like their Lord, and the promise for them is that they shall be comforted.

A true servant-leader understands what he is capable of doing in the flesh apart from the rule of God in his life. He understands it is only by God's grace that he has been extracted from the kingdom of Satan and placed into the kingdom of God.

3. After we have seen the poverty in our spirit, and after we have mourned our pitiful condition, one of the characteristics that begins to come forth, is meekness. Jesus said it was one of the characteristics of His own life. (*Matthew 11:28,29*)

Most people translate "meek" as "weak," but it doesn't mean that at all. It is used only four times in the New Testament. The basic meaning of the word is "gentle." Only Jesus and Moses were called "meek" in the Bible.

Matthew 5:5 does not say, "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall become doormats.*" Meekness is not weakness. Jesus is talking about the gentle spirit of a disciplined and controlled life. It is the reflection of the fruit of the Spirit of self control.

No matter what happens, when things seem to be falling apart, a meek person has the ability to remain peaceful, to retain control and to continue through the problem.

Other uses of this word in the Greek language are:

1. A wild stallion that has been tamed. It is still strong, but it is now meek.
2. Carefully chosen words that soothe strained emotions, are described as meek words.
3. Ointment that takes the sting and fever out of a wound, is termed meek.

The blessing is that the meek shall inherit the earth. That was a note of comfort for those who were living under the bondage of Rome. It is also comfort to us as we look at the evil that is rampant in the world.

It appears that the wicked are always on the throne and the righteous are always on the scaffold. But we know that God will show forth His righteousness in the end, and good will triumph over evil. God's people will inherit the earth if we follow the building blocks of character He has given us.

4. The fourth Beatitude builds upon the one we just discussed. There comes a point in our walk, after we have seen our condition and mourned about it, after we have begun to develop meekness, we begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

The word used for hunger, literally means to be continually hungry. The word used for thirst, taken spiritually, means to passionately desire spiritual good. This shows that a servant of God

will continually hunger and thirst after the righteousness of God. Once we receive a taste of it, we want more and more.

This righteousness is the saving righteousness found only in Christ. The promise is that we will be filled. Our responsibility is to hunger and thirst; God's responsibility is to fill us. It is the same word to describe the feeding and fattening of cattle. The servant who continually hungers and thirsts shall be thoroughly satisfied.

5. As we receive the righteousness of God, we receive his ability to express mercy. We have received mercy; therefore, we are able to show mercy to others. God forgives us as we forgive others. If we do not forgive or show mercy to others, God will not forgive or show mercy to us.

Walking in the righteousness of God, we become more understanding and considerate and compassionate of others. We become merciful. The word, mercy, is equivalent to a Hebrew word which means covenant love.

It is the same word David used with Jonathan, his best friend. Mercy existed between those two men and assured them that they would remain loyal to one another and to the bond they had formed.

To be merciful, means to identify ourselves so completely with another person that his condition becomes our condition. That is what Christ has done with us. Because we are flesh, Jesus likewise became flesh. He took upon Himself all the things we experience as human beings, so He could become a merciful and faithful High Priest.

A true servant is not a person who can walk past a person who has fallen while stepping off a curb. He will not stand by and watch while a woman is being attacked. He will minister to the miserable. He will help those who hurt.

True servants are merciful. They care about people. They get involved. They even get dirty if they have to. They offer more than just pious words. God promises that the merciful will receive mercy. He will pour out His mercy in even greater measure than His servants have demonstrated to others.

6. The next step that continues to build within us is purity of heart. The mercy builds on top of the other attitudes to produce a purity of heart within us. This speaks of the inner heart motive, the depth of a person, not simply outward morality. It can be translated literally to mean pure or clean, with reference to the heart.

The basic meaning of the word pure, is unmixed. It means having unmixed motives, a heart that is loyal under all circumstances. It does not refer simply to doing right things, but doing right things for the right reasons.

As the Lord renews our minds He frees us from our duplicity and hypocrisy. He wants us to have pure hearts as we come into His presence. He wants us to be real, down to the core of our being.

This is in contrast to the religious leaders in the day of Jesus. They had the outward appearance of being pure in heart, but inside they were phony. They were role-playing, thinking they were better than they actually were. They were big on conforming to rules and on personal behavior, but they paid little attention to obedience to the actual word of God.

Jesus said if our behavior is opposite of such hypocrisy, if our behavior is sincere, based upon a pure heart, we will see God.

7. Coming out of their purity of heart, the servants of God become peacemakers. As peacemakers, we shall be called the sons of God. This is the only time this word is used in the New Testament, and it means literally, one who makes peace.

It doesn't mean we are to avoid all conflict and confrontation. It doesn't mean we are to be laid back, easygoing and relaxed. It doesn't mean we are to defend peace at any price. It doesn't mean we are to be passive and compromise our convictions when we are in the presence of those who disagree with us.

The true Biblical sense of the word refers to people who are making peace. Before we can do that, we must be at peace with ourselves. And if we work through this building process, we will have peace in our hearts. We have peace with God, through Jesus Christ.

We are to be able to settle quarrels, and to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We cannot accomplish this unless we have the peace of God. The peace of God passes all understanding.

It means we have laid down all our weapons of war and have been reconciled to each other in a tender embrace. It is as if God has taken us in His arms, we have laid down our hostility, His judgment has been satisfied, and we are no longer hostile with God nor with each other.

Peacemakers allow God to work that out in them so they can work it out in others. A peacemaker reconciles one person to another.

A beautiful picture of peacemaking can be seen in the relationship between Jonathan and David. Jonathan was the son of Saul, the king. Saul was after David, trying to kill him. David and Jonathan were good friends, and they met one time in the woods, because they couldn't be seen in public together.

On this occasion, David took off his armor and discarded his bow and arrows and gave them to Jonathan. He made himself completely vulnerable to Jonathan. Jonathan would have been the rightful heir to Saul's throne, but he knew that God had anointed David.

This was a golden opportunity for Jonathan to kill David. No one would have known. When Saul died, Jonathan would have been king. David was saying to Jonathan, "I am at peace with you. I am totally vulnerable and transparent with you."

When we are really in a peaceful relationship with someone, that is the way it is expressed. We trust our lives in that person's hands. We trust them with our most damaging thoughts or experiences, knowing we are safe in that relationship. It is the same as a covenant relationship.

Can you see how all this builds, and how it has to be appropriated every day?

Every day we should recognize our poverty in the spirit.

Every day we should mourn our condition and repent over those sins which are still prevalent in our flesh.

Every day we need to allow God to rule us by His Spirit, so that meekness and gentleness and self control comes forth.

Every day we should hunger and thirst after righteousness for God.

Every day we should be merciful and obtain mercy from God.

Every day we should hunger and thirst after purity of heart, so we can have the revelation of God. With all that, we will be able to live as peacemakers unto the Lord.

After that has been worked in, we find Jesus saying in *Verses 10-12*, "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" The kingdom of heaven is where we started and where we end.

When we are living out the process of *Verses 3-9*, submitting ourselves completely to God, persecution will naturally follow. Peter said that all who live godly lives through Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. It may come first in verbal form, but it may also come, eventually, in physical form.

Jesus tells us to rejoice and be exceedingly glad. The words He uses actually mean to dance, exuberantly. The reason He gives is that our reward in heaven will be great, for we are being persecuted just as the prophets were persecuted before us.

Jesus made it clear that what the world would do to the Master, it would do to His servants, as well. It should be a joy and a delight to suffer in the name of Jesus.

Peter asks us what value is there when we suffer because we have done something wrong? That is nothing, because we have done something to deserve the suffering. But when we suffer for righteousness, when we are persecuted because of our belief in Jesus, He calls us blessed.

Chapter Two . . . Servanthood As Seen By Jesus

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 140)

1. What is the basic difference between leaders in the world and leaders in the kingdom of God?

2. What should be the heart motive of every servant of God?

3. What was Jesus showing us when He laid aside His garments and girded Himself with a towel?

4. What causes us to serve God for the wrong reasons?

5. Why is it important for a servant of God to realize and accept his personal spiritual poverty?

6. How does a servant of God function as a peacemaker?

Chapter Three

DISCIPLESHIP

The crucial time in a relay race is at the passing of the baton. The one to receive the baton has to start at precisely the right moment, with the right step. That moment is crucial. One team could be slightly slower than another, but if they can execute the passing of the baton better than the faster team, they can win the race. Of course, if the baton is dropped, valuable time is lost and that team loses the race.

That is a good illustration of discipleship. It is a passing of a baton. One generation has been trained by God to run the good race. They, in turn, say to the next generation, "It's your turn." They impart to the new team, the wisdom, knowledge, direction and anointing they need to continue the race as winners.

Unfortunately, as we observe history, we see generations failing to pass the baton. They have not raised up another generation to take the leadership. God built a system of passing the baton, a system of discipleship, from the beginning.

Observing the basic family unit, we can see that God designed the family to function in discipleship. He wanted the fathers to instill within their children the principles of God. Generation after generation were commissioned to pass the ways and the words of God to their children.

"Only take heed to yourself and diligently keep yourself, lest ye forget the things your eyes have seen and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; and teach them to your children and to your grandchildren. " (Deuteronomy 4:9)

- . . . *"Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is One!*
- . . . *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*
- . . . *And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart;*
- . . . *you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up."*
(Deuteronomy 6:4-7)

The fathers were to pass along to their children, not only the commands of God, but also the record of His mighty acts.

"We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done." (Psalm 78:4)

Had the people of God been faithful in passing the baton to their children, we would not be where we are today. We are where we are because we have not passed the baton. Fathers do not nurture their children in the admonition of the Lord.

During the Passover, the Jewish fathers would actually act out some of the miraculous works of God, experienced by previous generations. Passover is an example.

They would dress authentically, they would cook the same meal in the same way, and go through all the motions of that first great Passover night. The purpose was to plant within their children the actual Passover experience. It would be just as if the children were going through it themselves.

The family would talk about the Red Sea, and how God swallowed up the Egyptian army. They would talk about the Jordan River, and the great crossing, as the water parted when the priests stepped into it. They would talk about Jericho, and how the wall fell just as God said it would.

Later generations would talk about David and Samuel, and they would tell about the great and wonderful things God had done. They didn't have a Bible, they passed these experiences down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

Moses gives us a good example of passing the baton. Moses was more than someone who simply gave the law to his people. He had an anointing from the Holy Spirit, and God impressed him to impart that anointing to his successor. God showed Moses that Joshua was to be his successor. Moses laid his hands on Joshua, and Joshua was filled with the Spirit of wisdom. *(Deuteronomy 34:9)*

Moses passed the baton to Joshua, and the nation of Israel continued powerfully under Joshua. They went into the promised land and conquered the foreign kingdoms. Unfortunately, they didn't destroy their enemies completely, and eventually that caused them a lot of trouble.

But Joshua did not raise up a leader like himself. He did not pass the baton. As a result, the people wandered aimlessly. Then God raised up judges to lead the people and deliver them from bondage and set things in order. But there was still no passing of the baton. This led the people to fall back into sin and bondage.

Some of the judges were great leaders, such as Gideon and Samson, but the result of their failure to pass the baton is shown clearly in the last verse in the book of Judges. *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25)*

We can see that same attitude in the United States today. We have lost our point of reference in regard to a moral ethic. As a result, everyone is doing what is right in his own eyes.

The Christian process of passing the baton is discipleship.

An example of this concept may be found in the life of Elijah. After his great encounter on Mount Carmel, in which he destroyed the false prophets of Baal, and after his inglorious encounter with Jezebel, we find Elijah in a cave.

At this point of his life, Elijah was to lose his prophetic role to Israel, and he was to go back and raise up another man to take his place. The new prophet would be Elisha. We can see how God dealt with Elijah in *1 Kings 19:11-21*.

When Elijah moved in obedience to God, he found Elisha plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. Elisha was obviously a powerful man. When Elijah threw his mantle on Elisha, Elisha destroyed everything that could stand in his way of becoming a disciple of Elijah.

Some people suggest about ten years passed from the time Elisha received the mantle of the prophet, until Elijah was taken up in the chariot of God. This means about ten years of discipleship and training transpired before Elisha was prepared to take Elijah's place.

1. There are several principles for us to observe. First, we see that this discipleship relationship was initiated by God. Elijah did not one day say, "I'm going to find a replacement, I'm tired of being a prophet." Neither did Elisha run to Elijah and say, "You need an assistant, and I'm your man."

2. There was also a goal. When God told Elijah to go, He said, *"...and Elisha..you shall anoint as prophet in your place."* (*1 Kings 19:16*)

- a) There has to be a goal in a discipleship relationship. That goal is reproduction. Joshua's goal was to replace Moses; Solomon's goal was to replace David (*1 Kings 2:1*)
- b) Jesus raised up twelve to take His place; Paul raised up Timothy and Titus and a lot of other people to carry on the goal of his work in local areas. (*2 Timothy 4:1,2,5,22*)

3. Discipleship calls for close companionship. In *2 Kings 2:3,5,7*, we see that there were sons of the schools of the prophets. There were schools at Bethel and Jericho and at several different cities. These were schools at which men could send their sons to be trained to have a prophetic voice for the people.

But Elijah didn't send Elisha to a school. He brought him into close association with himself. God wanted Elisha to learn more through personal involvement with His anointed servant. He wasn't just to receive information, he was also to grasp the essence of Elijah's spirit. The only way this could be accomplished was by a hands-on relationship.

4. It is important for us to see is that there was a willing heart in both Elijah and Elisha. When Elijah found Elisha, Elisha was serving his father, plowing in the field. Of course, when Elisha

burned the yoke and slaughtered the oxen, that showed a willingness to remove all obstacles in order to follow the commands of the Lord.

It is the same with us. We must be willing to burn all our bridges to follow Christ. When a man is called by God, he is usually sent to another place. He rarely ministers in his hometown. Whatever God's call may be, there must be a willingness to respond.

5. A serving spirit is obvious in Elisha. First, he was serving his father. Now he is ready to serve God through Elijah.

"But Jehoshaphat said, 'Is there not a prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?' And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, 'Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.' " (2 Kings 3:11)

Elisha was a personal servant of Elijah. Elisha was pleased to serve as preparation for his entrance into the fullness of his ministry.

6. We can clearly see heartfelt affection. A deep bond develops between the one who is discipling and the one who is being disciplined. In 2 Kings 2:1-6, Elijah gave Elisha several opportunities to strike out on his own, but Elisha would not leave him.

7. It was also an honoring relationship. Elisha would not talk to the sons of the prophets about Elijah's forthcoming departure. If Elisha's heart had not been right, he could have felt excitement about Elijah leaving, so he could be number one.

But this was not the case, because Elisha honored his relationship with his master. When Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak, it was with reverence and respect. Elisha was not an opportunist.

We will never serve faithfully in another man's house until we learn how to honor that man. When Elijah said to Elisha, *"What may I do for you before I am taken from you?"* Elisha's reply was, *"Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."* Elisha is saying that he respects and honors what he sees in Elijah to such a degree that he wants twice as much of the same thing.

Elisha had seen what had happened in Elijah's life, and he knew that what he had was not enough. We should never settle for what we see in another man, no matter how anointed he may be. What we have seen in the most powerful anointing is nothing compared to what we will see in the days to come.

8. Their relationship was a fruitful one. Immediately after the departure of Elijah, Elisha took the mantle and the waters of the Jordan parted for him. Fruit was manifested right away in Elisha.

(2 Kings 4:16) Elisha prophesied a child into the womb of a barren woman.

(2 Kings 4:34,35) . . . He restored life into a little boy who had died.

(2 Kings 6:6) He made an axe head float in water.

(2 Kings 13:20,21) . . . in his dead bones the anointing was powerful enough to restore life to a man.

What all this means is that we should look for a double anointing. Whatever we see in other leaders, we should look for more. When we tell the lord we are not able, that is not humility, that is an inversion of pride. We are saying our insufficiency is greater than His adequacy.

When David stood before Goliath, he expressed true humility. He told Goliath, "the God before whom I stand will bring you to your knees!" Everything Elisha did was big, from the 12 yoke of oxen, on through his ministry. Yet he asked for a double portion, because he wasn't impressed by what he saw in Elijah. He knew that God was capable of greater things.

We don't need to be impressed either, by what we see in others. The greatest anointing we have seen is nothing compared to what is going to be.

Elisha wasn't content to be like the sons of the prophets. The sons of the prophets stood far off, on the bank of the river, watching. The most anointed man on earth told Elisha to stay put, but Elisha had the courage to say, "No, I will not leave you until I have received my full inheritance as your successor!"

A New Testament example of discipleship is Jesus, himself. Jesus is the One who gave the great commission. He is the One who called the disciples to their discipleship.

One of the best references to the principles of discipleship can be found in *John 15*. In this Chapter, Jesus makes it clear that we can do nothing apart from Him. Anything that comes out of our union with Christ is powerful, it has life. But anything that does not come out of our union with Christ ends in death, and is powerless.

- . . . *"If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire and it shall be done for you.*
- . . . *By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so will you be My disciples.*
- . . . *As the Father loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.*
- . . . *If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*
- . . . *These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*
- . . . *This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.*
- . . . *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*
- . . . *You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*
- . . . *No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.*
- . . . *You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.*
- . . . *These things I command you, that you love one another. (John 15:7-17)*

Those verses cover all the other teachings given by Jesus about discipleship.

1. The first principle is that a disciple remains in Christ. It is talking about the union. He has related it to the relationship between a vine and its branches. That is intimate union, where life is. When we are severed from Christ we begin to wind down, the life ebbs within us, and spiritually we die.

2. Another principle is that we will have a deep desire and a commitment to prayer. He said if we will ask what we desire it will be done for us. We ask through prayer.

In *Hebrews 7:25*, we are shown that Jesus, after He joined the Father in heaven, took the role of intercessor. He ever lives to make intercession for us. He is a High Priest over the people of God. As we begin to live out our union with Christ, we become intercessors. We become praying warriors for God.

In *Hebrews 5:7,8*, we can see the prayer life of Jesus while He was on the earth. He cried out to the Father, with tears and loud crying. Sometimes He prayed all through the night, sometimes He arose early in the morning to be alone, so He could pray without interference.

3. We are required to bear fruit. The Father is involved in our fruit bearing. The Father is the vinedresser. He orders the circumstances and brings the trials that prune us, so we will bear more fruit. Pruning always causes new life to come forth. It is painful, but the result is production that will glorify God. *Galatians 5:22,23* shows us the fruit of the Spirit.

4. A disciple is one who glorifies the Father. Jesus constantly makes reference to the Father in the Gospels. He thanks the Father, He tells the disciples to pray to the Father, He says that whoever does the will of the Father is His brother or sister.

"In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." (*John 14:20*) Our life is to bring glory to the Father, just as Jesus did.

5. We are to love as Christ loved. As the Father loved Him, he also has loved us. We are to abide in that love. He commands us to love one another. He tells us that there is no greater expression of love than to lay down our life for our friends. And He tells us we are His friends if we will do what He has commanded us.

The love of Christ is threefold:

First, it is expressed through His submissiveness. Our love will also have to be shown through submissiveness: submission to God, to our families, to the body of Christ.

Second, His love was a love expressed in humility. He humbled Himself in order to put those who were with Him first in importance. We likewise are to humble ourselves before the Father, before each other, and before our families. We put the needs of others before our own needs.

Third, His love was expressed through self-sacrifice. He put aside His own desires, the desires of His flesh. We are tempted at the points of crisis and trial to be rebellious to the ways of God and go our own way.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Christ made a decision of His will to choose against His flesh, to choose instead the way of the Father, even to death on the cross. That must become our attitude, to bring glory to the Father.

6. A disciple must be rightly related to the Word. He tells us His Words should abide in us. He also tells us if we keep His commandments we will abide in His love.

He tells us, in *Matthew 7:21*, that many will come to Him in the last days and say, "Lord, haven't we done these great and wonderful things in Your name?" But He tells us that those who are His true followers, are the ones who have done the will of the Father. And that will of the Father is contained in the teachings, the words, of Jesus.

The commandments of Jesus were given for the blessing and the benefit of our lives. They were not given to place us under a burden of law. By the same token, when we are under grace, that does not mean we can ignore the commandments of Jesus.

The desire of our hearts should be to observe the commandments of Jesus because we love Him and want to honor Him. If we allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit, obedience to the commandments of Jesus will flow naturally.

7. A disciple can also be recognized as one who has joy. Jesus came to give us life more abundantly. Jesus was not perpetually unhappy. He was excited about the life of God, and about our potential life with God. If we picture Him with the children, we don't picture Him as a sour personality who decides to tolerate them.

He thoroughly enjoyed them. He probably played with them, picked them up and tossed them around. He hugged them and kissed them. He was expressive with them. One of the things that irritated the religious leaders of His day was the joyful life He generated.

8. Finally, a disciple lives in deep union with the fullness of the Godhead. A disciple understands that he has the Spirit of Christ within him. We have union with Jesus, with the Father, and with the Holy Spirit. The call of the disciple is to live in the fullness of what all that means. We abide in the Son by way of the Spirit, and our lives are interwoven with the triune Godhead.

In *Ephesians 1:3-14*, we are shown the deep union we have with the Godhead. The Father chose us, in Jesus, before the foundation of the world. God had an infinite plan for all of us before eternity. We were in the mind of God at that time. This means we were in the will of God before eternity.

As God looked through the ages of time, He saw us, and He called us to be disciples of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, He drew us to Christ. Occasionally, when we are in an attitude of worship, we realize who we are in the eyes of God, and it is an awesome revelation.

The challenge of Jesus is just as it was when He lived among men, to always be focused toward bringing glory to the Father. The words Jesus spoke, were the words spoken to Him by the Father. The things He did, were the things the Father had shown Him.

That is the outcome of true discipleship. We are to do what God has told us to do and say what God has told us to say. When that becomes a reality in our lives, we will see things happen beyond our imagination.

Chapter Three. . . Discipleship

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 141)

1. What is the first system of discipleship initiated by God?

2. What happens when a disciple fails to pass the baton?

3. Why should a discipleship relationship be initiated by God?

4. Why must a discipleship relationship be an honoring relationship?

5. Why does a disciple have to remain in union with Christ?

Chapter Four

INNER HEALING – PART ONE

We will be better able to minister inner healing if we understand the process of woundedness. It helps if we understand, step by step, how we get hurt and what that hurt does to us. We also need to see that our family of origin can either help us or cause us more problems as we try to process through our hurt.

We should make a distinction between inner healing and emotional healing. Emotional healing refers to giving God access to areas resulting from woundedness, areas such as bitterness and hatred and resentment. It gives Him access to us as emotional people. That is a big need for all of us who are wounded.

In the process of inner healing, God helps us believe the Gospel for ourselves at a deeper level. Emotional healing and inner healing are important when ministering or receiving the Gospel.

The distinction is being made because we often experience emotional healing before experiencing inner healing. It is possible for us to experience healing from a painful life circumstance, such as abuse, or divorce. It is possible for God to comfort us, but at the same time, we may never have our belief system challenged by the Gospel.

Emotional healing is important. If we don't get some relief from our pain, we will just keep doing whatever we need to do to numb the pain. But inner healing, learning to see why we are worthwhile because of what God has done for us, is equally important.

We must have our belief systems challenged, and have the opportunity to replace our faulty belief systems with a Biblical understanding of ourselves and God and other people. When that is appropriated in our lives, we experience inner healing at its deepest level.

It is crucial to make this distinction between emotional healing and inner healing, because we must understand it is possible to receive emotional healing without experiencing any inner healing at all. We can experience relief from pain, but at the same time continue to remain dysfunctional in our beliefs and behavior.

Emotional healing means we may have areas in our lives that don't hurt as much as they did; therefore, we don't have to drink or drug anymore. But it also means we can remain dysfunctional in many areas of our lives because we continue to believe a lot of lies about ourselves.

To properly utilize emotional and inner healing, it helps to understand how people become dysfunctional in the first place; how it develops from childhood. Also, how that affects our belief systems about ourselves, God and other people. Ultimately, if we are going to minister or receive the Gospel, it must be allowed to get down to the belief system level.

A lot of emphasis in secular recovery programs today is placed on the idea of emotional healing. Somehow the idea has been accepted that if we can just sit around and figure out why we hurt, or be allowed to express a lot of emotion, this will bring healing. That is not necessarily true. If we do nothing but emote about our hurt, we just continue to hurt, and we have no idea what to do with that hurt.

The fact that we display emotion does not mean we are undergoing an emotional healing. There is nothing wrong with getting in touch with our hurt, but something has to happen as a result of getting in touch.

Let's suppose we were physically abused when we were small. As a result, we have some emotional scars. It is possible for us to deal with our emotional pain, yet never deal with the belief system we have about ourselves. We may feel, "I am a mistake! I am unworthy of love!" We can deal with our emotions on one level, yet never get down to the real belief systems beyond that level.

Emotional healing is a part of inner healing. From a Biblical frame of reference, we are talking about receiving the proclamation of the Gospel so we can hear it at deeper and deeper levels. Emotional healing is a part of that, just as deliverance is a part of it.

Inner healing is nothing more than allowing the Gospel to sink to deeper and deeper levels. There is nothing mystical nor magical about it. It is just a way of helping us believe the Gospel for ourselves at a deeper level. It is entirely Biblical.

We should build our concept of inner healing on the recognition that we have three basic needs in our lives:

1. Physical needs;
2. Personal needs;
3. Spiritual needs.

Let us assume a baby is born and has its physical needs met. The next level of need in that baby's life is personal. The two types of personal needs are significance and security. Security needs consist of love, acceptance and forgiveness. The significance side includes the need for meaning and purpose.

A baby may not worry about significance right away, but it needs a sense of belonging. Security is crucial in the life of a baby. That need extends even into the womb. When babies are not held, they die. Their need for acceptance is that strong.

When our need for love, acceptance and forgiveness is not met, we cannot move from that point; therefore, our spiritual needs are not met. We know we need these things as babies, but we seem to overlook the fact that if we don't have these needs met in childhood, they don't go away. If they are not met early in life, they are still needed late in life.

Most of the time, in dysfunctional families, those needs are not met. God intends for parents to be His ministers. They are to minister to a baby's need for love, acceptance and forgiveness, and its sense of security. The parents are to represent God's expression toward the children.

It has been said that 98% of the families in the United States are dysfunctional. That means 98% of the families are not functioning at a high enough level to meet the needs of the members of those families. Many families do not know how to meet the needs of the children they are bringing into the world.

Some of them can meet the physical needs, but most of them have no idea how to minister the love of God to their children. It is not because they are bad people, it is because they don't know, or haven't received it themselves.

There are four kinds of conditions which we will identify as trauma. These conditions are factors in those needs not getting met.

1. Addiction. Addiction can refer to a variety of different things. We can be addicted to drugs, alcohol, sex, food, religion, gambling, power, work, etc. When addiction is present, the basic needs will probably not be met in the children of the addict.

This is because the nature of addiction is self-centeredness. It is a "taking" mentality. Addiction says, "What I want to make me feel good is more important than you, and I will use you, as well as other things and people around me, so I can feel O.K."

Instead of ministering unconditional love to a child, the addict pursues a chemical or an activity. The bizarre things the addict does in pursuit of his addiction, serve to destroy even further the possibility of the child having his needs met. The addict's activities do not communicate love, acceptance and forgiveness to others.

One addiction is not necessarily worse than another addiction. For example, religious addiction is just as harmful and damaging to a child in terms of getting his personal needs met as alcohol and drugs. The religious addict does not know how to allow his religion to affect how he lives his life.

He is wrapped up in a legalistic concept of what God wants.
He doesn't have time to minister God's unconditional love to other people.
He doesn't know how to relate to others, he just knows how to preach to them and tell them what God says they are supposed to do.
He doesn't know how to love or accept or forgive them, he is too busy being religious.

2. Abuse. Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or verbal. All four kinds are devastating. They communicate to the person being abused that he is worthless, that he is simply a thing to be used.

The person is there for sexual satisfaction, or to be the recipient of wrath, or to be told what a totally worthless person he is when he doesn't do something right. We see this type of abuse everywhere. Abuse robs a person of all personal value, it rips something out of the one being abused.

3. Deprivation. An example of deprivation is abandonment. Abandonment can be experienced by a child when the parents are never home. Abandonment occurs in adulthood through separation or divorce. It can also occur when one marriage partner is a non-emotional person. Some people feel incapable of expressing emotion. They are uncomfortable with emotion, either their own or the emotions of others.

A typical person of this type doesn't know how to let someone else cry. He can't handle crying himself; therefore, he doesn't know how to handle it in others. It is particularly difficult for a little boy who has a father of this type. His father will always say, "What do you mean you have a problem with that?" "What do you mean, you are hurt?" "Get up and get about your business!" It is almost non-acceptance of emotion.

We are naturally emotional people. Emotions are some of the most personal things we have. When someone communicates to us, either directly or indirectly, that we are not allowed to feel emotions, they are telling us there is a part of us that is defective, that is unacceptable in the situation.

One of the ways we learn how to deal with emotions is by watching others deal with their emotions. If parents are unable to deal with their emotions, the children are left with no healthy point of reference in dealing with their emotions.

4. Obsessive compulsive behavior. This includes behavior patterns such as perfectionism. It also includes unrealistic expectations being placed upon someone. It can be a demand for a child to perform in a way that is not reasonable or possible. It could be very rigid rules and boundaries for the family.

The concept is, "You have to do what I say, simply because I am the parent. I don't have to have a reason for my demand." Sometimes that expression is necessary, but most of the time it is not.

The problem with addiction, abuse, deprivation and obsessive, compulsive behavior, is that the child is trying to connect with unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness, and these things make it impossible.

Not only does that hurt emotionally, it also destroys belief systems. Suppose you are a two year old. Your father has left the home. You have begun to see other children with a male around the house, who they call, "Daddy," and you don't have one.

Suppose Mom has a man she sees regularly, who is physically or sexually abusive to you. Suppose also, that Mom leaves you in day care a lot because she has to work. What are you going to begin to believe about yourself? You will feel abandoned, worthless, and different from others.

Not different in a wholesome way, but different in a negative way. Your self talk will consist of statements, such as, "I am not loved." "I am not lovable." "What is wrong with me?" "Why am I different?" "I am defective in some way." "Am I less than these other people?" "Are these other people better than I am because they have a Dad?" These are reasonable questions and statements every child can be expected to make when he finds himself in such a circumstance.

Most of the people who have grown up under the influence of an addict, feel that somehow, in some way, they could have stopped or controlled Mom or Dad's drinking. Most who have been abused, believe, "If I hadn't done that, Dad wouldn't have done what he did." They believe, "If somehow I would have done better, Daddy would not have left home." Children have a tendency to blame themselves for the divorce of their parents.

Children don't think in a complex way, they think in a simple "cause and effect" mode. "If Dad did this, it must be my fault." They tend to connect themselves directly to what is happening.

Not only does this keep children from knowing they are loved, accepted and forgiven, it causes them to begin to look at themselves as responsible for the dysfunction that is going on in the house.

When such a condition is intense, or when it is repeated over a long period of time, there is a point at which the child goes into shock. By shock, we mean an emotional shutdown. It is as if a circuit breaker has flipped and the current has been cut off. There has been an overload, and it is too painful, too much to handle. This is not so much a conscious choice as it is a reaction within the subconscious mind.

At some point, however, there will be a rebound. Rebound occurs when some feelings begin to come back. From the rebound stage, a child moves into resolution. This means there has to be a resolution of feelings. All the negatives he has experienced have to be resolved. At this point, the child begins to try to re-connect.

There are two pathways this resolution can take. Whether a child is in a dysfunctional system or a functional system will determine the direction he will take to resolve this trauma. A functional family will process through things that hurt in a way that is different than a dysfunctional family.

In a dysfunctional family system, there will be silence concerning the trauma. That means they do not know how to talk about what happened. Dad may have come home drunk the previous night and physically abused everyone in the family, but the next morning, not a word is said about the incident.

Or perhaps Mom and Dad had a loud argument late at night, but the next morning everything is treated as if nothing happened. The child may even ask his mother, "Did you and Dad fight last night?" And Mom will answer, "No, no, everything is fine." The family doesn't know how to talk about what has happened. One of the rules in an alcoholic home is that you can talk about many things, but not about the alcohol.

In the addict's home, you cannot talk about cocaine. In the abuser's home, you cannot talk about the abuse. The family is silent. That leaves the child to figure out on his own what this trauma

means. "What does it mean that I got sexually abused?" "If I can't talk about that, for whatever reason, that means I will have to figure it out on my own."

In a functional family system, the family talks. They say, "You are not imagining it, this thing really did happen. Let's talk about it." That is a healthy approach to the problem.

If there is silence in a dysfunctional family system, that means there is no support for the victim. If the trauma happened within the family, the family is too disorganized to be a healthy, safe, support place. There is no one to say, "I know you hurt, let's talk about it. I will help you with this."

The functional family is sensitive to the issue of doing what is needed to provide support and encouragement. The child has stability and structure available to help him process what has happened, and to work through it.

God didn't intend for a person to have to go through a structured rehabilitation program in order to process through a trauma. God designed families to be able to deal with trauma as it occurs.

Because the dysfunctional family reacts in silence rather than with support, there is again an emotional shutdown. There is no place the child can talk about the trauma either inside or outside the family.

If children grow up in alcoholic or abusive families, if they can't talk about it within the family structure, they will rarely go outside the family to talk about it. Partly, this is because they have not learned, within the family, the skill to communicate. Emotionally, all the feelings, all the hurt and resentment are stuffed way down inside, and the emotion is shut off.

In the functional family system, however, there is an opportunity for emotional discharge. That means the hurt that exists is able to be expressed. If the child needs to cry, he is given the freedom to cry. If he needs to express anger, he is allowed to express anger. If he feels hatred, he is allowed to say that. In other words, what is inside the child is allowed to come out and be laid on the table, in an atmosphere of support.

Obviously, this cannot happen if there is only silence, and if the love is not in place within the family. In the dysfunctional family system you don't talk about the problem, so you certainly can't express how you feel. Also, you are not loved and supported in the middle of it, so there is no way you will make yourself vulnerable enough to risk your emotions.

So the child from the dysfunctional family carries within him unresolved shock. The trauma happened. He shut down for a little while. Eventually, the circuit breaker flips back on and he starts to feel the emotions again. But he has absolutely nothing to do with it because he has no way to resolve it. The result is that shock begins to kick back in again.

This can happen because of one major incident in the life of a person, or it can happen as a result of an ongoing trauma. The shock is usually related to memory loss, complete disassociation with the trauma. The brain unconsciously shuts down. It is probably a gift from God that the mind says, "This did not happen to me."

That is a defense mechanism. The mind is created so things which are too painful to deal with, and things that cannot be resolved, are shut out of the normal memory bank and locked in a drawer which has a "Do Not Open" sign.

Many of us who grew up in an alcoholic home do not have an awareness that we grew up in an alcoholic home. Likewise, many of us who are incest victims, do not remember the abuse.

When we do begin to remember, there can be a lot of disassociation. It is as if we can describe the scene as if we were somewhere up on the ceiling, looking down at what was happening, but we were not even present. This is because the experience of being present was too painful, so our mind has shut it down and locked it away. Even the memory is distorted.

In a functional family system, the trauma is processed. That means we are able to say, "Yes, this did happen to me, it actually did happen. And it hurt. But through the support and the encouragement, I can go on and not have that thing hold me back.

I can continue to grow and develop. I am beginning to get re-connected to a sense of security and significance. I can have my personal needs met. And I can understand that bad things happen in life, but that does not necessarily mean I am a bad person."

After the unresolved shock, the memory loss and the disassociation, there is chronic shock. That is the state in which we shut down. We are unable to learn or to function normally. It is almost a point of numbness.

Chronic shock is a severe form of disconnection. When we are in chronic shock we will still try to re-connect, but there is a part of us that is disconnected. And that part will stay disconnected unless and until God is given an opportunity to restore it.

It is as if there is a piece missing from a puzzle. The rest of the puzzle is still there, but the piece is gone, and is not retrievable without God. We may still try to connect because we still have personal needs, but our circuit breakers have been shut down.

In the dysfunctional family, there is only silence. There is no emotional support for us. The only one left to help us interpret the answer to such questions as "What is wrong with me?" "Why am I different?" "Am I worthwhile?", is the spiritual enemy. Satan is ready to support any non-Biblical belief system we may have.

There are three primary stages in our development as a child, all of which occur before we are six years old.

The first stage, age 0 to 18 months, deals with the issue of trust versus mistrust. That means we will begin to view the world either as a place in which it is safe to trust, or a place to be viewed with suspicion and mistrust. This really means we will view the world either with fear or with trust.

The second stage, is from 18 months to three and a half years of age. The key issue facing us at that point is autonomy versus shame and doubt. It is the stage at which we begin to get an awareness that we are individual, and we question what that is supposed to mean to us.

Satan is not in control at this time, but he is able to lie effectively. There is a tremendous amount of power in a lie, that is why Satan uses it. If he can exploit this crucial developmental time to his own advantage, he will certainly try to do it. He will attempt to set up a block within us centered around fear, to keep us from believing the Gospel.

At this stage we ask, "Is it all right for me to really exist as a person?" "Is it all right that I am different from other people?" If the answers to those questions come from a dysfunctional base, we will decide we are not all right as a person. And Satan will do everything he can to reinforce that lie. The result is that we will be filled with shame and doubt.

The third stage, from three and a half to six years old, the basic developmental issue is initiative versus guilt. This means we will ask the question, "Is it all right for me to begin to initiate activity on my own?" "Is it all right for me to venture out and do some things as an autonomous individual?" Some of these questions are very basic, such as "Can I tie my shoes?" "Can I get dressed in the morning by myself?"

Guilt says, "No, I am a failure, I can't do anything right." "There are too many demands placed upon me, I cannot live up to them." There is also the possibility that we have everything done for us by our parents. We become spoiled, and we never learn how to take the initiative.

By the time we are six years old, we probably have already formed a base of fear, guilt and pride. Our basic personality is already formed. In a sense, the rest of our life will be lived in response to our reaction to our first six years.

Those experiences, from the ages of 0 to 6, are programming us to live in reaction to them for the rest of our lives. That doesn't mean trauma can't happen after that age and have an adverse effect, but it does mean that a lot of basic things are in place by the time we are six years old. Satan knows that, and he will exploit it.

As a result of this negative programming, we begin to develop a facade. We have learned that as we are presently, we are not acceptable. We still need love, acceptance and forgiveness; therefore, we have to perform to get approval from others.

We develop a protective reaction to our parent's dysfunction, and begin to attempt to artificially get our needs met. We try different kinds of behaviors. We may withdraw, or we might do something positive to get strokes. We could simply rebel. We could become the umpire in the house, to try to keep peace.

In some fashion, we will try some kind of behavior to get what we need. This is because we are unable to get what we need simply because we exist as a human being. This is not our conscious choice, it is our natural reaction.

We think we will be worthwhile if we perform properly. Not knowing what is proper, we will attempt different behaviors and test the results. Perhaps we can accomplish this in sports. If we are not athletic, we may perform well scholastically. We may try to be a good helper around the house. We will do something until we experience the payoff.

The payoff means a certain behavior has worked, and we receive some form of acceptance. We get a sense that, "I will be worthwhile if I do this particular thing." This leads us to believe we will be worthwhile every time we repeat that particular performance.

The payoff is important, because we don't do what doesn't work for us. We tend to do whatever will give us some form of payoff. After we get a payoff, we feel re-connected. We don't realize we are experiencing a false sense of re-connection.

The next step following a payoff is the beginning of the formation of a facade, designed to protect our sense of self. It is designed to protect us from that inner voice that says, "They like me, but if they really knew me they wouldn't like me."

At some point, there is a payoff for the facade, so this reinforces the facade. Underneath it all, however, is the realization that we are not getting a payoff for our real self. The payoff is coming because of what we are showing to other people.

It is not the real us. As that feeling strengthens, we become more fearful about allowing our real self to express itself. The result is that we become imprisoned within our facade.

It is as if there are two realities. One is what we really believe about ourselves, our core beliefs. The other is what we show to everybody else to get security and significance. The bottom line is that we have lost our sense of identity.

Who we are, is defined by how others have responded to us. We perform one way with one group of people, and an entirely different way when we are with another group of people. We have learned what works with different groups to get their approval.

In the midst of this, we become very manipulative. If we need the approval of the people around us, we walk in a room, size up the people, figure out what they want, then give it to them. We manipulate them so they will give us what we need to feel O.K.

Chapter Four. . . Inner Healing - Part One

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 142)

1. What is the difference between inner healing and emotional healing?

2. Why is it that a display of emotion does not necessarily indicate an emotional healing is taking place?

3. How can religious addiction be just as harmful to a child as drug or alcohol addiction?

4. How does a child learn to deal with his emotions?

5. How does a dysfunctional family handle trauma?

6. How does a healthy, functional family handle trauma?

Chapter Five

INNER HEALING – PART TWO

DESTRUCTIVE CYCLE OF DEFEAT:

When our basic needs are not met, a cycle of dysfunction is begun. Dysfunction causes pain. Most of us have become adults through a process of reacting to the various pain in our lives. We have attempted to avoid pain by escaping from it or compensating for it in one way or another.

In our youth, we often turn to sports or some other activity to tune out certain emotional pain in our lives. Even in elementary school we can get caught up in soccer or some other sport to receive a feeling of worth, and to grasp identity and significance.

Music is another method of compensation. As junior high students, we may have turned on the stereo as soon as we got home from school. This let us escape our negative feelings from a bad day at school, or a break in relationship with a friend.

As we mature, we may turn to sex or alcohol or drugs to escape from the reality of life. We may indulge in fantasies for a period of time, dreams of success in various imaginative activities. When we reach manhood, we may transfer our method of escape or compensation to workaholism. We get lost in our job to avoid our dysfunctions.

We may even use religion, or entertainment, or spending money as an escape from facing the realities of life.

Another thing that happens in the destructive cycle of defeat is the development of facades. It is possible for us to have numerous facades in an effort to avoid reality. If the occasion calls for a macho personality, we put on our macho facade.

We can be a Romeo, or a Juliet, or a high roller, or a boss, or a soldier-of-fortune, depending upon the situation. None of the facades are the real us, they are merely instruments to enable us to escape reality.

In addition, we put up defenses, to protect our dysfunctions from attack. Listed below are twenty of our most common defenses:

- We attack, to avoid being attacked.
- We withdraw, to avoid confrontation.
- We verbalize, to avoid discussing the real problem.
- We project, to avoid taking any blame.
- We rationalize, to avoid the truth.
- We comply, to avoid criticism.
- We minimize, to avoid the full impact of the problem.
- We generalize, to avoid facing anything specific.
- We threaten, to avoid being threatened.
- We intellectualize, to avoid facing the basics of the problem.
- We blame, to avoid being blamed.
- We judge, to avoid being judged.
- We use silence, to avoid open discussion of the problem.
- We use humor, to avoid the seriousness of the problem.
- We use evasion, to avoid vulnerability.
- We agree, to avoid argument.
- We deny, to avoid any consequences.
- We justify, to avoid admitting mistakes.
- We switch subjects, to avoid dealing with the truth.
- We explain, to influence others to accept our excuses.

These defenses do little more than produce guilt and fear and anger and other dysfunctional emotions. They complicate matters and cause us to be further separated and isolated from God, from people and from the realities of life. This pushes us to compensate even more, and the cycle continues.

At the same time, our attitudes reflect our dysfunction. Our emotional wounds, received from not having our needs met, surface in the form of rejection, fear, anger, etc.

A good illustration of what is happening is that we have encased ourselves in a fashion similar to an onion skin. Our self is surrounded by layers of protective defenses, emotional wounds, attitudes, facades, etc. Under all that protection is the real person God created us to be.

Most of us stay encased within our onion skins until we face a crisis that causes a rupture in our protective walls. This gets us in touch with the pain we have suppressed. Although it is very uncomfortable, it is actually beneficial, because it enables us to take our first step toward inner healing. We begin to cry out, to ask for help, because we know that what we are experiencing is beyond our capability to handle alone.

KEYS TO INNER HEALING

Inner healing begins as we apply the Gospel to our inner man. The Gospel reveals the distinction between the body, the soul and the spirit. Failure to establish the proper relationship between these three dimensions places severe limitations upon our ability to receive true healing.

Man's spirit is the birthplace of intuition, conscience and communion with God. Our spirit-man has a special God-consciousness. God is a Spirit; therefore, man relates to God through his spirit.

Man's soul encompasses his mind, his will, and his emotions. This is the psychological dimension of man. It produces a self-consciousness, and enables him to relate to others.

Man's body is his physiological dimension. He came from the dust of the ground *Genesis 2:7*; therefore, he relates to the earth and the environment around him.

When Adam sinned, he lost his relationship with God. As descendants of Adam, our sinful nature is not compatible with the Spirit of God. However, we still have a spirit, and our spirit is sensitive to the spiritual influences around us.

We pick them up through music, literature, entertainment, etc. And if those spiritual influences are evil in nature, we can be influenced by them. This makes us subject to the demonic influences of the world.

When we are not fed by the proper spiritual influences, we begin to accept the lies of the enemy. We begin to believe we are inferior and insecure and inadequate. We become burdened with guilt for the sins we have committed, some of them real, some of them imaginary.

We begin to worry and have doubts about ourselves and about God. We begin to fear the future. We become filled with frustrations and anxieties. We may even become hostile. In other words, our soul suffers.

If this process continues for an extended period of time, it begins to affect our bodies. We experience tension headaches, nervous stomach, hives, allergies, asthma, arthritis, spastic colon, palpitations of the heart, respiratory ailments, fatigue, the list is endless.

Unless man can re-connect to God, he is destined to function as only 2/3 of a person. He is dead, spiritually. That is, he is separated from God, who is life. This means he has only his body and his soul with which to function. The early philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle and Socrates spoke of these two dimensions of man, his soul and his body. Man had lost sight of the realm of the spirit.

The early Greek fathers brought this teaching into the church and slowly, through the years, the church has had only a dualistic view of man. It has overlooked the spiritual dimension.

In dealing with dysfunction, people have been trying to work with the soul only. They have concentrated upon the mind, will and emotions. Unfortunately, that makes for an incomplete healing. It doesn't penetrate to the depths of the true inner person.

We will never be able to experience true healing until we deal with the issue of sin. Sin disrupted the harmony between God and man. It brought disunity between man and the earth. It caused disunity between Adam and Eve, man and woman. This disunity then came between parents and children, when Cain was born. It passed to the brothers, Cain and Abel. It all came about as the resulting impact of sin.

We have to look not only at the Biblical-based root of sin, we have to look also at how man tries to handle problems today. Man reacts out of the sinful condition of his heart. We can look at sin from three different angles.

1. Inherited Generational Sin.

- a) **Adamic Nature.** This is what we received from Adam. It is commonly identified as our Adamic nature. We are born with this Adamic nature toward sin. It is not something we choose for ourselves, it is something we inherit. David understood the concept of inherited sin. "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*" (Psalm 51:5)

Romans 5:12 tells us that sin entered through one man, resulting in death to all men.

- b) **Personal Family Lineage.** This may include generational curses, passed down from one generation to another. Many people find themselves to be third or fourth generation alcoholics. Sexual perversion, incest, etc. may also pass through generations.
- . . . "*Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;*
 - . . . *who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generation. '*" (Exodus 34:6,7)

2. Parental Sin.

- a) **Sins of Omission.** This is a condition where the parents, perhaps by ignorance, do not nurture their children properly. They omit establishing standards of behavior for their children, or they omit the establishment of a proper moral ethic. There may be a lack of discipline, or they may be poor role models. Perhaps they were incapable of providing a good example of unconditional love.
- b) **Sins of Commission.** These are sins actually committed by the parents. Examples are physical, sexual and verbal abuse, neglect, etc. Such sins impact children severely, so they must be dealt with.

3. Personal Sin.

- a) **Sins of Omission.** An example would be the lack of a personal relationship with God. Inherent in all people, there is an awareness of God and of morality. When that awareness is ignored, it leads to sin. A person doesn't have to be exposed to a church environment to be aware of God.
- b) **Sins of Commission.** These may begin with wrong reactions to people and situations. These reactions may lead to sinful indulgences as we begin to grow up.
- . . . "*How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, you who weaken the nations!*
 - . . . *For you have said in your heart, 'I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will also sit in the mount of the congregation on the farther sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most high.'*" (Isaiah 14:12,13)

.These verses show us the height of sin. The key can be seen in the emphasis upon "I". Lucifer was self-occupied, self-gratified, self-glorified. Lucifer's declaration of independence, pride and rebellion epitomizes the essence and nature of all sin: selfishness.

Life controlled by sin is a life of self-indulgence and self-preoccupation. Regardless of the problem, the solution is sought through selfish means.

What is behind all this concentration on self? Even though we are blinded by our sinful condition, by their actions, we are actually crying out for help. We are ignorant of the fact that the help for which we are so desperate is provided only in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For example, the commonality shared by most sex offenders is that they were, themselves, sexually molested as children. The little child within them is still crying out to be loved. They are reaching out for that love the only way they know how. There is also another cry coming from within. They really want that abuse syndrome to die.

Any inward sinful condition that is allowed to grow without being dealt with, eventually expresses itself in an outward projection upon other people. Instead of the offender abusing himself or finding a way to cure himself, he takes out his frustration on someone else. At the same time, in his heart he is looking for relief, for crucifixion of that fleshly characteristic. In other words, he is looking for the Gospel, even though he is unaware of that fact.

Unknowingly, the abuser, the rapist, the murderer, are all crying out for the cross at Calvary. They are crying for the healing blood of Jesus to come in and purge and cleanse them. However, the nature of sin causes these sinners to look at their problem from a fleshly perspective. They are unaware that their healing must be spiritual.

Before sin came to Adam and Eve, they related to God through pure spiritual communion. They were naked, but they weren't ashamed because their relationship was spiritual. The minute they sinned, their eyes were opened and they knew they were naked. When sin came in, spirituality died, and they began to relate exclusively in the flesh, both with themselves and with God.

That is our condition when we are in the flesh. We are totally carnal. But when we are reborn in the spirit, when our spirit is restored and we become whole, for the first time in our lives our spiritual dimension is set free to commune with God. Spiritual things become more significant, while things of the flesh become less significant.

People who are caught up in sin, but who are unaware of the spiritual application of the Gospel, look for natural answers. For instance, they try to apply psychology to their problem. Sex offenders frustrate psychologists. They can progress well through a secular program, but as soon as they are released they return to their sin. This is because psychology can be applied to the mind only. It does not deal with the root issue in the life of the offender.

Those who run such programs do not get to the heart of the sin problem. They try to reinforce will power and apply positive thinking. They give anti-depression pills. But they miss the point because the key lies in the spirit of the offender.

The Gospel must be brought in to be applied to the flesh. Spiritual rebirth will bring renewal to the mind and healing to the emotions. It will line up the will of man with the will of God.

- . . . *"I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God, to present yourselves as living sacrifices holy and acceptable unto the Lord, which is your reasonable service.*
- . . . *Be not conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is a perfect and acceptable will of God."* (Romans 12:1,2)

Paul indicates in these verses that we are to be transformed from an ugly sinful creature into a glorious, radiant, spiritual creature of God. He uses the same words that apply to the emergence of a butterfly from its cocoon.

After we experience a renewal of our minds, we begin to experience healing in our relationships. Paul address this in *1 Thessalonians 5:23*:

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Every area of our being is important to God.

As the renewal of the mind continues to mature us spiritually, our basic belief systems begin to change. We live out what we believe on a daily basis. As we apply the Gospel, we become set free from the lies and false beliefs that have kept us in bondage. As the Spirit of truth leads us into all truth, He establishes new Biblical foundations, based upon our true identity in Christ.

THE PROCESS OF INNER HEALING

A. We must first realize that God has already addressed our basic needs through Christ.

1. **Significance**. We must have a sense of personal significance.

In *Psalms 139*, David speaks of God having formed him in his mother's womb, making all his intricate parts. He says that this is so incredible it is incomprehensible. That is true for us as well.

We may have been told we were a mistake, or a freak biological reproduction, but the truth is that God pre-ordained us in eternity. We are a part of His plan. That should give us a sense of significance.

Ephesians, Chapter 1, tells us about our spiritual inheritance in Christ, and that we were in God's mind before the world began.

2. **Acceptance**. This gives us self worth. In *Ephesians, Chapter 1*, we are told that we are totally and unconditionally accepted in Christ.

3. **Identity**. God has given us a new identity in Christ. We need to know who we are and why God put us on the earth.

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)

In *John 1:12*, we discover that He has identified us as His own sons, along with the rights, authority and privileges to be His children.

4. **Purpose**. In *2 Corinthians 5:18-20*, we are called to be ambassadors for Christ. We are told to go forth and reconcile people unto Him. We have the privilege of taking the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. We are to be His messengers. That means God trusts us.

B. Specific Steps In The Process of Healing.

1. Pray for the Holy Spirit to be released into the three areas of our soul:
Our mind "Holy Spirit, be Lord over my mind, my thoughts."
Our will "Holy Spirit, be Lord over my will, my decisions."
Our emotions . . "Holy Spirit, be Lord over my emotions, my feelings."

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way of everlasting." (Psalm 139:23,24)

2. As areas are revealed by the Holy Spirit, we are to deal with them right away.
 - a) Ask God to help us forgive those who hurt us.
 - b) Ask God to forgive us for our wrong reaction.
 - c) Ask God to help us forgive ourselves.
 - d) Ask God to heal the wound caused by the person who hurt us.
 - e) Ask God to heal the wound caused by our wrong reaction.
 - f) Ask God to fill us, replacing the negative with the positive influence of God's character, through His Holy Spirit.

3. Maintain a daily relationship with God. Personal relationship with God on a daily basis is like experiencing a continual inner healing session. As we present ourselves to His Spirit, He reveals our areas of need. He gives us the opportunity to apply the Gospel to our lives, exchanging our sickness for His wholeness.

"It we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

To confess our sins means to agree with God that we are sinful. It keeps our relationship with Him open. Forgiveness is not based upon our confession. Confession is for the sake of relationship only. Forgiveness was received when we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior.

When we keep ourselves in right relationship with God, we stay in right relationship with ourselves. As a result, it keeps us in right relationship with other people. All our relationships flow in harmony with each other.

Jesus said, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23)*

The beams of the cross go vertically and horizontally. This gives us a vertical and a horizontal picture of daily life. One beam aims toward God and the other beam stretches horizontally toward our relationship with everyone in our lives.

This fulfills the two great commandments, to love God with all our heart, soul and body; and to love our neighbor as ourselves. The cross is the way of fulfilling all that God would have us live out in our Christian life. We crucify our flesh when we come into the presence of God. Then, when we go out into the world, we have only the spiritual, the truth of the Gospel to share with others.

THE RESULTS OF INNER HEALING.

As we submit ourselves to inner healing, we begin to process the pain we have felt through rejection, abandonment, etc. We begin to admit our need to be healed. As we process the pain, we begin to

resolve it through our growing relationship with the Lord.

Instead of simply attempting to get drug free and sober, we enter a complete regeneration process. This puts us on the road to recovery;

Out of that regeneration, we discover our purpose, our calling, our mission in life. We begin to see that there is a Divine purpose for our existence.

HINDRANCES TO THE INNER HEALING PROCESS.

1. We refuse to learn about who we really are in Christ.
 - a) We do not let the Holy Spirit show us our fleshly nature. We refuse to identify our wounds and our sins and our attitudes. We do not admit our facades and our defenses.
 - b) We do not let the Holy Spirit show us who we are in the spirit, how to live in the spirit. We refuse our spiritual identity.
2. We refuse to deal with who we are after it has been revealed to us.
 - a) We do not want to deal with our flesh. We will not deny ourselves, we will not crucify our flesh. We will not reckon our flesh to be dead.
 - b) We do not want to believe the Gospel. We do not believe we are sons of God. We do not believe we are accepted in Christ.
3. We get lost in our escapes. We run back to our fantasy world of sports, sex, movies, etc.
4. We hide within our facades. When God puts His finger on something in our flesh, our tendency is to throw up a facade that will hide the truth.
5. We use our old defenses. Instead of facing the truth, we use anger to stop the process.
6. We choose to react based upon our old wounds, our sinful pattern of behavior, rather than respond in new ways of spiritual life.
7. We avoid the healing process by not actively seeking the life of Christ in the Spirit.

Chapter Five. . . Inner Healing - Part Two

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 143)

1. In what way are we like an onion skin?

2. What happens when we are not fed by the proper spiritual influences?

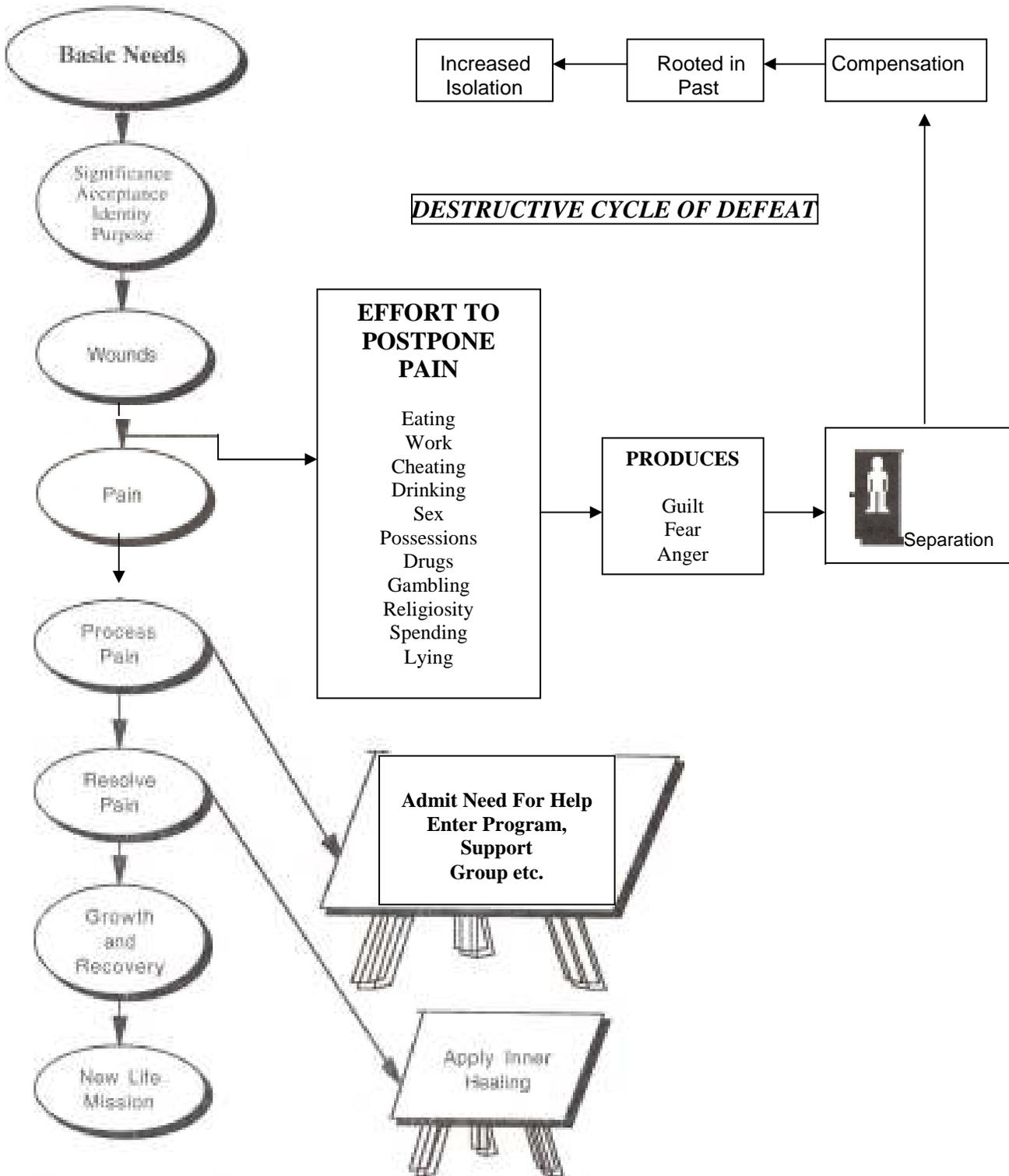
3. What are the three basic types of sin?

4. What happens to an inward sinful condition that is allowed to grow without being dealt with?

5. What happens when the renewal of our mind continues to mature us spiritually?

6. How does confession affect our relationship with God?

Illustration Chart 4b



Chapter Six

Confrontation

We will discuss why we confront, when we should confront, what we address at the time of confrontation, and how we confront. We will also address the role of accountability in confrontation, when we do not confront, and what happens when we do not confront.

At the outset, we must understand there is a vast difference between confrontation within the protective confines of a structured program, and confrontation outside such a program. Learning confrontation in small, structured groups is different than outside in the world.

If we attempt to confront in an outpatient or overcomers setting, we will find the reactions of the people to be entirely different from reactions of the same people within the protection of an in-residence program. We may have excellent discernment, in that we may see a person's situation clearly, but our approach to confrontation requires different skills.

Learning to confront, or to minister the truth, is foundational for any ministry in which we may be involved. We must always maintain the proper balance. We must never forget that Jesus is the truth; therefore, when we speak the truth, in love, we actually minister the Person of Jesus Christ.

If we fail to keep Jesus in the center of ministering the truth, we will find ourselves caught up in rights and wrongs, and do's and don'ts. We will be trapped in technicalities concerning the person's behavior, and we will miss the Person of Christ.

At the same time, other principles are true. For example, suppose we face someone who simply has a rotten attitude, and is in complete rebellion. He needs the Person of Jesus, because it is ultimately Jesus who will deal with his rebellion. But if we fail to confront him with the fact that he is in rebellion, and that he has a bad attitude, he will not hear us minister the Person of Jesus.

There has to be balance between the principle involved and the Person of Christ in every confrontation. Both are truth, and both must be involved in the confrontation. If we miss either one, we are out of balance. If we minister Jesus only, and the fact that Jesus loves the person, we will simply enable him. On the other hand, if we only minister truth, without the Person of Jesus, we will place the person under law, with no direction for healing.

Is confrontation Biblical? Confrontation defined, means to cause to meet, face to face, to oppose, clash or compare. This definition does not include the necessity to make someone change, or to make someone hear us, or to make someone do something specific. That would be control.

Confrontation is bringing an issue up, face to face, so the person can become aware of it. Sometimes confrontation requires opposing, sometimes clashing, sometimes comparing. The point is to bring up the issue so it can be looked at, squarely. This will enable the person to understand what we are saying, and it will enable us to understand what he is saying.

The first confrontation mentioned in the Bible is when God confronted Adam and Eve. God was gentle, but He definitely raised the issue. "*What is this you have done?*" (*Genesis 3:13*) Adam and Eve knew exactly what He was talking about. They tried to hide, they tried to deny, they tried to project, but they could not evade the confrontation.

The Scriptures are full of occasions when God interacted with people, ministering to them His person, but also ministering truth to them. Some of that ministry was in the form of confrontation. God dealt with Israel continuously in this form. When Israel refused to listen, God would not control them, but He allowed them to reap the consequences of their rebellious behavior.

Many of the Old Testament prophets had a ministry of confrontation. God told Ezekiel that he was a watchman. It was his job, as watchman, to tell the people what was coming. Ezekiel was held accountable for that ministry.

When we are responsible for ministering to others, God will hold us accountable to raise the issue with them, and to tell them what to expect if they remain in their rebellion.

The prophets were always bold in their ministry. They didn't hesitate to confront. They never pulled their punches, they told the people exactly what was happening. But they never attempted to control the people themselves.

In *Matthew 18:15-18*, Jesus instructs about confrontation. He says we are to go to our brother and raise the issue. If he doesn't hear us, we take witnesses and confront him again. If he still refuses to listen, we take him before the body. This is a systematic way of dealing with confrontation within the church.

In *Ephesians 4:15*, Paul tells us to speak the truth in love. Through this process, the body will grow up, spiritually, becoming more Christ-like.

Confrontation is seldom a pleasant task. That is why it is important for us to study the Scriptures to see how confrontation was accomplished, scripturally. It is good for us to study Ezekiel and Jeremiah and Isaiah. It is important to observe how God had His people confront. Unless we understand God's principles concerning confrontation, we may find ourselves attempting to manipulate or control others.

What are we to confront? Unless we make this determination at the outset and the person doesn't hear us, we will be inclined to identify the person with his sinful flesh, rather than the new person he is in Christ. If we do this, we will see the person as worthless, and we will treat him accordingly.

Remember how Jesus dealt with the sinners and the tax collectors. He loved them, and He treated them as if they were worthwhile. If a person doesn't hear us, his problem is his flesh, but he is still worthwhile, because Jesus died for him.

When we understand the distinction between flesh and spirit, we can really apply the law to his flesh. This is because we know who he is, and that God has His hand on him. We know he is O.K. whether he hears us or not.

If we don't know this distinction, we will be concerned about his reaction. If we do know this distinction, we will be able to trust God with him and his behavior.

In the process of confrontation, discernment is crucial. It is one of the most important gifts we have to work with. It is a gift from God. If we don't have discernment, we won't know what we are confronting; therefore, we won't know how to properly raise the issue.

Discernment is a gift given by God, but it is developed and sharpened over time as we use it.

Confrontation is a body ministry. The whole body, not just one or two people, need to be involved in the process. It is dangerous when only one person does all the confronting. That one person is inclined to become the enforcer. Discernment comes through the interaction of the members.

The discernment of a group leader is probably better than that of the other members of the group. He has been at the process longer; therefore, he has had more experience. But he should never make the mistake of thinking he is the only one who can discern clearly.

If we are a group leader we should always turn our group loose, and listen to what they are saying. As leader, we can discern what is being said through the body. We can then put together the pieces and present them to the person who needs to be confronted.

Remember, we can speak the truth in love only by listening to the Holy Spirit. If we don't listen to the Holy Spirit, we may see things that are wrong, but we may not be able to speak the truth in love. Without the Holy Spirit we may also find ourselves enabling, thinking we are loving, but not speaking the truth.

WHY DO WE SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE?

It is the job of the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. God is love. When we listen to the Holy Spirit, we will not only hear love, we will hear the truth.

The basic purpose of speaking the truth in love is to make truth specific, relational, applicable and understandable.

The reason we have to speak the truth in love is because the person to whom we minister may have a hard time hearing the truth about himself. In a perfect world, where everybody hears God completely, correctly, one hundred per cent of the time, there is no need to speak the truth in love.

It is the job of the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would take from Him and make it known to us. He is to guide us into all truth. He is to convict the world of sin and its need for Jesus. The Holy Spirit is supposed to guide us and lead us and show us how to live.

If we were perfect people we wouldn't need confrontation because we would hear God correctly and we would flow with Him correctly all the time. Our problem is that we are not perfect. We have flesh that is sinful by nature.

We speak the truth in love to show a person how the truth applies to him in the specific situation in which he finds himself. We need to show him how it relates to him in that situation. We show him how it applies to him in the midst of his circumstances. And we must show him in a way that is understandable to him, right where he is.

Because we need to accomplish all this, when we speak the truth in love, it must be simple, it cannot be complicated. If a person can't see something, he needs someone to tell him in a way that enables him to see. It is not that the person is stupid, he simply can't understand because he is caught up in the problem.

Our ultimate goal should be to facilitate healing and spiritual maturity in the life of the person to whom we speak. We do not speak the truth for the sole purpose of keeping a person from returning to his addiction. We are to help him become healed, so he can deal with the things for which he is responsible, then move on into spiritual maturity.

Because confrontation is difficult, we often look at it as a negative thing. We may think, "I have to confront this person because if I don't, he will return to his addiction." That may be true, but if we see confrontation only as a method to keep someone from doing something he shouldn't, we miss the positive side. The positive side is to produce healing and spiritual maturity.

Paul has told us as we speak the truth in love, we will in all things grow up. He is talking about spiritual maturity. So we see that the ultimate goal of confrontation is not simply to keep someone from doing something bad, it is to provoke him to go on to spiritual maturity.

Confrontation has to be specific. We never confront in generalities. We must ask ourselves how the truth we are trying to communicate has specific application. This means we will deal with blind spots, areas the person does not see clearly. There may be some areas in which there is deception.

Denial and projection often produce blind spots. For this reason, the truth has to be specific enough to uncover the blind spots.

If we use words, such as, "You always do this," the person obviously knows he doesn't always do that thing, so he will come up with an exception. Obviously, this tactic is ineffective. Unless we use specifics we will be unable to show the person his blind spot.

As we confront, we need to help the person recognize the truth on his own level. We determine that person's spiritual maturity level and we meet him at that point. To make the truth applicable,

we have to look at the spiritual maturity of the person to whom we are ministering. One size doesn't fit all where confrontation is concerned.

It is an insult to approach a mature person as if he is immature. We will succeed only in making him angry. He will be unable to relate to the truth we are trying to convey.

On the other hand, we do not force-feed a baby, food it cannot digest. If we give a baby steak when it doesn't have teeth, the baby will choke. In the same manner, we do not use mature issues with an immature person. We restrict ourselves to a simple approach, something easy to understand, with no confusing grey areas.

We must be certain that what we say to the person means something to him. Does it speak to where he is right now? Does it speak to his needs? Can he understand it? If it isn't relevant, if he can't relate to it, if he can't see how it applies to him, he will not hear us. He must have a handle with which to grasp what we are trying to convey. That handle is relevancy. We must be relevant to his experience.

If the person is motivated to receive his healing, he will take our relevant message of truth and respond positively with it. He will work with it, and allow it to work in him.

If we are placed in a teaching position, we must recognize that in any classroom there are those who have greater ability to grasp what we are saying than others. If we present our teaching only to those who are more mature, we will lose all our immature students. We should gear what we say so that the least functioning person in our class will be able to grasp our message.

The standard of any program should not be set according to the person who is doing the best, it should address the person who is functioning the least. If we communicate to the least functioning people, the remainder of the people will receive our message also.

This is especially true in an overcomers group. We must be aware of our audience. If we try to make truth relevant to them, we must understand their ability to receive our message. This is an excellent example of why preaching, by itself, is a poor way to communicate truth.

Most congregations are made up of a cross section of society. They have extensively different backgrounds and completely different abilities to comprehend. It is virtually impossible to gear a message for all the people. One size simply does not fit all.

Remember, Jesus is always relevant. Our knowledge is not necessarily relevant, but the love of Jesus is always relevant. This is the primary reason we must continue to listen to the Holy Spirit as we confront. God will show us how to make His love specific to the person to whom we are ministering.

God will not necessarily show us how to make our knowledge relevant to that person, but He will show us how to make His love relevant.

WHEN DO WE SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE?

First of all, we must discern if we have anything to say. That means we ask God before we say anything. We never stop asking God while we are involved in confrontation.

We may be able to see a lot of issues in a person's life that he may not be aware of, but we need to ask God what it is He wants to deal with at the present moment. What issue does God want to be raised now? We must turn to God for that information.

Not only do we seek God's leading as to what to deal with first, we also must ask Him when to deal with it. Many things may have to be addressed, but we need direction where to start.

There could be issues within the person that rub us the wrong way. Our obvious choice would be to deal with those abrasive things first. But that may not be where God wants to start. This is another reason we need to hear God.

In every ministry situation, we need to be totally committed to speak the truth in love. This means that every time we sit down to teach or counsel or lead a group, we must be totally committed to do whatever God shows us to do in that situation.

Our mind set should be, "If you show me, God, what I need to do, I will do it." It is not that we have to do it, but that we are willing to do it. At times this may be difficult, because there are people we will not want to confront.

There are some principles concerning when to speak the truth in love. We are best able to speak the truth in love when a relationship is already established. If we have a relationship with that person, he will be much more likely to hear us.

If there is no relationship, or if he doesn't trust the relationship, or if the relationship is not solid, he may have a tendency to shrug off what we say to him. A relationship can open the door of acceptance for a confrontation.

This means the more we can build a relationship with the people to whom we are trying to minister, the more effective we will be in confrontation.

We can speak the truth in love after love has been affirmed. When we affirm a person he is inclined to drop some of his defenses, with the result that he will be open to hear us. When a person has a bad attitude, it may be hard to find something about which to affirm him, but we should look for it, nevertheless.

We should also speak the truth in love from a platform of example. This means if we don't model what we are speaking, he will not hear us. We can't speak to a person about moral issues if our behavior is immoral. He obviously will not receive from us.

If the person we confront doesn't see a model in us of something he would like to have for himself, he will not listen to us. If we are short-tempered and irritable, and we confront him about being impatient, he will not hear us.

We are all the same where that is concerned. If someone tries to teach us something that we don't see evident in his life, we don't listen to him. His words go in one ear and out the other.

Of course, God can speak the truth through anyone at any time, regardless of how we feel about the person. There is even one incident in the Bible where God spoke through a jackass.

Generally speaking, however, we do not like to receive something from another person when we do not see that thing evident in the person's life.

We can speak the truth in love when there is a bridge of trust established. If a person trusts us he will be more likely to hear what we have to say.

We can speak the truth in love when we know our hearts are right. The Biblical analogy is to get the beam out of our own eye so we can see the splinter in the other person's eye. This will obviously make our discernment sharper. It also means we will be less likely to go after somebody who is rubbing us the wrong way because we dislike his attitude.

It is difficult to hear the Holy Spirit talk to us about the person when we have ulterior motives. It is easy to see a problem in another person's life if we have the same issue. In such a case, we can speak the truth, but we can't minister the truth to them in love. We won't be able to help them deal with the issue until we have dealt with the same issue within ourselves.

If we confront a person and we lose control of ourselves, we should go back to that person and make it right as quickly as possible.

WHAT DO WE SPEAK IN LOVE?

What should we address when we speak the truth in love? First, we need to understand that there are levels of confrontation.

The first level is a rule infraction.

The second level is an attitude problem.

The third level is a spiritual need.

Understanding these levels is important because it helps us understand how rules and skillful use of the law is important.

The first level of confrontation is put into force when someone doesn't do something he is supposed to do, or he does something he is not supposed to do. It is an obvious behavior problem.

In a Christian regeneration program, the rules are utilized to bring the person under discipline, so he can be introduced to the love of God.

If we don't recognize the purpose of the rules, we can develop a dictator mode. We may be inclined to try to get everybody to behave the way he is supposed to, simply because the rules say so. That is not the purpose of the law structure in a Christian regeneration program.

The Bible tells us that as a man thinks, so is he. This means if there is improper behavior, it is caused by something deeper. There is something wrong in our attitude, or thought process. Rules, if properly applied, act as a springboard to help us look at deeper issues in our lives.

The purpose of confrontation for rule infraction and attitude problems, is to get to the spiritual need within us. If our behavior is off, our thinking is off, which means there is a spiritual need behind it all.

The object in confrontation is not just to approach the rule infraction or the attitude, but to help us allow Christ to deal with the spiritual need that is the cause of the problem. If we don't see the spiritual need behind our behavior, we have missed the point of confrontation.

This does not mean that every time we confront, we have to take half an hour to get the person to a high spiritual level. We don't always have that luxury of time at the moment of confrontation. But later, when there is more time, we can help him begin to see his actual need.

If we don't get to the spiritual level, we will get caught up in the rule infraction and attitude problem. So, we must follow through at the appropriate time and bring the person to the spiritual level. Unless we do this, we will simply be employing behavior modification, and we will have become a Pharisee. We will fall under the Hitler syndrome.

This approach is a skillful use of the law. It is essential for this kind of ministry. If we tell a person about his spiritual need without helping him see his problem in rule infraction and attitude, the truth we try to give him will not seem relevant to him. He will not see his need for it. If he doesn't understand his need for God, he will not be inclined to turn to God.

When he understands that he cannot control his behavior and his thoughts, he will begin to see a spiritual need. At that point, he will be open to receive the truth in love.

We speak the truth in love when a person is motivated by a wrong foundation. An example of a wrong foundation is when a man enters a rehabilitation program so he can get his wife back. Another example would be to work a program to get sober, but not really wanting God to be number one in his life. It could even be doing a good job at work because he is just a people pleaser.

We speak the truth in love when a person has consistently wrong attitudes. If a man has a pattern of not dealing with specific attitudes, he needs to be confronted. He fails to deal with those issues because he does not hear what God is saying to him in that area of his life. We are to help him see how the attitudes affect his behavior, and we are to show him his spiritual need behind it.

We speak the truth in love when we see relationships that are off base. There are three kinds of relationships: relationship with God, with self, and with other people. If any of those three is off, we need to confront. An example could be someone who is afraid of God because he thinks God is just like his father. That issue has to be addressed.

Improper relationship with self occurs when someone is in denial. He refuses to deal with himself. He may isolate from himself and from others. In terms of his relationship with others, he may project his problems on others. When a man works a program to please his wife, that is a typical off-base relationship.

This is all very important because we are relational people. If a man doesn't learn how to relate properly with others in a healthy way, he will have a hard time staying free from his addiction. Relational problems may be more difficult to confront than other problems. It is sometimes hard for a person to understand that a specific relationship is off-base.

We should never overlook the obvious. That refers to half-truths and lies. If there is something blatant in the person's behavior or attitude, it should be confronted in love.

We speak the truth in love when we see a person take on the comfortable, "I have arrived" attitude. It is not wrong to be comfortable in the Lord, but an "I have arrived" attitude is a manifestation of deception and needs to be confronted. A person may appear to be doing all right, but in reality he is simply cruising along. He has figured out the system and what he needs to do to comply, and he kicks everything into neutral and begins to coast.

The Holy Spirit has a tendency to provoke people who are comfortable. He prods them to get out of their comfort zone, and to keep on keeping on in their walk with the Lord.

HOW DO WE SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE?

First of all, the bottom line is that we do it in love. That is what *1 Corinthians 13* talks about. We may feel that because we deal with addicts who will die if they aren't exposed to the truth so they can deal with their addiction, means it is simply important for us to speak the truth.

But *1 Corinthians 13* says if we speak the truth and we don't have love, we are nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. It is true that we need to be committed to speak the truth to the outrageous problems that people have, and those problems can kill them if they don't deal with them. But that is not an excuse not to exercise love when we speak the truth.

We don't have to be perfect; we will make mistakes. But we need an awareness that if we don't speak the truth in love, we may as well walk up to them and begin to beat a cymbal. That is how much good we accomplish.

No excuse will justify departing from that principle. There may be valid reasons for us to lose our temper with a person, but there is really no excuse for it. That is a hard line to draw, but it is the truth.

We can be firm with a person, and very often we need to be, but that firmness should be accompanied with a lot of love.

This becomes possible when we walk in the Spirit and stay in communion with God ourselves. God is love, and when we are in communion with Him, we will communicate His love to others.

It is difficult to speak the truth in love when we are filled with arrogance and pride. God can use us, but He can be much more effective through us when we have allowed Him to break us of our arrogance and pride.

Our goal should always be to speak to a person with his highest good in mind. If we speak the truth in love for our own highest good, our motive is wrong because we get some worth out of our action. Remember, we don't need for the person to stop what he is doing, he should stop doing what he is doing for his own highest good.

It is critical for us to see the other person's needs as important. We are to put what other people need in front of what we need. The only way we can do that is to realize God has already met our needs. Speaking for another person's highest good means we put what he needs above what we suppose we might need.

How do we speak the truth? We check our motive. If we are not getting through, we should check our motive. We should check our attitude, also. If we find that we are not getting through, we should drop back and look at things so we can figure out what is going on.

We should ask God if there is something wrong with our motive. Are we the reason for keeping this person from hearing? If there is something wrong with our motive we should deal with it.

That may mean we have to say to the person, "I'm sorry, I have been getting in the flesh with you, and I apologize. Let's start over. We need to talk about this, but I recognize that I am trying to control you. I realize I'm getting angry."

It is hard to do that because if we confront with a chip on our shoulder, and we determine that the person is wrong and we are right, we put that person in a "lose" situation. In other words, the goal of the confrontation will be that we will win and the other person will lose. The result is that we set ourselves up to fail.

We learn to speak the truth in love in ministry as we learn to speak the truth in love in relationships. That means, we learn to speak the truth in love to those we are close to, personally. If we can't speak the truth in love to our spouse or our daughter or to someone else close to us, we can't do it effectively to those to whom we are trying to minister.

If we can't work the relationships in our own family, we can't expect to be able to do it in church. If we can't learn how to confront and hold each other accountable, and accept each other in the process, we won't be able to do it in small groups or in class, or head to head.

We may learn the techniques, but that is all it will be, just techniques. It needs to become an inner reality so it can become a lifestyle.

Again, we will have to understand that God meets all our needs, otherwise we will not speak the truth in love to someone because we will not want that person to reject us. Instead, we will be after his approval; therefore, we will lose our effectiveness.

As we speak the truth in love, we learn from our mistakes. We take our best shot, as we see God leading us, as honest as we know how to be. If we make a mistake, we learn from it. There will be mistakes in timing, mistakes in discernment, mistakes in method, mistakes in approach, mistakes in every way possible.

That doesn't mean we are to stop confronting. We can't afford to stop confronting if we expect to stay in the ministry.

We learn that we are capable of making mistakes, just the same as the person we confront. We also learn humility, and as we grow we continue to confront, and we become progressively more effective. We become wiser, and our discernment sharpens.

We should never wait until we feel we can confront perfectly. If so, we will never begin, because we will never become perfect. People need to be confronted in order to be healed.

In *1 Corinthians 13*, Paul said that when he was a child, he spoke as a child. If that is how we approach confrontation, we will have a lot of problems.

In *1 Corinthians 2:7*, Paul talks about speaking a message of God's secret wisdom. That means that one of the "how to's" of speaking the truth in love is to hear God.

At times we may find ourselves in confrontation in which we do not want to be involved. We will have to pray to God to show us how to confront this particular person. We may not know how to deal with that situation, and we will have to really hear God. God's wisdom will show us how to operate in that specific situation.

The answers are not in our natural mind. We have the mind of Christ, but God has to show us how to use it. That means total dependency upon God. We do not operate out of what we know, we operate out of what God is showing us and what He is saying.

In *2 Timothy 2:24-26*, Paul tells Timothy that a servant of the Lord must not quarrel. He must be kind and gentle with those who oppose him. He should not be resentful. This means when we confront in love, and the person doesn't hear us, that is his choice. We are to let it go at that.

Confronting is not an excuse to get into an argument with a person to prove our point.

Confrontation involves clashing at times, but the purpose is to bring up the issue, face to face, not to persuade the person to see things our way. It doesn't mean we become a wimp, it means we love him, even when he refuses to hear us and gives us a hard time. We let the truth speak for itself. Truth will stand on its own.

In *James 1:19,20*, James talks about being quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to become angry. Man's anger does not bring about the righteousness that God requires. This means when we confront, we should be quick to hear God. We are to listen to what the person says and, at the same time, listen to what God tells us.

When we are quick to hear God, we will be slow to speak, and slow to become angry. We can't be in reaction and be hearing God simultaneously.

THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN CONFRONTATION.

The biggest point for us to understand is that confrontation and accountability go together. Accountability is built into *Matthew 18*. Accountability is all through God's interaction with His people in the Scriptures. Accountability is built into the New Testament church. When we confront, there must be follow-through.

Without follow-through, people will hear us but do whatever they want to do. If we are not willing to hold someone accountable and he is not willing to be held accountable, we have to question why we are confronting to start with.

That means, in small groups, if we confront we have to hold a person accountable in that particular issue. We have to follow up and ask him, "What are you doing about this?"

We also have to hold the person accountable to work whatever program he is supposed to be working. It is important that we hold him accountable to do something in response to the confrontation.

Accountability to a program keeps a group on track. If we don't have that, the group will be scattered in its thoughts and its actions. This is the difference between a group that really works, and a group that just holds meetings.

Without confrontation and accountability, we will enable. We will allow a person to slide by with whatever he feels like doing. This will reveal the difference between leaders who are do-gooders and leaders who are effective in this kind of ministry.

We can hold accountable only those who want to be accountable. The question we must ask ourselves is, if a person will not be accountable or is not teachable, is he in the right place? Maybe the reason that person is not accountable or teachable is because he is in the wrong place. This may be over his head, or perhaps he is not ready. It may be more than he is able to handle.

Because he does not do what he is supposed to do, doesn't necessarily mean he is a bad person. He may be in the wrong place. If we confront, but the person does not follow through, we ask God, "Why?"

There are times when we do not confront. We don't confront when a person has not asked us for help. Also, we should never confront another person's behavior when the person is not present. We don't raise the issue face to face in a group when a person is not there. That is called gossip. If the person is not there, don't talk about him.

Also, we never confront on the basis of another person's facts. If we have only one side of a story, we never attack the supposedly guilty party with guns blazing. We know only half the story, which means we will go off half-cocked. We can confront by saying, "This is what I heard. Tell me what has happened." But we don't accuse the person of being wrong until we have our facts straight.

If someone comes to us with an issue about something someone was supposed to have done, we should not confront for the accuser, we should let the accuser confront for himself.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T CONFRONT?

If we don't confront, defenses continue. That means the denial and the projection and the blind spots continue unchecked. This also means the life-controlling problems go unchecked. In some cases, this means someone could die. That is a serious reason to confront.

If we don't confront, there will be a lack of spiritual growth and maturity. The Scriptures say that when we speak the truth in love, we grow up.

If we don't confront, people will play games with us, and they will not get real with us nor with themselves.

If we don't confront, the body of Christ will not be built up. If everyone does his own thing without being confronted, the body will never come into unity.

If we don't confront, we can expect to see gossip and back-biting take over. If a problem is not addressed through confrontation, it will be addressed in gossip. Gossip and backbiting have a tendency to devour people. They create division and discord and disunity.

This means if we run a small group and there is an issue that we or the group does not deal with, the people will deal with it outside the group in the form of gossip. If we have an issue within the group, we are to deal with it. Our group is not blind, the issue will be addressed one place or another.

We should always deal with rebellion. Rebellion can spread. If there is not confrontation and accountability, there will be rebellion. Once rebellion begins to spread, the standard of a program goes down. Moaning and groaning and complaining become the norm.

If we don't confront, people who are serious can be crushed in the middle of the gossip and the games and the back-biting. They will become frustrated from the lack of unity. They want to grow, but they are not able to grow because of the disunity. If the system does not nurture them nor support them, they will eventually die. They will disappear from the group.

Chapter Six . . . Confrontation

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 144)

1. Why do we need balance between the principle involved and the Person of Jesus in every confrontation?

2. Why is discernment crucial in confrontation?

3. Why is confrontation necessary?

4. Why is relevancy necessary in confrontation?

5. What is the real reason to confront a person for rule infraction and attitude problems?

6. How can we be certain we are speaking the truth in love?

Chapter Seven

SMALL GROUPS – PART ONE

There is a multitude of different kinds of small groups. A small group in a residential treatment program is entirely different from a small group in an overcomers program. If we try to accomplish the same thing in an overcomers group that we can accomplish in a residential program, we can destroy our group. We would be very poor overcomers leaders.

The opposite is true, also. If we try to lead an in-residence group the same as we would an overcomers group, we would accomplish nothing worthwhile.

One of the keys to being a functioning group leader is knowing what kind of group we are trying to facilitate. Some people are skilled at working a rehabilitation group, but cannot handle a therapy group. Some are good at therapy, but are not effective at running an overcomers group.

For the most part, the church has no idea what small groups do, or why they work. When they try to run a small group, it usually becomes a mini version of church, with one person teaching and everybody else listening. That is not really an effective small group.

The secular world has done a lot of study as to why small groups work, the theory behind small groups, and what makes a good group leader. Some of their findings are valid and should be considered when we study the subject of small groups. This is because they have arrived at truth which is Biblically based.

CONCEPTS OF SMALL GROUP MINISTRY.

The basic method for ministry in the New Testament is small groups. In today's church, small groups in Christian circles are usually the exception rather than the rule. Most Christians are frightened of small groups. This is one reason Christians are reluctant to get involved in support groups. They are scared of them.

Consider for a moment, the ministry of Jesus. Jesus ran a small group with His disciples continuously. Jesus is the model for working in small groups. While the disciples walked with Jesus, they asked Him questions and shared their problems with Him. They were comfortable with Him; therefore, they were free to act within the group the same way they acted outside the group.

When a group functions properly, people have a tendency to play the same kind of roles, say the same kind of things, do the same kind of things and come across the same way they do outside the group.

Let's say, one morning we are in a convenience store getting ourselves a cup of coffee before going to work. We are busy putting cream and sugar in our coffee, when this great holy Person named Jesus walks up to us. We have heard a lot about this Person. We have seen Him do miracles, and have heard Him teach. He gets Himself a cup of coffee and begins to talk to us.

Among the things He says is that He wants us to follow Him around for a while because He wants to teach us some things. We decide that would be a good idea, so we get in His truck and ride around and do what He does that day.

It would be reasonable to assume, with that scenario, that we would have a tendency to be on our best behavior. We wouldn't swear, we wouldn't burp, we wouldn't do anything that would be unacceptable in His presence. We would probably act so holy that we would be completely unnatural to our normal behavior.

As long as we are together with Jesus, we are on our best behavior. In reality, we are phony. We are acting like someone other than who we actually are. We refuse even to look at a beautiful woman when she walks by scantily dressed. Our normal behavior, the things we do every day, but that we do not want Jesus see us do, we simply do not do.

How long would that type behavior last? Suppose Jesus had a van, and He went around and picked up eleven other people. And suppose that among those people were some who we couldn't stand to be around.

For instance, suppose one of the people was a Southern cowboy, and another was a fellow from the streets of New York. Suppose one of them was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, and another was a member of the Black Panthers.

And suppose the rest of the group was comprised of young men from rival street gangs. How long would everybody be able to act holy? Probably only a matter of minutes. These people already have built-in resentments. Their true natures would surface very quickly.

What happened when Jesus walked around with His twelve disciples? He had a tax collector and He had zealots. The tax collector collected taxes for the Romans and lived on extortion. The zealots lived to drive out the Romans and everyone who aligned themselves with the Romans. Do you suppose those two types of people had problems with each other?

He also had two men whom He called sons of thunder because of their impulsive tempers. Then He had Peter, who seemed to say whatever came to his mind. This collection of people walked around with Jesus. In what way did the Lord have to minister to these men on numerous occasions? He had to help them learn how to live out the truth that He taught, in practical, everyday relationships.

Jesus did confront His disciples, and He did correct them, and they did ask Him questions, but a lot of what the Lord had to deal with was how those men could learn to function together. They needed to get some teeth into the truth Jesus taught them.

Small groups always need that dynamic in them. In our role as facilitator, we are, in fact, a coach. We are not so much a teacher or instructor, as we are a coach. Jesus coached the disciples as they walked around. He taught them what it meant to live with expectation for the kingdom of God. He taught them what it meant to love each other and to love their neighbors as they loved themselves.

He coached them in terms of their daily lives. A coach trains, encourages, disciplines and affirms. A coach can be a good teacher, but some teachers make poor coaches. A coach may teach, but if he never takes his pupils out on the field and allows them to experience the product of his teaching, his team will never be in a position to stand up against competition.

A coach not only helps a person know what he is supposed to do, he helps the person learn how to do it.

A coach gets us into shape, he tells us what we are supposed to do, then he gives us plenty of opportunity to practice. He informs us and affirms us and tells us how to perform properly. He knows when we make an honest mistake and when we are just lazy.

He knows how to get the most out of each person, because he is able to see where each person is, individually. He sees where we fit into the team, and how the whole team can work together.

A good group leader is a coach. He learns the strengths and the weaknesses of each person in the group, just as Jesus knew the strengths and weaknesses of His disciples.

A good group leader knows when someone is just being lazy, and when he is honestly struggling.

A good group leader knows his responsibility is not just to tell people what they are supposed to be doing, it is to help them learn from each other.

For the most part, the concept in church is not "coach," it is "teacher." There is a place for that, but small group ministry is based entirely upon the ministry of Jesus. So, when we think about group leading, we should think in terms of coaching people.

We may know how to confront, but if we don't know how to help the group and the individuals within the group, we are really not a good coach. We don't lead our group, we beat up on people.

Biblically, the method for growth has always been small groups and the concept of "coach." If we look at the New Testament church, that is what they worked with. They met from house to house. A small group leader learns how to speak the truth in love from the concept of "coach."

If we don't take the position of coach, speaking the truth in love can be very destructive. It becomes an excuse to be critical and judgmental, and just to tell people where they are wrong.

Coaches need to know who is on their team. In an overcomers group, not everyone will want to function as a part of our small group. As coach, we must assume that every person on our team will be a player. We will have to spend time asking God where each person fits on the team, where his talents lie, where he is struggling, where he is overcoming.

Every person in our small group is a minister. Part of our job as coach is to learn what each person does well, and to cultivate and develop that talent. We also need to know what each person is not good at.

If we want to successfully coach our group as the Holy Spirit directs, a part of what we need is to know is the strengths and the weaknesses of each person in the group. When we have that information we can facilitate the people playing their roles within the group.

Remember, a functioning group is a group where people tend to act within the group the same as they act outside the group. If people are not able to come into our group and be real, if they think they all have to fit into some acceptable mold, then our group is nothing more than a behavior modification group. Everyone merely conforms, he doesn't grow.

As coach, we do not want everyone on our team to look the same. God did not make them that way. The disciples were not exactly alike. We should encourage them to be in group the same as they are outside of group.

Most of the time we tend to think that a good group is one in which everyone grows at the same rate. Such a group would be easier to manage. But a group that really functions, has people who grow at different rates and react in different ways.

Being a coach is similar to being a pastor. In a sense, we are pastor to our small group. There is a difference between a pastor and a preacher. Each job has its place. God has given the gift of preaching to His people for a specific reason. The problem is that in most churches it is way out of balance, with all preaching and no coaching or pastoring.

From a Biblical standpoint, the role of a small group leader is one of pastor of that group, which means coaching that group. God has given gifts to the body to build up the body; therefore, the more we coach and encourage our people to exercise their gifts, the healthier our group will become.

There is an advantage in small groups over one-on-one accountability confrontation. Let's say, for example, there are five people in our group and we are the group leader. We have already established that each person has problems, but they also have gifts. In addition to the people, Christ is also sitting in our group.

Christ is in the group within each of these people who have problems. They are really new creatures in Christ.

This presents a problem. When the Christ in one person wants to minister to one of the others in the group, the flesh gets in the way. The real people they are, want to minister. The Holy Spirit is working within them to energize them to minister to one another, but their flesh is an obstacle.

It is important for us to recognize that our group is not just a bunch of people with problems, but that Christ, himself, is present within each of them. We need to go into the group with that understanding and with the awareness that the Holy Spirit is energizing them to love and to minister to one another.

It is not as if we are trying to get people to do something they don't want to do. They are ready to minister to each other, but they don't know how. They need to be coached in how to do that.

It also means that the Holy Spirit, because He knows everything, knows who in the group needs to be dealt with every time the group comes together. Our job is to facilitate, and we do that by asking God where to start, and who is in need to receive ministry.

At the same time, we should be constantly aware that the Holy Spirit is focusing upon each person and energizing each person to minister. The basic advantage to doing a small group as opposed to one-on-one is that in one-on-one, Christ in one person will express love to the other person.

But in a small group, Christ will express Himself in six different ways through six different personalities. We give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to magnify His power six times over the one-on-one situation.

Perhaps that is why Jesus functioned in small group situations. That is why He did not call one person, such as Peter, and say, "Peter, you are going to be the head man and I am going to invest all my time in you."

If we think our only purpose as group leader is to deal with the flesh in the group, we will probably identify the people in our group by their flesh. This will quickly burn us out, because we will be looking only at everybody's problems. We will see only what is wrong with everybody.

Instead, we should open ourselves to discover what Christ in each of the people intends to do at the present time. With that attitude, group work becomes exciting, because every day is a new opportunity to see what God will do.

It is not, "How am I going to deal with these people?" "How am I going to fix their flesh?" There is a part of that in group, but our real excitement in a group is watching God do what God wants to do, as the Holy Spirit energizes each person.

In our small group there are some things we will want to facilitate:

CRISIS:

This could be something severe, such as a wife who has been beaten by her husband during the week. It doesn't have to be that severe. It could be simply that one member of the group has had a particularly difficult week, and has been unable to cope.

It is always a good idea in a group setting to start off with an agenda of dealing with a person who is in the most pain. Sometimes their pain surfaces in something such as outright rebellion.

It is important that we never let rebellion go without being confronted. If someone is in rebellion, we need to deal with that right away. Rebellion is similar to complaining, it grows and spreads dissention within the group.

Our group will be perceptive. The members will have a tendency to know the condition of each person within the group. If we avoid dealing with a person who is having a problem, everyone in our group will be aware of it. We may try to avoid heavy confrontation and just deal with surface issues, but our group will be aware of what we are doing.

If we attempt to pull this off, we will find that our group will not be with us. They will know where the ministry should be taking place. Our group will not flow until we have the confrontation. The Holy Spirit wants to get at the real issue for the moment. He wants to deal with the pain or the rebellion.

For this reason, it is a good practice to ask God where He wants us to start. If we are listening, God will show us where to start. We may not know why we are to start with a certain person, but God knows, and that is good enough.

As group leaders, we have to be patient with people. We shouldn't let them get away with anything, but we should limit what we expect from them. Just because a group spends a great deal of time ministering to one particular person, that doesn't mean we should expect that person to be completely healed by the next meeting.

We must exercise patience and mercy, and one of the best ways to have the right frame of mind is to look at how patient and how merciful God has been with us through the years.

The nature of a residential treatment program is to push the people, to keep them under pressure to respond positively. They have life-controlling problems and some of them will die if they return to the outside world without handling those problems. But even while we are holding their feet to the fire, we must understand that they are in process.

When someone is struggling, it is not a reflection of our skill or lack of skill as a group leader.

The program for the addict will continue all his life; therefore, we shouldn't expect wonders overnight, especially when we deal with people in crisis. Also, remember we are not responsible to fix anybody. Neither is our group responsible. Coaches are not responsible to play the game. They need to know the game and they need to know how to coach, but the coach is not a player.

When someone makes a mess of things, it is not necessarily the coach's fault. We should not take responsibility, nor allow our group to take responsibility for fixing people. That is a sure way to burn out.

PEER SUPPORT:

All people, before they come to the Lord, experience a great deal of negative peer pressure. To be accepted by our peers, we have to do the things our peers do.

In small groups, people should receive positive support from their peers. One of the things we always want to facilitate in group is that people build relationship with each other. They should spend time with each other and minister to each other, even outside the group.

Our small group will probably be the first place the members of the group will ever have experienced positive peer support. This may seem obvious to us, but it is a rare condition in the world. To have peers who will really support us is a rare thing. We should encourage this kind of support within our group.

Some of our participants will have to create support groups for themselves in the work place. The world is not waiting for them to come knock on the door and say, "I need help."

One of things we must do is to begin to teach the members of our group how to relate to each other outside the group, and how to keep each other accountable.

YOU ARE A MODEL:

Groups have a tendency to take on the personality of their leader. When a group has a leader who confronts everyone in the group, each member of the group will have a tendency to confront others. Groups led by a merciful leader will have a lot of compassion, but they will not be good at confrontation.

Groups who have a leader who is interested primarily in inner healing, will usually attempt to go in depth with simple, basic things, such as accountability. Groups will always tend to look and act like their leader.

This means what we model in our group is very important. The only way a person is going to learn how to speak the truth in love in our small group is through watching us. They will learn that the acceptable procedure in that group is what we do. We don't do what is unacceptable. Because of this, the members will emulate us. The normal way for the group to function will be how we function within the group.

People don't learn simply because we tell them. They learn because we show them by our actions. We lead by example. If we are not speaking the truth in love, we can't expect our group to do it. If we are not holding people accountable, we can't expect our group to hold people accountable.

If the group is not doing something it needs to be doing, we can't blame the group. We must look at ourselves first and find out what we are modeling within the group. Over time, groups look like and function like their leader. If we are a good, functional coach, our group will probably look healthy.

We are the one who defines for our group the normal group procedures. We do this by our actions. We do not sit down and tell our group precisely how it is going to function. Nor do we pass out a set of rules for behavior. We establish the norm by our behavior. The members of our group will receive that as the normal operating procedure, and they will act accordingly.

If we do not confront well, we should determine who within our group is good at confronting and facilitate his action during group. It is the same with mercy, or accountability, or any other gift that is necessary for the proper function of our group.

Also, if we do not walk what we talk, we will create a lot of problems within our group by our example.

If we are not a model of being transparent, they will not listen to us tell them about the necessity for transparency within the group.

If we are not a model of being accountable ourselves, they will not learn accountability from us.

If we are not a model of loving them unconditionally, they will have a difficult time receiving from us, and they will have a difficult time speaking the truth in love to each other.

We must first learn how to maintain our own relationship with the Lord and the people He has placed around us. For example, if we don't know how to encourage our family, or how to handle small conflicts within our family, we will not be able to handle a small group effectively. We won't be real with our people, because we will not be living what we teach.

If we don't know how to ask for help when we need it, the members of our group will have a hard time asking for help. We will come across as self-sufficient, and the members of our group will think that is what it looks like to be healthy. So they will also put on the self-sufficient facade.

Our relationships with our group will begin with our relationships with our family. If things are not right in our closest relationships, it will affect everything we try to do in ministry. The result is that we will not be as effective as we might be.

BURDEN BEARING:

The idea of burden bearing refers to *Galatians, Chapter 6*, where we are told to bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ. It also tells us that we who are spiritual are to restore the sinner in a spirit of gentleness, keeping an eye on ourselves, lest we also are tempted.

In small groups there are some practical ways in which we can be a burden bearer. One is simply by encouraging people to share where they are at the moment. Another is to affirm them while they work through their problems. Another is praying for them.

After a person has shared, it is a good practice to pray for that person before moving on to the next person. We pray for their specific need, and in that way we bear their burden.

We also do not demand that people get better immediately. We are patient with people who are honestly struggling. Again, we need discernment to determine who is just lazy and who is really dealing with his problem, but is temporarily stuck. Part of burden bearing is walking along with that person for a while, being patient while he struggles.

It would be burden bearing just to let someone cry if he needs to cry. Burden bearing is practical, and it is something we have to facilitate in our group. We facilitate it because it is the responsibility of the whole group. Christ, in all the members of our group, will be willing to bear the burdens of the group, so the whole group is involved in burden bearing.

It is a big mistake to try to bear all the burdens ourselves. We may have to bring two or more group members together, because one of them is struggling. When we bring them together, we facilitate the ministry of the group.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Accountability is a big part of the purpose of a small group. If we confront without accountability we accomplish little. Confrontation and accountability go together.

Two tools to be used in a small group are the Daily Moral Inventory, and the Contract. The Daily Moral Inventory (DMI) consists mainly of prayer and journaling. These are the two primary tools. Another tool is the Sociogram, but that is not always practical in groups other than in-residence.

We should know how to use the DMI effectively in the small group. The DMI is a knife-like tool. If we know how to use it, we can cut to the heart of a person's problem.

There are two parts to a DMI. One part identifies the liabilities, and the other part identifies the assets. When inventorying liability, the person takes inventory of his flesh. The only reason the person has assets is because the Person of Christ lives in him. The asset side is a reflection of the character and nature of Christ.

When we look at a DMI, we look at the past 24 hours, and how the character of Christ was either reflected or not reflected. The DMI becomes a tool with which to pray specifically and to journal. We can do a lot of things with a DMI. One of the things we look for is patterns in a person's character. We look for what is there and what is not there.

Part of the reason people need to learn the discipline of using a DMI is because they are usually in denial. Their thinking is out of balance.

With a DMI, we can tell if someone is hearing from God, and how much denial he is still in. Denial and projection kill us. They set us up to return to our addiction.

As we work with a DMI, we will determine what a normal DMI is for the person to whom we are ministering. For instance, a person may have a couple of attitudes marked, but they are always different. There are never enough attitudes marked repeatedly, so we can identify a specific problem. There are just a few, and they are always different. This indicates the person is not focused. He has no idea what his problem is.

Suppose, on the other hand, we have a person who consistently marks the same attitude over time. This means he is looking at the attitude, but he is either not willing to deal with it, or he doesn't know how to deal with it.

Suppose a person never marks resentment. This means he is in denial. On the other hand, suppose he marks projection and procrastination, but nothing else. This tells us he is looking at other people, and he is lazy. But if he is looking at other people, and he is lazy, he should also mark projection and forgetting God.

If he is looking at other people, he is projecting upon those people, and his focus is upon those people, not upon God. This means he is actually being self-righteous.

If we learn how to use a DMI, we can save a lot of time and get down to the reality of what is happening in a person's life. Part of the process is learning what is normal for each particular person. Is what we hear about this person as others speak to him in our group, the same as what we see on his DMI? Are the people in the group missing something, or is the person missing something? Or is the person obsessed with one problem only?

Prayer needs to be specific in order to respond to the specific problem that brought the person to our group. If the person deals only in generalities in his DMI, and in generalities in his prayer, that tells us the person is in denial, and probably doesn't know how to focus. He is shooting, but he is missing the mark because he doesn't know what he is shooting at.

The idea behind a DMI is that the people are responsible for doing the DMI, and we are responsible to check to make sure they are doing it. It doesn't mean we beat them up with it, but we hold their feet to the fire to find out why they are not doing it. We need to discern who is dealing responsibly, and who is not dealing responsibly.

One person may be stuck because he doesn't know what to do or how to do it. He needs to be encouraged. Another person may be stuck because he has decided he is simply not going to do it. At this point we return to the concept of coach. A coach holds a player accountable. If a player continually messes up, the coach deals with him.

However, a good coach will know who simply hasn't grasped it yet, who isn't skilled enough, and who is just lazy. One person, he will teach, but the other person will be running laps during practice.

Chapter Seven. . . Small Groups - Part One

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 145)

1. Why did Jesus focus the depth of His ministry upon a small group?

2. What is our responsibility in our role of coach?

3. What happens within our group if we avoid necessary confrontation?

4. Why is a group leader always a role model?

5. What are some examples of burden bearing?

6. Why is it important for a group leader to know how to read a person's DMI properly?

Chapter Eight

SMALL GROUPS – PART TWO

Something we must remember about our small group is that the Holy Spirit is always in charge. We have to continually ask God, "What do I do now, Lord?" For example, if we have two people in crisis at the same time, we ask, "Lord, which one do I start with?"

There are some things which we, as group leaders, need to be aware of. One is that we have to prepare the ground for work that is to be done in the group. Most important, is that we understand clearly and we define clearly the ground rules for our group. That may appear to be obvious, but if we don't define clearly the ground rules for our group, anything goes.

If we expect everyone to show up with his DMI and his journal, we must establish that rule. Also, we must establish the rule that everyone listens while one member talks. There cannot be several conversations going on simultaneously. These are boundaries. For people to function in a group there must be safe boundaries. This means they know the limits.

People in group will always push the limits until they are clearly established, after which the people themselves will enforce the limits. It is our job as coach of our group to see that no one steps outside the boundaries. This means we have to hold the people accountable to the limits and boundaries. We cannot minister effectively unless we are willing to hold their feet to the fire.

If we allow people to slide through the limits, our group will not work. The people will not be able to focus; therefore, the Holy Spirit will not be able to minister with power. If people are allowed to do whatever they think, the power of the Holy Spirit will be diffused because of the confusion. Therefore, it is important, in order for the group to work, to hold the feet of the people to the fire.

We can believe the Gospel for our people, but we cannot give them slack. We must hold them accountable. People will feel safe and secure when the boundaries are clearly established and well defined.

In a dysfunctional family, boundaries are either super rigid or non-existent. In either case, the people feel insecure. Because of this, one of the things people need, to work together effectively, is a secure place where the boundaries and limits are reasonable, but consistent.

We will also have to foster a sense of security in our group. This means we will have to go out of our way to affirm people. In a sense, we will have to anticipate where our people will be in their walk as they continue to attend our group. We will have to take responsibility to make certain new people are included from the outset.

It is possible to have accountability in a group, but no security. A leader can constantly confront with intensity, to such a degree that the people in the group feel insecure because they don't know who will be the next to be confronted. By the same token, it is possible to have security in a group without accountability.

When the group leader does nothing but affirm, and has no idea how to hold people accountable, the group will be reduced to nothing more than a "bless me" condition. In that case, the group will do its own thing, with the leader failing to hold the members accountable.

Another necessity for preparing a group to work effectively is to develop a sense of unity within the group. This means, among other things, if there is conflict within the group it is our job to see that it is dealt with.

All this is important because our purpose in the group is accountability to the DMI, to the contract and to journaling. But because people will be interacting with each other they will rub each other wrong. The unity of that group and the relationships within the group are as important as whether or not someone has done his DMI properly.

If a person has done his DMI properly, but he is not getting along with the other members in his group, our purpose is not being accomplished. We are not reaching and maintaining healthy relationships in our group.

Jesus had the twelve disciples, but He also spent a lot of extra time with Peter, James and John. Small groups are a bit like the Peter, James and John scenario. If the people in our group can't learn the fundamentals of getting along with each other, they have missed the whole point of the program. They may learn how to do the mechanics of the program, but they miss the heart of it.

We will always be looking at relationships. We need to be aware of what is happening in terms of the material or the subject matter being covered. At the same time, we listen with a second set of ears to determine what is happening in the relationships within the group.

There are two levels that we, as group leaders, need to be listening to.

The first is called, content. Content refers to what is being said, who said it to whom, and how it was said. Content is simply the facts. It is what is actually happening within the group. Who said, who didn't say, who did their work, who didn't, etc. We have to be on target with this because it is our responsibility to be sure the content being discussed in the group is on target. We have to listen to make sure.

The second level is called process. In some groups, process is more important than content, in others, they are equally important. Process is the means by which the content is taking place.

Process means being aware of who is talking and who is not talking. How are people saying what they are saying? What kind of emotion is behind what they are saying? Who is shut down, and who is talking too much? Who is not getting along with whom?

The content is the basic subject matter, and the process is the way the subject matter is being worked. In the content, we listen to what is being said. In the process, we listen to how it is being said, and what is not being said.

If someone in the group needs to grieve, the content of that person's discussion may be about his or her relationship with the spouse. That person could be ready to break down emotionally. If we are not aware of what is going on, we may let somebody quote a verse as to what he or she should do about the problem. If we allow this to happen, we have missed the process. The content would be addressed, but the healing power of the Holy Spirit would be quenched.

Content would be if a person properly worked his DMI. Process would be, as we discuss the DMI, the person begins to weep or become angry. The process is what is being said and how that issue is being worked with. Both are important. If we try too hard to stay on track with content, we may miss the process.

We must be certain we maintain balance. We shouldn't get so wrapped up in the process that we miss the content, and vice versa. In a therapy group there is more interest in process than content. But in an accountability group, content is possibly more important than the process. The process of holding people's feet to the fire really involves content.

Within a group, conflict is a process issue. To be able to deal with a sense of unity within our group, we have to include process.

Another method for us to develop a sense of unity is to help the people learn to draw strength from the Christ within each other. The group should not be focused solely upon us, and upon drawing strength only from us. We want them to learn to see Christ in each other. They will see that when they start ministering one to another.

We are talking about creating a sense of interdependence, which is a way of saying, "I have something you need, and you have something I need. We as a group all have something we can give to the group, and we all have something we can receive from the group."

If we can direct people to learn to draw from each other it will be very helpful, because we will not always be available. If they don't learn how to find that ability in our group, they will not be able to use it effectively in their relationships with other Christians. This will also make our group more solid and functional.

People will begin to realize they can actually minister to somebody. That is a powerful revelation. When someone who has primarily been taking from the group eventually arrives at the point where he realizes he has something worthwhile to share with a person who is hurting, it is a great step forward for that person.

When we foster the sense of interdependence, so the people look to each other for ministry, they will catch a vision for that, and they will get excited at the prospect. They will become motivated. We simply have to monitor them so they will not get carried away. It is our job to keep them on target, to keep the group focused. At the same time, we want people to know they are in the group to minister to each other.

OUR NEED TO FACILITATE:

Confrontation. We must facilitate loving confrontation within our group. Groups will have a tendency to do what is called, flight. That means when we get close to an issue that matters to people in the group, they will try to avoid it.

An example is when one member of the group is hurting, but all the others are hurting also. If the person who is hurting begins to break down and weep, the others want to avoid the issue, so they take flight. They get away from the heart issues and withdraw to their heads with such statements as, "We're just fine. We have the basic scriptures, and that's all we need."

They overlook the reason they are in the group in the first place. Obviously, the scriptures are not working for them, they need more, but they don't want to face the issue. The DMI and the contract are tools with which we can confront the issues.

There are many ways in which we can confront in a group. It depends upon the situation we are facing within the group. The best way to confront people is to ask questions, rather than tell them what is wrong with them. That takes practice, because it is sometimes difficult to come up with questions with which to confront people.

Remember, in confrontation we try to raise an issue. If we just blast someone, we may have raised an issue, but if they haven't been able to see the problem themselves, all we have done is blast them. Questions have a tendency to make people think. If we utilize the group to help with the question, we may break through some denial.

Also, questions have a tendency to be less threatening. This means, if their defenses are lower, it will be easier for them to receive from us. However, because these are accountability groups, there will be times we will have to blast.

We should start with questions and get our group involved with those questions. Then if asking doesn't work, we are free to blast. It is better to knock on a door than to knock down the door. If we can get someone to open the door so we can talk with them, that is better than using a battering ram to go through the door.

We should remember also, that blasting will be only as effective as the authority people think we have. It is difficult to go back and knock on the door after we have already torn it off the hinges.

If the issue has not been clearly defined before the group, we should go after the issue for the purpose of exposing it to the group. If the issue is clear, and the group sees it clearly, we should let the group go after it first.

We can then listen to both the content and the process. What is being said, and is the person receiving it? Also, what is happening within the group? We can then address both the content and the process. The more functional our group is, the more they will pick up on issues. If we have been working with our group for a while and our group knows us and each other, they will be able to do a lot more work, and we will do less.

We will have to learn also how to draw information from people. If we do nothing but blast, the people will have a hard time giving us information. Questions invite information. If someone didn't do his DMI, we need to find out why. If we go at him hard and heavy to start with, he will be too intimidated. He will be afraid to tell us what is really happening.

This doesn't mean we should be wimpy with him, we have to hold him accountable. Our goal is not just to see that he does what he is supposed to do, our goal is to find out why he doesn't do it.

As we get information, we will have to learn how to expose inconsistencies. If a person didn't do his DMI right, and he tells us he just couldn't do it, we begin to ask him questions. "Tell me about your quiet time." "Tell me about your day yesterday." If he had an argument at work, we ask him where that shows up on his DMI. "Where is your resentment?" "Well, I didn't think it was really that big a deal." We need to show him the inconsistency of what he is saying.

He may be doing his quiet time and seeking God, but he is not seeking God in terms of his relationship with the people around him. We have to show him the contradiction between what he says he is doing and what is really happening.

We also have to learn how to deal with defensiveness. Some people are more defensive than others, but most people are on some level of defensiveness, no matter what. This is because they have issues of fear on some level.

One way to deal with defensiveness is with affirmation and encouragement. We should avoid one-on-one confrontation. The more we try to make our point, the more rigid their defenses will become. Instead, we must utilize the group process.

Dealing with defensiveness, we need to be specific with what is being confronted. We should not make general statements. If we confront inconsistencies on the DMI, we should nail the person with the specifics of how the DMI has not been done correctly.

We should never say, "You always come to the meeting like that!" They know they are not always like that. Nor should we say, "You haven't done anything since you have come into this program!" We may feel like saying it, but in reality it is absurd. They have accomplished something, and they know they have.

Sometimes, when we see denial, we just want to blast it with a bazooka. But it is impossible to be specific with a bazooka. We have to remember we are servant leaders, and as such we have to learn how to handle power. We may feel we can use a bazooka, but we will actually blow away the people and destroy what we want to accomplish.

That is why we need to get the group involved. In the group activity, we can discover the weak points in each of the people in the group. When those weaknesses surface, we can confront them. Many times, the process within the group will show us how to go after the specific weaknesses. For example, "You say you don't have any resentment, but it looks as if you are having a hard time with the people in the group who are telling you what they see in you."

SPECIFIC TASKS:

1. To initiate activity within our group. For instance, who is going to start, and what is our goal for the day? We should not let the group decide what is going to be done, we should decide the direction for the group.

We should always be open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. He will tell us if we are to work on letters of forgiveness, or whatever. While being open to the Holy Spirit to change our agenda, we should have an idea what we want to accomplish. Every accountability group should have a specific agenda. This is not necessarily true in an overcomers group or a therapy group.

We can pray for the Holy Spirit to show us what is happening within our group, then expect to hear the answer by listening to what the people are saying. There will almost always be a theme. One of our jobs will be to clarify for the group what God is processing. It is like pulling common threads from the different members of the group in order to focus the direction of the group.

We become like a magnifier or an amplifier. The group may not be entirely aware of what is actually happening. They see little bits and pieces, but it is our job to see the bigger picture. To help the group focus, we may ask them what they are hearing. If they are not attuned to what is happening, we can then clarify and help them refocus.

2. To facilitate interaction between the group members. If we have someone who rarely speaks, it is our job to draw them into the conversation. In an accountability group we can specifically ask them, "How come you are not saying anything?" Or we may ask them, "Why are you always the last person to speak?"

We should encourage everyone to speak, to be transparent, to be honest, to feel free to confront or to comfort. Whatever needs to be happening, it is our job to facilitate it.

3. We are not to lecture. There is always a need for information to be given to the group, but it is not our job to bring that out in the form of a lecture. We are to keep the group members involved in doing the work of the group. This will keep us from having to lecture.

Instead of telling people what they should be doing, we can have members share what they did when they were dealing with the same issues. That means the people will get the information relationally instead of through lecture.

4. We should encourage prayer. We are not in our group just to pray, a lot of other things need to happen, but part of what we need to facilitate is specific prayer. It should be addressed to the direct needs of the individuals.

5. We should facilitate reconciliation. If there is a difference of opinion between members of the group, we are the ones to facilitate the reconciliation and forgiveness.

To be effective leaders, we must know the purpose God has in mind for bringing the group together. We may have a day in which God does not want us to focus upon a specific problem. In that case, we will have an opportunity to use the time to affirm the people and to build trust between them.

This is important because down the road if an issue does surface, the group will be more inclined to flow together to confront the issue.

PERSONAL PREPARATION TO LEAD GROUPS:

1. As with personal counseling, to be ready to lead a group we must be involved in personal prayer. We all know the value and the validity of prayer. Even though we may know that God has called us to lead a group, if we have not soaked ourselves in prayer, we may not have the necessary fresh anointing to do the job properly.

We can't expect to facilitate the life of someone else in a small group, nor can we challenge people about their prayer lives if our own prayer life is suffering. That is clear hypocrisy. We also have to deal with our own issues. As God reveals attitudes within ourselves, we have to deal with them. Our personal prayer life can handle that.

2. We also need to spend time praying for the group. We should pray for the group as a whole and for the individuals within the group. In this respect, we take the role of intercessor.

When we take time to prayerfully prepare for personal counseling, God will most likely give us a direct word of knowledge for the person we counsel. He will give us specific insight. He will give us appropriate scriptures for the people. He may reveal a deep issue in their lives that we would not have known without His revelation.

It is proper for us to pray for God to give us a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom, discernment and discernment of spirits, prior to ministering to a person. This may come to us as we are in the midst of facilitating our group. If so, we should speak it out because it will be God's timing for it to be brought forth.

3. We must do our homework. We should know the group members in settings other than the group, itself. Even if we can spend only a brief time alone with our group members, it will be worthwhile.

We are to pray for ears to hear. It is important for us to be able to listen to what is not being said as well as what is being said. We should pay attention to how our group members receive confrontation from the other members of the group.

4. We are to be led by the Spirit. We are to seek the Spirit's leading in our preparation time, in our prayers, in our homework, and in our group facilitation.

Example situation: In the group process, we begin to see that one member has a serious deep root of rejection. He asks for prayer and we begin to minister in prayer. In the midst of this, another member taps us on the shoulder and tells us he has something from God.

What do we do? If we have a clear direction, we should have the courage to tell the person to wait. If our direction is not all that clear, we can allow that person to speak the word he has and we can test its validity.

Suppose we decide to let the second person minister, but he begins to attempt to deliver demons. What do we do? We don't want to destroy the person who is attempting to minister, because if we do, he may never have the courage to minister again.

First of all, we should move to shut down the process in a tactful manner. We should then continue to minister to the first man. After the ministry has been concluded, we should try to process with the group why we did what we did.

Then, privately, after the session, we should talk to the person who tried the deliverance ministry. We should explain to him that deliverance is valid and it is appropriate at the proper time. There could actually be a spirit of rejection, and his discernment could have been valid. But in the group setting it would not be proper to undergo a deliverance.

Example situation: During our time of preparation, the Lord has told us someone in the group will have a physical back problem that needs prayer. How do we facilitate this? We can either begin the session by declaring what the Lord has revealed to us, or we can wait until the group is flowing in the Spirit, and allow the need to come forth at a specific time.

There is one thing we should understand. Even though God may reveal something like that to us, we should not plan the entire group activity around that one thing. The important thing in a group is the flow of the Spirit.

The Spirit has a theme for the group. The healing may be incidental, rather than primary. It is our responsibility as facilitator to be able to discern the difference.

Example situation: In the homework process, in our preparation time, it becomes clear to us that we have a person in our group who is really playing games. We receive reports from the outside that the man is not serious. We seek the Lord and He gives us confirmation. We come to the group with all this foreknowledge. How do we deal with that?

Should we come into the group with a set agenda to confront this man? If we do, the man will build a wall around himself. He will not respond, no matter how we attack him. We will finally exhaust ourselves, then discover we still have thirty minutes of group time left. How do we recover our group?

If we go head and head against a person during group time, we essentially leave the group outside. Or we may alienate the group against us. They will put themselves in that person's place, and that is a very uncomfortable position for them.

Instead of direct confrontation by the leader, we should give the members of the group first opportunity to confront. We should ask them what they see happening in the man, then let them minister the truth. After the group has set the flow, we can summarize. The result is that everyone in the group has both given and received ministry.

Remember, we can be right, but not always righteous in the way we do things. We should always be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Every confrontation should end with affirmation.

As group leaders, we may think of ourselves as a quarterback, rather than a coach. A quarterback is the leader on the field, but he never stops looking to the coach for direction. The Holy Spirit is our coach, and we must be in constant flow with Him as we direct our group.

If a quarterback decides he knows more than the coach and that he will call all the plays, he will most always lose the game. The coach is there for help and for guidance. The quarterback has to be able to read the defenses and flow accordingly. As we observe the members of our group, we may see a wall come down. That is our moment to move in, it is our chance to go for a touchdown.

We also have to know all our plays. One of the plays is to utilize the group. We should always see the group as a team, meant to flow together. We shut down the talker and we prod the non-participant. We affirm those who try, and we gently correct those who miss the mark.

We also need to know when to turn up the heat on a person, or when to send a person away from the group to pray about something specific. When a person is shut down, he needs to spend some time alone with the Lord to get his attitude straight.

When we run aground completely, we should have other group leaders with which to consult. There will be times when we simply will not have the answers, and when we do not receive anything from the Lord. That is a good time to look for the counsel of elders.

Very often we should call time out and go into consultation with the Coach. It isn't necessary that we should be able to minister to every situation immediately. When our group members see us taking time to pray, they will receive that as an example for themselves.

Chapter Eight. . . Small Groups - Part Two

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 146)

1. Why is it important for us to establish boundaries for our small group?

2. What is the difference between content and process?

3. What is the primary purpose of confrontation?

4. How should we deal with defensiveness?

5. What are the five specific tasks of a group leader?

6. What are four ways to personally prepare ourselves to lead a group?

Chapter Nine

COUNSELING

True counseling occurs when two people set aside time to sit down together. One person acts as a vessel who purposefully seeks the heart of God for the other person. The counselor receives counsel from the Wonderful Counselor and shares it with the person who needs His touch. The goal of all counseling should be for one person to lead the other person to the Father to be touched directly by Him.

PERSONAL PREPARATION:

Prior to a counseling session, every counselor should take time to prepare himself through prayer. Failure to do this will result in the counselor attempting to counsel according to his own worldly wisdom. This means he will be operating in the flesh, rather than under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

1. The counselor should approach every session as a ministry unto the Lord. The counselor should accept the fact that the Lord has arranged for the session to occur. If this is the case, the Lord has a goal to achieve through the session; therefore, the counselor should constantly seek the purpose of the Lord as the session progresses.

2. Because the counselor is actually engaged in spiritual warfare during a counseling session, he should dress himself in the armor of God. (*Ephesians 6:10-18*) It is good practice for him to verbally dress himself in each article as described in the scripture.

Christ is Truth;

Christ is Righteousness;

Christ is Peace;

Christ is our Source of Faith;

Christ is Salvation;

Christ is the Word of God.

When we put on the armor, we have put on Christ.

3. As the counselor prays to be personally equipped for ministry, he should include prayer for the release of the gifts, which will be necessary for him to counsel effectively. These gifts are outlined in *1 Corinthians 12*.

He will need discernment as the counselee talks, and discernment of spirits, to detect if the counselee is adversely affected or controlled by unclean spirits. He will need a word of knowledge, a direct message from God as to the true nature of the counselee's problems. Finally, he will need a word of wisdom, a word from God as to the proper direction for the counselee.

4. The counselor should also pray for the release of the fruit of the Spirit in his life as he counsels. (*Galatians 5:22,23*) The counselee may be difficult, and the counselor should not let his own flesh fall into conflict with the flesh of the counselee.

5. The counselor should release his own needs to the Lord, so they will not stand in the way of his ability to counsel. If the counselor is occupied with needs of his own, he cannot help but filter the session through his present emotions. This will dilute the effectiveness of the counseling session.

6. The counselor should intercede for the counselee prior to the session. He should pray for the counselee to receive the mind of Christ during the session. (*1 Corinthians 2:16*) He should also pray that the counselee would be able to flow with the Holy Spirit, who is the true Counselor. (*John 14:16*)

Note: The above preparation time is obviously ideal, and can be attained only when the counseling session has been planned ahead of time. In the case of on-the-spot counseling, the counselor should pray without ceasing, constantly seeking to be Spirit-led.

KEY ISSUES IN COUNSELING:

1. The basic need for everyone is the same: it is spiritual in nature. Although our problems manifest in the realm of the flesh, the battle is actually spiritual. (*Ephesians 6:12*) The counselor must always have that understanding in the back of his mind.

2. The basic problem for everyone is the same: it is the sin nature of man. Man is subject to sin from three perspectives:

a) He has inherited the Adamic nature toward sin; therefore, like Adam and Eve in the garden, he doubts God's word as being true, and he acts on his own knowledge of good and evil.

b) He is subject to the sin nature of his parents. As he observes his parents, he emulates them. They are his authority figures and his role models; therefore, they are his point of reference for behavior. This sin nature is passed from generation to generation.

c) He is subject to the sins of his own creation. These may originate from peer pressure, but they are still his responsibility and his problem.

3. The basic solution for everyone is the same: it is the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without the appropriation of Jesus, sin cannot be overcome because it is not within the power of the flesh to overcome sin. Jesus has overcome the world. Only Jesus can overcome the world in us.

THE THREE R'S OF NEED FOR SPIRITUAL RECOVERY:

- a) Sinful Roots, in the realm of our emotions; i.e., rejection, fear, moral impurity, etc.
- b) Sinful Ruts, in the realm of our minds; i.e., carnal, corrupt thought patterns.
- c) Sinful Resistance, in the realm of our willful rebellion to the ways of God.

THE THREE R's OF SPIRITUAL RECOVERY:

- a) Resurrection, following the death and burial of our sinful emotions. (*Galatians 2:20*)
- b) Renewing the mind, by taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
(*2 Corinthians 10:3-5*)
- c) Releasing the Spirit of God into our decisions by submitting our will to His will.
(*Matthew 26:39*)

The battle of life is fought in the arena which pits flesh against spirit. The war is won or lost in the area between the ears of man. It depends solely upon his decision to walk either in the flesh or in the spirit.

If he chooses to walk in the flesh, the result is death to anything godly or spiritual. If he chooses to walk in the spirit, the result is death to the flesh, but release to life and all that pertains to godliness.

The Word of God given to Zechariah is still true today: "*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.*" (*Zechariah 4:6*)

THE PROPER SETTING FOR A COUNSELING SESSION:

The location for each counseling session should be determined during the counselor's preparation prayer time. In *John, Chapter 3*, we see that Nicodemus came to Christ for counseling. However, in *John, Chapter 4*, Jesus counseled with the woman on her ground, the place of her shame.

The counselor should be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit as to the proper location. But whatever location is agreed upon, the counselor should be prepared ahead of time concerning the following items:

- a) **Physical Setting**. The location should be comfortable. The counseling session could last for several hours; therefore, comfort is an essential ingredient. In line with comfort should be temperature control. If a location is too hot or too cold, it can be very distracting. It is also a good idea to have plenty of tissues on hand because most counseling sessions involve emotional expressions.
- b) **Minimum Distractions**. The location should be quiet, with no children present, no television or radio, no outside traffic noise. It should be a place not subject to interruptions by either people or telephone.
- c) **Resource Tools**. Obviously, the counselor should have a Bible. He should also have a note pad upon which to record pertinent statements made by the counselee. This is

especially necessary in order to catch a counselee in a contradiction. Very often, graphic explanations put across a point better than words. If possible, it is advantageous to have a blackboard, chalk and eraser available.

PROCEDURE FOR COUNSELING:

Prayer. The first order of business in every counseling session should be prayer. The counselor should lead the prayer, then offer time to the counselee to pray if he or she wants to.

The counselor should pray for the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. He should pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the session. He should bind the demonic forces that might attempt to disrupt the purpose of God in the session.

Interviewing The Counselee. The counselor should be direct in his questioning. For instance, he should ask the counselee to describe the problem that brought him to the session. The counselor should then probe the counselee in reference to his relationships in his marriage, his family, etc.

He should accumulate a family history, i.e., the counselee's relationship with his father, mother, etc. As the interview proceeds, the counselor should note the key issues that arise.

The counselor should establish the counselee's relationship with God. If the counselee has no relationship with Jesus Christ, there can be no permanent healing. There could possibly be some degree of healing of the emotions, but no in-depth inner healing.

It is crucial for the counselor to learn and to utilize good listening skills. At the outset, he should keep his comments to a minimum, using questions to maintain the flow of information from the counselee. He should also be aware of the counselee's body language and unspoken messages.

Ministry. The key factor that determines the ministry direction in the first session is the counselee's personal relationship with God. If the counselee is unsaved, salvation becomes the number one priority. If the counselee is saved, the counselor should determine his level of communion and fellowship with God.

Other issues should be left until later sessions unless the Holy Spirit prompts the counselor to proceed. The counselee's responses toward moving forward in spiritual growth will be directly related to his basic understanding of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer To Close Session. *Ephesians 1:15-23*, paraphrased into the counselor's own words is a powerful way to finish the first session. Praying for revelation that the counselee's eyes be opened to the fullness of Christ can lead to miraculous results.

Preparation For Succeeding Sessions. The counselor should spend time in intercession for the counselee. He should pray over his notes, and ask God for direction as to which issue in the counselee's life should be addressed at each forthcoming session.

PITFALLS TO AVOID:

1. **Transference**. This occurs when the counselee begins to see all his/her emotional needs being met in the counselor.
2. **Counter-Transference**. This occurs when the counselor begins to transfer his personal feelings to the counselee.
3. **Spiritual Adultery**. This occurs when the counselor shares with the counselee, especially if the counselee is of the opposite sex, intimate secrets that should be shared with a spouse only.
4. **Co-Dependency**. This occurs when either the counselor needs the counselee, or the counselee needs the counselor.
5. **Children Present**. This has already been addressed, but it bears repeating. Counseling requires continuity, which is impossible when children are making demands.
6. **Three-Way Straight**. This occurs when the counselor allows himself to be drawn into the middle of a conflict between a husband and a wife, instead of maintaining his position of objective helper. If this is allowed to occur, the counselor becomes the scapegoat who they accuse as being powerless to help them.
7. **Fear of Terminating Session**. The counselor should be willing to terminate the session at any time. This is especially true when he has lost control, or when the counselee refuses to respond. If the purposes of God are not being accomplished, there is no reason to continue the session.

A COUNSELING MODEL: Jesus And The Woman At The Well. (*John 4:4-24*), (*John 28-30,39*)

1. **The Divine Appointment**. *In Verse 4*, Jesus needed to go through Samaria because He had a Divine appointment. God will give us Divine appointments during our prayer preparations.
2. **Ministry Beyond Man-Made Law**. *In Verse 7*, it was against the law of His day for Him to talk to a woman in public. It was even more heinous because of the kind of woman she was.
3. **Ministry Beyond The Personal Prejudice Of The Counselor**. *In Verse 9*, the Jews and the Samaritans were sworn enemies, Jesus did not let that interfere with His ministry.
4. **Minister Spiritually By Avoiding Fleshly Arguments**. *In Verse 10*, Jesus refused to be drawn into an argument with the woman and away from the purposes of God.
5. **Deal With The Sin Problem To Reveal The Need For Grace**. *In Verses 15-18*, Jesus used a word of knowledge to get to the heart of the sin in the woman's life. By revealing her deep root of shame, He opened her to receive ministry.

6. **Do Not Get Caught Up In Religious Dialogue.** In *Verses 19-24*, Jesus avoided meaningless dialogue about ritual. He kept the conversation focused upon Spiritual truth.

7. **Goals Of The Counselor.** *Verses 23,24*, take the counselee beyond the situation, into the presence of the Father. *Verses 28-30,39*, release the counselee to minister the truth to others.

Chapter Nine . . . Counseling

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 147)

1. Why should the counselor approach every session as a ministry unto the Lord?

2. Why can't man solve his problems himself, without Jesus Christ?

3. What part does man play in the war between flesh and spirit?

4. Why is the proper setting important in counseling?

5. What part does prayer play in a counseling session?

6. When is it appropriate to terminate a counseling session?

Chapter Ten

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

WISDOM and **LIFESTYLE** are two areas of need in our lives when we conduct spiritual warfare.

1. **WISDOM.**

An old European proverb says, "Age and treachery will always defeat youth and zeal."

As we face the necessity to engage in spiritual warfare, we must remember that Satan is an ancient and treacherous foe. Often, young Christians challenge the gates of hell with zeal, but they lose the battle. The devil is not one who can be taken by storm. Even though we have more authority and more power, because of his age and his treachery he can deceive us.

The brightness of youthful vision can grow dim under the dark cloud of relentless Satanic assault. The weight of increasing frustrations and discouragement often fosters compromise, then, after compromise, sin sets in.

The real villain in this case is not sin, but ignorance. We have a tendency to put the devil into a doctrinal box and expect him to operate from that position. But he never does. In a subtle fashion he undermines our relationships and throws strong spiritual opposition against our prayers.

Opposition of this type can disillusion us and weaken our faith when we fail to discern that we are actually under an assault from the devil. In such a case, we don't realize that we stand unprotected against an ancient and treacherous foe. We lack the necessary weapon of wisdom.

In *Matthew, Chapter 10*, Jesus sent His disciples into war. For over a year, Jesus had been teaching His disciples, by example, how to deal with the opposition. Now He sent them forth with the same authority and power. His specific directions can be seen in *Verses 5-8*.

What was true for the disciples is also true for us today. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we receive the same power and authority and the same gifts Jesus imparted to His disciples. Unfortunately, most Christians live a lifetime without realizing that truth.

In the midst of giving His disciples counsel, in *Verse 16*, Jesus tells them He is sending them out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore, they are instructed to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

He instructs them to carry with them the wisdom of God and the innocence of Christ. That is the foundation of all spiritual victory.

Wisdom must precede spiritual warfare, and virtue must come before victory. It is not so much the gift of the individual as it is his character base. The devil always looks for character defects. When he finds them, he has legal access to them and he uses them to defeat us.

But what about faith? Of course we must live by faith, but we still have to learn the ways of the devil, and we have to execute our warfare with wisdom. Many Christians attempt to walk in faith, but they approach faith from the wrong perspective.

They use blind faith instead of seeking God for His wisdom and the knowledge of His ways. It is ignorance, not lack of faith that leaves us vulnerable to Satanic attack.

- *"This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great" unto me:*
- *There was a little city, and a few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it.*
- *Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.*
- *Then said I, 'Wisdom is better than strength'; nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.*
- *The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.*
- *Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroyeth much good." (Ecclesiastes 9:13-18)*

2. LIFESTYLE.

There are no shortcuts to successful spiritual warfare, but one thing assures us of victory: our own overcoming lifestyle. This means we live out the reality of the Gospel. We live knowing that Jesus is victor, that we are in union with Him, and we live out the reality of that victory.

We apply the Gospel to our minds and allow God to renew our thoughts. This kind of lifestyle removes strongholds, which makes us less accessible to Satan.

Our goal should be the same goal as the goal of Jesus. He said that the evil one had come for Him but had found nothing. We may not actually achieve that goal here on earth; nevertheless, it should remain our goal. That can come only through the character of Christ as we apply the Gospel to our lives.

There are some perils. Because we know we are winners, we may feel that all we have to do is to stomp on Satan, but there is not the slightest possibility for us to accomplish that without the life of Christ within us.

We should remember that Adam was in Paradise when he fell. Solomon had seen the glory of God fill the temple he had built. He had a direct relationship with the Father, but he fell.

We should never allow our increased knowledge and our special spiritual experiences to cause us to become overly self-confident.

In those moments of our deepest worship of the Almighty God, we must not forget that ages ago Lucifer, himself, was once in heaven, pouring out praise to God. Our enemy has deceived mankind for centuries. On the other hand, our own experience spans but a brief period of time.

We should be bold, but never brash nor arrogant when we enter spiritual warfare. We should learn all we can about our spiritual authority, then use it wisely, never presumptuously. Many well-meaning Christians have approached the enemy with flippant attitudes and have suffered greatly.

BEING PREPARED.

Spiritual warfare is not just another teaching, it should be a way of life for every Christian. A Christian doesn't have the freedom to attack the strongholds of hell one day, then decide not to fight on the following day. Once Satan is challenged, he will set himself vigorously against his challenger. For this reason, you must be prepared.

1. **Preparing Our Fort.** Our fort is comprised of our personal being and all the members of our household. We prepare our fort by applying the Gospel on a daily basis and by working out the application of what Christ has done in us.

Most Christians live out of the strength of their minds, their wills and their emotions. They do not understand the dimension of the spirit. If we don't know how to live in the spirit, how can we possibly fight spiritual warfare?

Strongholds are established through our thoughts. Thoughts develop our attitudes. Our attitudes are expressed in our actions. Our actions manifest themselves in our habits, when negative or sinful, become our character defects. Out of our character defects come Satanic strongholds.

We win or lose our spiritual battles on a daily basis, depending upon the thoughts we entertain and allow to incubate. When our will is not submitted to the will of God, we will always resist His leading for our lives. God sees this as rebellion.

As we allow ourselves to be led by our emotions and our feelings, we give Satan an open door to exploit us. When we understand this, we realize our need for the renewal of our mind, for the submission of our will, and for the healing of our emotions.

Our call is to be overcomers. *Revelation 12: 11* tells us we overcome by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of our testimony and by not loving our lives even unto death. One of the biggest factors in our preparation is our decision to live an overcoming life, regardless of what happens to us.

In *Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3*, Jesus gave seven specific promises to those who overcome:

1. *"To him who overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Revelation 2:7)*
2. *"He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." (Revelation 2:11)*
3. *"To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except he who receives it" (Revelation 2:17)*
4. *"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give the power over the nations; He shall rule them with a rod of iron. As the potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces, as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star." (Revelation 2:26)*
5. *"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before the angels." (Revelation 3:5)*
6. *"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My Name." (Revelation 3:12)*
7. *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." (Revelation 3:21)*

We need always to recognize that overcoming is related more to what we are, than what we do. Just as ministry reflects our character, so the dimensions of an overcoming life reflect the quality of our relationship to Christ. Overcoming is a mark of sonship!

The place to start overcoming is within ourselves. Unfortunately, many Christians relate overcoming solely to doing battle with Satan, such as casting out demons, etc. It is true that those are activities of spiritual warfare, but they should not be our first priority. Proper personal preparation should always be our priority. This will assure us of victory.

2. **The Defensive Armor**. When we are saved, we are given a helmet of salvation. At first, that is the extent of our defensive armor. Many young Christians run off to battle with only their helmet for protection. They know nothing about the rest of the armor. Because of this, they are vulnerable to all forms of temptation and deception.

These are the defensive weapons available to every Christian, as described in *Ephesians 6:10,18*:

- *"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.*
- *Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*
- *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*
- *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*
- *Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,*

- *and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*
- *in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.*
- *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*
- *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. "*

We must hear the positive statements Paul makes in those verses. He says that we can stand against all the wiles of the devil. We are up against spiritual forces of darkness, that is why we need the whole armor of God. Paul tells us over and over to stand, to persist against the onslaught of the enemy.

The helmet of salvation gives us protection for our minds. The mind is one of our most vulnerable areas. It is the birthplace for doubt and for sinful thoughts.

The breastplate of righteousness covers our hearts and our strategic internal organs. God wants our hearts to be in right standing with Him. To be in right standing is to be righteous.

We gird the loins with truth. This is another vulnerable area, one in which we can be easily tempted to fall. Our adversary knows he can take us out of the spiritual war if he can cause us to stumble sexually.

We shod our feet with the Gospel of peace so we can walk out the Gospel according to the ways of Jesus.

The shield of faith protects us from the fiery darts of the enemy. It is through faith that we operate in the spiritual gifts. This is a necessary exercise when we are in spiritual warfare.

3. Our Offensive Arsenal. *"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they did not love their life even to the death." (Revelation 12:11)*

- a) When we are under attack by the enemy, if we can squeeze out the name of Jesus, if we can plead the blood of Jesus over our situation, we will experience a release from the pressure. This is especially true when we deal with fear. There is power in the blood of Jesus.
- b) The word of our testimony also has power, because it is our personal testimony of what God has done in our lives. That becomes a spiritual weapon of victory.
- c) To love not our lives unto death, speaks of our commitment. Jesus has called us to love as He loved, willing to lay down our lives for our friends. *(John 15:12,13)*
- d) The name of Jesus has power. It is the name of the One who conquered Satan and death.

- e) The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. That doesn't refer to simply the reading of scripture, it refers to the proceeding Word, the rhema, which gives life to the Word in our lives.

In *John 5:39*, Jesus told the Pharisees to search the scriptures to discover that eternal life is in Him. The combination of the Spirit of Christ and the Word of God give life to the scriptures. That is the Word that divides soul and spirit.

- f) The power of the Spirit. One of the aspects of the power of the Spirit is the gifts of the Spirit. Certain power gifts are given us by God: the working of miracles; deliverance; healing, etc. Faith is another weapon in our arsenal. There are also gifts of revelation, such as the prophetic gifts, discernment, words of knowledge, words of wisdom.
- g) Prayer should be above all things. Prayer consists of supplications, petitions, intercession, etc.
- h) Praise is another weapon in our offensive arsenal. Praise and worship should be personal as well as corporate. The devil cannot stay in the presence of true worship of God.

4. Know Our Enemy. This is simply intelligent military strategy.

"In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes." (2 Corinthians 2:11)

In Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth, in *Chapter 5*, a man was living with his step-mother. Paul told the people they had to put the man out of the church. Now, at the point of time when the above scripture was written, the man had repented.

Paul is saying there should now be forgiveness toward the man. He warned the people that Satan might use the occasion to divide them because of the controversy of the issue, and to divide the repentant man from the congregation.

- *"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.*
- *And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*
- *Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds." (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)*

Notice, even in cartoons, Satan is always portrayed as hideous. This is the work of Satan to deceive, so that when he appears as an angel of light and of good works, people will not recognize him as evil.

"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies." (John 8:44)

"The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and to destroy." (John 10:10)

"In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Corinthians 4:4)

We must always remember that old saying: Age and treachery will defeat youth and zeal. Our enemy has been around a long time. We are no match for him on our own. We are victorious over him only through Christ.

We should also remember that there is a structured hierarchy in the realm of evil. There are principalities and powers and dominions, levels of authority. There are areas of warfare in the mind, in the church, and in the world at large. As we begin our walk, the demonic forces are not as strong as they become when we progressively mature.

As we defeat one level of opposition, we can expect to be confronted by another level. This will continue as we grow, until we find ourselves actually taking on principalities, strong forces of evil. When we study *Daniel, Chapter 10*, we are given a glimpse of what transpires in the heavenlies as we do spiritual battle in prayer.

5. **Know The Victor.** If we know the Victor, we will know the victory. That is most important. It is unwise to spend inordinate amounts of time talking about the devil. It reveals that our focus is in the wrong place. God has not called us to spend a lot of time studying the devil. We need to know what He has told us in the scriptures, but we don't need to worry about the confrontation.

God wants us to be on the offensive. We can accomplish this only when our focus is upon Jesus. The better we know Jesus, the more we have a passion for him. If we want to be able to recognize a counterfeit, we must be familiar with the real thing. If we want to be able to recognize the counterfeit methods of the devil, we must be familiar with the ways of Jesus.

"Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Matthew 11:11)

Those of us in the kingdom have been spiritually reborn. This gives us the spiritual authority and power of Jesus. The devil does his best to keep Christians in the dark concerning this truth.

He also tries to keep us from the revelation of our true position, *"...and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:6)*

- *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.*
- *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*
- *and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might*
- *which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,*

- *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.*
- *And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,*
- *which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." (Ephesians 1:17-23)*

Paul tells us that the right hand of God is the seat of all authority and power in the heavenlies. That is where we are seated, that is our position with Christ. Jesus is far above all principalities and powers, mights and dominions, and we, who are His body, are also above all those powers. We are to live the reality of that truth.

When we engage in spiritual warfare, we should take that throne room perspective, aware that we are with Christ, in heavenly places, above all principalities and powers of the devil. Paul prayed that the eyes of the believers would be opened to see the reality of our true position.

- *"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*
- *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,*
- *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39)*

Again, this shows us that Jesus is more powerful than the principalities and powers of the enemy. No matter what may come against us, it cannot separate us from the love of God.

"When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." (Colossians 2:15)

Paul exposes our archenemy as defeated and stripped of his power. Paul relates it to the image of a victorious army returning to the city with its disarmed captives.

The prisoners would be marched triumphantly through the streets until they reached the palace of the king. The conquered king and his ranking officials would then be led up the steps of the palace and be made to prostrate themselves before the victorious king, who would place his foot on their necks, signifying their defeat.

This is what Jesus has accomplished over Satan. Satan is defeated and disarmed. We need to live our lives and engage in spiritual warfare from this perspective.

6. Daily Checklist For Spiritual Warfare.

1. Every morning, we are to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus. We are to invite Him to be Lord over us, body, soul and spirit. (*1 Thessalonians 5:23*) & (*Galatians 2:20*)
2. We are to put on the whole armor of God. (*Ephesians 6:12-18*)
3. We must set apart time for fellowship with God and the study of His Word. (*2 Timothy 2:15*)
4. We should pray to be filled continually with the Holy Spirit. (*Ephesians 5:18*)

5. We should pray for a release of the gifts of the Spirit in our lives, and to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit needed for the day. (*1 Corinthians 12:28*) & (*Galatians 5:22,23*)
6. As we pray, we should take authority over all evil spirits that attempt to harass us, our family, and those to whom we minister.
7. We must remember, Satan and his demons are defeated, disarmed foes. (*Colossians 2:15*)

They have no authority over us unless we allow it through our bad attitudes, unconfessed sin, etc. They can exploit us only in those areas in which we give them access.
8. We must deal with those areas the Holy Spirit exposes. This eliminates doorways for Satanic harassment.
9. We should live in an offensive posture, storming the gates of hell in the reality of the victorious life in Christ, making use of the weapons of our warfare. (*James 4:7,8*)

CONCLUSION.

Our goal is simple, but vital: The battle has already been won. Our part is to enter into the victory that is ours and take the spoils. We are to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

Jesus triumphed completely over Satan at Calvary. He reigns now at the right hand of his Father, waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool. (*1 Corinthians 15:25*)

Our part is to ensure that our lives, motives and actions are always under the Lord's government, for He is the Head of the church and Commander of His army. His peace within us and among us comes as a result of His government over us.

His headship in our lives is the first priority in warfare, for it is the God of peace Who gives us victory over Satan.

We are to recover what our father, Adam, lost, mainly authority to rule the earth. We are to enter into our Lord's victory and, as workers together with Him, regain the place of authority given to Adam. The Lord will finally destroy the works of Satan, using His many-member body as a mighty army.

Our goal is to become overcomers in Christ. This is our commission: to resist Satan, to bind his power, to loose from his control those who are appointed for life, and to walk together with all the saints in total victory over him and the world system of which he is the head.

We are able to do this, for we are more than conquerors in Christ! We are strong in the power of His might!

Chapter Ten . . . Spiritual Warfare

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 148)

1. Why do we need wisdom when dealing with Satan?

2. What part does personal lifestyle play in spiritual warfare?

3. How does Satan establish strongholds in us and in others?

4. How do we become overcomers?

5. Why is it important for us to understand that Satan can be expected to appear as an angel of light?

Chapter Eleven

RELATIONSHIPS

The first law in the kingdom of God is the law of relationships. When we look at the nature of God we see that He is a relating God. There is a relationship within the structure of the triune God and there is a relationship within the order of angels.

Everything about the Father concerns giving. He gave us His Son, the Son gave us Himself, then He released the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us gifts, He gives us His character, He gives us His nature. The whole nature of God is giving.

For us to be giving, we need other people. When we understand that, we can see that God is a relational God. And He calls us to be relational as He is relational.

At salvation, for the first time in our lives there is a spiritual awakening, we discover that we are spiritual beings. The things of God are born within us at that time.

The most important thing He calls us to is spiritual relationship with Himself. He has made every means available for us to have an intimate relationship with Him.

Unfortunately, our ability to flow in that relationship has been hindered because of our fleshly, sinful behavior. Some of this has been inherited and some has been established through our own intentions.

Each time God reveals an improper attitude within us and we confess it, our ability to relate to Him improves. This growth in relationship has to occur on a daily basis. Every incident of confession and forgiveness opens a new avenue of relationship with Him.

That is one of the goals of the Gospel. Jesus seemed to have a two-fold focus. First, He came to do the will of His Father, to complete His Father's plan. Because of that intense focus, Jesus was able to accomplish His mission, which was to free us from the bondage of Satan and death. In freedom, we can now relate to God's grace and come into relationship with Him.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

- *"And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*
- *This is the greatest and foremost commandment.*
- *The second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*
- *On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.' "* (Matthew 22:37-40)

These words of Jesus came during a heated discussion with the religious leaders of the day. They constantly tried to maneuver Jesus into a position, which was contrary to the writings of Moses and the prophets.

But, of course, Jesus knew the Word better than anyone on earth and He also understood the intention behind every scripture. Because of this, He could always bring His accusers back to the truth.

In this particular discussion, the lawyer made specific reference to the Ten Commandments, although he was also speaking of the whole law of Moses. It was a common procedure in the synagogue to ask questions of this type of the children and have the children respond with appropriate scripture.

The first four of the Ten Commandments all relate to God. Jesus has summarized this truth in His answer. He is saying that the greatest commandment we have received is to relate to God. That vertical relationship comes first.

The last six of the Ten Commandments pertain to our relationship with man. That is our horizontal relationship. On this subject, Jesus told His disciples to take up their cross daily. A cross contains two beams, a vertical beam, which points upward, and a horizontal beam, which points outward.

To take up our cross means to live in a crucified relationship with Christ, that is our vertical relationship with our Father. (Galatians 2:20) We then take that relationship we enjoy with our Father and we open our arms, horizontally, to those about us.

This is what Jesus accomplished on the cross. He was there to please the Father, to complete the Father's plan and purpose. That was His vertical relationship. At the same time, He had his arms spread wide, pouring out that loving relationship to the whole world.

Jesus also told us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Before accepting Christ, our self-love was mostly self-centered and unhealthy. But after we accepted Christ and received His Spirit into our hearts, we are now capable of a healthy love for ourselves and for one another. This is the love Jesus refers to.

A RELATIONAL ESSENTIAL: HAVING OUR NEEDS MET

It is difficult for us to fulfill the commandment to love, unless our physical needs, our personal needs and our spiritual needs have been met.

For example, to go out on the street and witness to street people, we should take along a pot of soup and a loaf of bread. We can just sit on a street corner and begin to feed the people. We don't have to concern ourselves about sharing Jesus, we can just minister to their physical needs and see what happens. If we try to share Jesus with someone who is hungry, he will not hear us.

Think about our past lives. When our physical needs were not being met, could anyone minister to us, spiritually? It is the same with our personal needs. If we don't know our spiritual significance, our personal worth, we will not have a deep relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Our initial contact with God is spiritual, but our relationship with God grows stronger as we begin to understand our personal worth, and as we begin to have our physical needs met.

If our needs are not met, we get into relationships for the wrong reasons, because we expect people to be able to fulfill our needs. As a result, we become takers, human leeches, who suck the life out of others. We endeavor to meet our needs on a lower level, and our needs are not met at all. We settle for less than God's best for us.

In a proper relationship, we are not there to receive ministry, we are there to give love, to give ourselves to ministry. In this manner, we become like Christ. Remember, through the loaves and fishes, Jesus ministered to the physical needs of the people. Because of this, they received His words with gladness.

Also, Jesus met the physical needs of the people through physical healing. Then, after the healing, they became His disciples. First, their physical needs were met, then they received salvation.

God is a giving God, He is a loving God. The only way His nature can be released in us with any consistency is for us to be plugged into our spiritual relationship with Him at all times. When we are led by the Spirit, we allow the Spirit to do what He needs to do in us, releasing the life of God.

When this occurs, we can really love people, our horizontal relationships are fulfilled. We will not be after people to get some of our own needs met, we will be helping God fulfill their needs.

RELATIONAL MEASURING ROD.

Intimacy. The best measuring rod of relationships, with God and with others, is the level of intimacy in the relationship. When we look at our most intimate relationship, the one in which we can share our dreams and joy and sorrow and pain, that relationship will parallel our relationship with God. We will be no more intimate with God than we are with the person closest to us.

Vulnerability. The key to being intimate is our willingness to be vulnerable. That is an area in which we struggle most. Many of us have been victimized during our lifetime, and in some

instances we have victimized others. Because of this, we have, a deep fear of allowing ourselves to become vulnerable. That is a great hindrance in our relationship with God.

To be in an intimate relationship with God, we must present ourselves vulnerable before Him, open, transparent, realizing He knows our innermost thoughts and our entire past. We must be willing to let God speak to us about our fleshly characteristics without fear of His reprisal. At the same time, we find ourselves open to let Him speak to us about the depth of His love.

Healing. The result of vulnerability, is healing. We need to be healed of our emotional wounds and our past dysfunctional relationships. One specific healing necessary for us to have a healthy relationship with our Spiritual Father, is our relationship with our earthly father.

Willingness. The key to healing is our willingness to face our dysfunctions and allow God to heal them. We must want to be set free from the influence of our unhealthy relationships and behavior. If we are not willing, we condemn ourselves to settle for less than God's best for our lives.

Once we are willing to be healed and we submit ourselves to God's love, the natural outcome is healing. After we have experienced healing, we can allow ourselves to become vulnerable. After vulnerability, comes intimacy. We can then enjoy a deep relationship with God, and our spiritual needs will have been met.

RELATIONAL MODELS.

Husband and wife.

- *"And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.*
- *Wives be subject to your own husbands, as the Lord.*
- *For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is head of the church, He himself being the Savior of the body.*
- *But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. (Ephesians 5:21-24)*

- *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;*
- *that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*
- *that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27)*

- *So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;*
- *for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,*
- *because we are members of His body. (Ephesians 5:28-30)*

- *For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.*

- *This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.*
- *Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself;*
- *and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.” (Ephesians 5:31-33)*

It appears that God gave us a picture of the type relationship He desires to have with us through the union of husband and wife. Throughout scripture, He refers to His people as His bride. He refers to acts of disloyalty to Him as spiritual adultery and fornication.

He says, in *Isaiah 54:5*, “*For your husband is your Maker, whose name is the Lord of Hosts.*”

From God's perspective, there is a significant expectation placed upon a husband, in reference to how he should relate to his wife. In the same context, we, as ministers of the Gospel, in relationship with His bride, have significant expectations placed upon us.

Even an unmarried minister has the same principle applied to his life concerning his relationship with the bride of Christ.

This responsibility is not a burden, it is a privilege. We are called to live out our union with Christ in a similar manner to the way we are called to live out our relationship with our spouses and with the body of Christ.

Notice, in *Ephesians 5:21*, we are told to be subject to one another. Some men prefer to bypass this verse in favor of *Verses 22-24*. Often, men who are not related to Christ in any way attempt to use these verses to impose rulership over their wives.

There needs to be an attitude of submission in the heart of each of us if we intend to walk as disciples of Christ.

The analogy that Apostle Paul uses in these scriptures is that the husband is the head of the union, as Christ is the head, and the wife is the body in the union, as is the body of Christ.

When a husband lives out *Verses 25-31*, there will rarely be a problem in the marriage relationship. He will never have to remind his wife of *Verses 22-24*. It is a principle of God that when the husband submits in obedience to the Word, the wife will automatically submit to the husband as priest of the house.

A husband will experience the greatest resistance from his wife when he is out of harmony or in rebellion to his scriptural responsibilities as a husband.

When a husband looks to his wife to meet his needs, his love turns to lust and the inevitable result is disharmony in the marriage. However, when the husband looks to the Lord to meet his needs, that proper vertical relationship will result in a harmonious horizontal relationship with his wife.

Eight statements of instruction are given to husbands, and four given to wives within these scriptures. Twice as many are given to the husbands. That should say to husbands that there

is more responsibility and greater expectation made upon husbands than upon wives. This is in direct parallel to the responsibilities Christ, as the Head, placed upon Himself.

Philippians 2:5-8, outlines the love of Jesus. His love was humble, it was submissive, it was self-sacrificing. That is the kind of love He would call us to as the head of our marriage union. It is the kind of love that should characterize our lives as ministers and as husbands.

It is impossible to manifest such love unless we live in the proper vertical relationship with God. Unless we live in the proper vertical relationship, we will never be able to extend our arms, horizontally, to our wives and to those to whom we have been called to minister.

Parent and Child.

- *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise),*
- *that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.*
- *And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:1-4)*

Notice that these verses single out the fathers. Again, the heaviest responsibility falls upon the man as head of his family.

One of the worst things that has happened in families in the United States, is that men have relegated responsibility to their wives for teaching the children. This has been done not only within the family structure, but also in schools and Sunday schools.

Generally, men have relinquished their function as priests. That is probably the single most important reason for the poor spiritual condition of this country today.

The lack of family structure and the lack of the father role has produced general dysfunction within the majority of families in the United States, as well as other parts of the world. Now, God is calling us back to proper relationships and responsibilities.

When parents live out the proper relationships with God and with each other, it is not a problem for their children to follow suit.

In *Verse 4*, fathers are told not to provoke their children to anger. This does not mean fathers should not tease nor torment their children, although that is true. The deeper meaning is that fathers should not withhold their children's basic physical, personal and spiritual needs.

The children of today who are angry at the world, are children who have not had their needs met. Sometimes their parents meet their physical needs, but rarely do they meet their personal and spiritual needs.

It is the primary responsibility of the fathers to meet the personal and spiritual needs of their children. The children receive their significance and worth and purpose from their fathers. These are the elements which lend stability to their lives.

The fathers are responsible for facilitating their spiritual growth. The fathers should make certain their children experience the unconditional love of God. Only fathers can transmit the father image to their children. Unless that is done properly, the children will have an unhealthy concept of God, the Father.

When this is understood, it becomes obvious that the role of the husband and father is very significant. The children emulate their fathers and, eventually, become carbon copies of their fathers. Because of this, God calls us to be very sensitive to the needs of our children.

The primary responsibility of fulfilling the needs of the children lies with the fathers. The mother is deeply involved in the process, but the responsibility is primarily with the father.

Body of Christ.

1. Personal Sin:

- *"If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;*
- *but if we walk in the light as He himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.*
- *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:6-9)*

This scripture refers to our relationship with God, something for which we are all responsible. Because of our nature toward sin, it is important that we understand this scripture. It is our responsibility to maintain the proper vertical relationship with the Lord.

As we walk through life, He will reveal to us areas in our lives that need to be changed and healed. He brings our darkness into the light to be cleansed. As we experience this cleansing, we are better able to walk in fellowship with each other.

The vertical relationship with God keeps the horizontal relationship with man in a healthy state.

2. Sin Against Others:

- *"If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,*
- *leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. " (Matthew 5:23, 24)*

This is an important scripture for those who have been called to leadership in the body of Christ. Leaders should be more sensitive to this scripture than the people for whom they are responsible.

This is a situation where someone has something against us. It may not be our fault, but that doesn't seem to make any difference, according to the scripture. Perhaps we acted in a certain way, convinced it was right for us to do so, but our action offended a brother in Christ.

God says as soon as we realize the situation we should stop what we are doing and become reconciled to the one who was offended. God has told us that to obey is better than sacrifice, so we are to obey this command before we sacrifice to the Lord.

When we are in positions of leadership we will make decisions that those under our leadership will not understand. These decisions may be very unpopular, and may cause dissension between us and someone. According to this scripture, when we know such a situation exists, it is mandated that we go to the person and repair the relationship.

3. **Sin Against Us:**

- *"And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.*
- *But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.*
- *And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer." (Matthew 18:15-17)*

This scripture refers to a situation in which we experience sin in the life of another person. We act, not because we are self-righteous or holy, but out of obedience to the scripture. Motivated by love for our brother, we confront him.

If he refuses to repent, we are to turn him over to Satan to be dealt with. Hopefully, this will bring him to his senses and he will eventually be restored to the body of Christ.

4. **Sin In Others:**

- *"Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.*
- *Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1,2)*

When we see a brother who is overtaken by sin, we are to confront him in a gentle, loving way. We need to exercise humility, realizing that we are capable of committing the same sin. We should help the sinner recognize that his sin is against God. At the same time, we should strive to maintain the relationship with him.

ONE ANOTHERS - FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT BODY

- (Mark 9:50) Have peace one to another.
- (John 13:34,35) Love one another.
- (John 15:12,17) Love one another.
- (Romans 12:5) Everyone members one of another.
- (Romans 12:10) In honor, preferring one another.
- (Romans 12:16) Be of the same mind, one toward another.
- (Romans 14:13,19) The building up of one another.
- (Romans 15:5) Be like minded one toward another.
- (Romans 15:7) Receive one another.

(Romans 15:14) Admonish one another.
 (Romans 16:16) Salute one another with a holy kiss.
 (1 Cor. 12:25) Have the same care one for another.
 (Galatians 5:13) Through love serve one another.
 (Galatians 5:26) Not provoking one another.
 (Ephesians 4:2) Forbear one another in love.
 (Ephesians 4:25) Members one of another.
 (Ephesians 4:32) Be kind one to another.
 (Ephesians 4:32) Forgive one another.
 (Ephesians 5:21) Be subject to one another.
 (Colossians 3:9) Do not lie to one another.
 (1 Thess. 4:18) Comfort one another.
 (1 Thess. 5:11) Encourage one another.
 (Hebrews 3:13) Exhort one another.
 (Hebrews 10:24) Stimulate one another to love and good deeds.
 (James 4:11) Do not speak against one another.
 (James 5:16) Confess your sins to one another.
 (James 5:16) Pray for one another.
 (1 Peter 1:22) Love one another from a pure heart.
 (1 Peter 3:8) Have compassion one on another.
 (1 Peter 4:9) Be hospitable to one another.
 (1 Peter 5:5) Be subject one to another.
 (1 John 1:7) Fellowship with one another.
 (1 John 3:11) Love one another.
 (1 John 3:23) Love one another.
 (1 John 4:7) Love one another.
 (1 John 4:11) Love one another.
 (1 John 4:12) Love one another.

CONCLUSION:

To summarize the teaching on relationship, everything points to the nature of our Father, and the living out of that nature in us.

God is a relating, giving, loving God. He demonstrates these characteristics in the fullness of His being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

From the beginning of the existence of man, God has been an intimate Relator. He has made Himself vulnerable, completely willing to know and to be known. In Christ, He has provided all that is necessary for our reconciliation, restoration and healing, in relationship with Him and with one another.

The key for us is to live out the reality of the vertical and horizontal life, as given to us in the two great commandments and the cross. As we plug in, vertically, to our Father's love, and we begin to experience the height, depth, length and breadth of His love, we have no problem opening our arms horizontally to embrace one another in that same love.

Chapter Eleven . . . Relationships

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 149)

1. In what way is God a relational God?

2. Why is having our needs met important to our ability to relate to others?

3. What part does vulnerability play in relationships?

4. What is the husband's responsibility in maintaining a healthy relationship with his wife?

5. Why is the role of father so important in a family relationship?

Chapter Twelve

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

INTRODUCTION

The subject of spiritual gifts has historically been highly controversial. This is true of all the Biblical record as well as throughout the course of church history.

Biblically, it was addressed by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. That portion of the letter which we refer to as *Chapters 12-14*, were included because of the ignorance and abuse of the gifts. Paul wanted those in the church at Corinth not only to be knowledgeable and informed, but also to be skilled as to the function and release of their gifts.

Crucial to Paul's treatise is his emphasis on the Giver of the gifts. The Corinthians, as has been so often the case, lost sight of the gracious Giver and became caught up in what was given. This attitude always leads to abuses, extremes and excesses.

The same holds true for today. We are not exempt from the same error. We need to always keep in mind the heart of Paul's teaching:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all." (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

The Holy Spirit of God is the key to flowing in the gifts. Historically and tragically, the church has been robbed of the fullness of Christ, represented by the offices, the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit.

Sometime after the end of the first century and the death of the first apostles, the church was deceived into believing that the apostles and prophets were only foundational in purpose; therefore, these gifts (offices) we considered to be no longer necessary.

As time passed, many of the spiritual gifts given to all believers came under scrutiny by those in authority. Slowly, the church was robbed of the power of the Spirit, as the gifts were laid aside.

In time, without the power of the Spirit present in the gifts, the fruit of the Spirit began to disappear. In the absence of the fruit of the Spirit, the essential character of Christ was lost. This opened the door to all kinds of imitation methods to put on Jesus.

We should be thankful to God that in our day He is restoring the fullness of Jesus to His church.

Twenty-three manifestations of Christ have been given to His body. These manifestations make up the whole Christ, which is to be expressed by His body. They are as follows:

The Ministry Of Christ Contains Five Offices Of Headship/Government: (*Ephesians 4:11*)

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Pastors
4. Teachers
5. Evangelists

The Power Of Christ Contains Nine Gifts: (*1 Corinthians 12:7-10*)

1. The gift of Wisdom.
2. The gift of Knowledge.
3. The gift of Discerning of Spirits.
4. The gift of Tongues.
5. The gift of Interpretation of Tongues.
6. The gift of Prophecy.
7. The gift of Healing.
8. The gift of Miracles.
9. The gift of Faith.

The Character Of Christ Contains Nine Fruit: (*Galatians 5:21, 22*)

1. The fruit of Love.
2. The fruit of Joy.
3. The fruit of Peace.
4. The fruit of Patience.
5. The fruit of Kindness.
6. The fruit of Goodness.
7. The fruit of Faithfulness.
8. The fruit of Gentleness.
9. The fruit of Self-Control.

The restoration of the fullness of Jesus to His church is bringing forth a new awareness of walking in the gifts. We can expect to see great outpourings due to the accompanying restoration of His headship and character.

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST: MINISTRY GIFTS OF THE CHURCH

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers. (Ephesians 4:11)

These gifts are commonly referred to as the five-fold office, the headship/governmental ministry of Christ to the church. Paul then gave the reason for their presence:

- *For the equipping of the saints for the work of the service, to the building up of the body of Christ;*
- *until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:12,13)*

We should note several key words. Every good and perfect gift comes from God...(James 1:17). He gives the headship gifts to equip the saints. One purpose for equipping is to enable us to discern our part in the body of Christ.

As noted earlier, Paul wrote *1 Corinthians, Chapters Twelve through Fourteen*, to educate the brethren about their gifts. His purpose was to eliminate ignorance (lack of knowledge). In his letter to the Christians at Rome, He wrote:

- *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you*
- *always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.*
- *For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that you may be established. (Romans 1:9-11)*

The primary focus of ministers at the *Ephesians 4:11* level, is to establish the body of Christ as undivided members (parts), each exercising his grace gifts as led by the Spirit for the building up of the corporate whole.

(Ephesians 4:7)

(1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

(Ephesians 4: 12)

Unity among the brethren, intimacy with Jesus and spiritual maturity result as the headship gifts are ministered to the body, and as those in the body minister to one another. We will now look at the five-fold ministries given to the church.

1. **Apostles.**

In the New Testament, two words are used to describe this ministry. One word is apostolos. This descriptive noun is used 81 times. It is translated "apostle," "messenger," and "he that is sent."

Another word is apostello. This active verb is used 133 times. It is translated "send," "send forth," and "send away."

(Hebrews 3:1) These words are used to refer to Jesus Christ.

(Matthew 10:2) . . . the twelve apostles.

(Revelation 21:12) . the twelve tribes.

(Romans 1:1) the apostle Paul.

(1 Corinthians 1:1) . the apostle Paul.

(Acts 14:4) Barnabas.

and other appointed and anointed people:

(Acts 21:26)

(Romans 16:7)

(Philippians 2:25)

They are also used in connection with disciples:

(Matthew 10:1,2)

(Luke 6:17)

elders:

(Acts 15:2,4,6)

and prophets:

(Luke 11:49)

(Ephesians 2:20, 3:5)

(Revelation 18:20)

The Scriptures make it clear that these individuals had a special, powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit:

(Jude 17)

(2 Peter 2:22)

Their ministry was attested to by signs, wonders and mighty deeds:

(Acts 5:12; 1)

(Timothy 2:17)

(2 Corinthians 12:12)

We see also that they had a ministry of impartation by the laying on of hands:

(Acts 8:14)

They were instrumental in leading the church in specific ways:

(Acts 4:33) In message.

(Acts 4:35,37) In direction.

(Acts 6:6) In appointing church leaders.

(Acts 8:14) In guiding and establishing new work.

They are also characterized by some profound phrases:

(Acts 1:2) Chosen by the Lord.

(1 Corinthians 4:9) Sent forth by God as forerunner.

(John 13:16) Sent forth from Jesus.

Some distinctive characteristics of apostles:

(Matthew 10:2) They are disciples of Jesus.

(Galatians 1:1; 2:7) They are chosen and sent forth on a special, usually known and defined task for the Lord.

(Acts 8:14) They usually spearhead a new ministry as forerunners.

(Ephesians 2:20) They work closely with prophets in establishing new churches.

(Ephesians 3:5) They are used by God to reveal new truth.

(Acts 15:2,4,6) They work with elders to establish order in the church.

(1 Corinthians 12:28,29) . . . They are given a primary place in the ministry of the body.

(Ephesians 4:11) They are given a primary place in the ministry of the body.

(2 Corinthians 12:12) They have an unusual anointing of power that confirms itself in miracles and signs.

(Matthew 10:2) A strong case has been made, and has been historically imposed, to limit the apostolic ministry to the twelve originally appointed by Jesus.

(Acts 1:26) plus Matthias, who replaced Judas.

(Acts 9) and Paul, who was later added by Jesus.

We must boldly declare the need for and the presence of modern day apostles. There may be some distinct differences between the original apostles and present day apostles, but Scriptural weight leans toward, and cries out for, the apostle's role in church life.

Paul declares very clearly:

"And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues."

(1 Corinthians 12:28)

Those who take the position that apostles no longer exist, say the gift was essential in establishing the foundation of the church, but it is no longer necessary. Citing *1 Corinthians 13:10*, they claim that which is perfect is come. They include the letters of the apostles; therefore, there is no need for apostles today.

A proper response is to agree that there is no further need for apostles who write Scripture. The word of God is complete, additions are not necessary. But we should understand that writing Scripture was only a small part in the lives and ministry of the apostles.

The body of Christ needs the other areas of apostolic ministry. It is unwise to dismiss the entire apostolic ministry because there is no further need for one facet.

If Jesus saw the need to appoint apostles to the church first, before all other appointments, it appears that there could be no church without them. Does that mean a church without apostles is really not a church established by God on His principles? The work of the body of Christ, set in motion by the five-fold offices, led by apostles, is to continue.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13)

The key word is "Till." If the church has no apostles (and prophets), is it saying that *"Till"* has already taken place? If so, when?

Both *1 Corinthians 13:10* and *Ephesians 4:13* refer to the necessity for the body of Christ to grow to maturity under the direction of the five-fold office, edifying itself by proper use of the gifts of ministry.

For 2,000 years the church has needed the headship ministry, and the need continues. Proper church function requires that the members operate in all five offices. As we review church history and see how early the offices were stripped away, it is little wonder that the church is in such a weakened condition today.

2. Prophets

Prophets are believers who speak under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit in the name of God. Their main concern is the spiritual life and purity of the church. Under the New Covenant, they are raised up and empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring a message from God to His people.

We will look at some particulars to help us better understand the office and work of the prophet.

(Acts 2:17)

(Acts 4:8)

(Acts 21:4)

We must observe the Old Testament prophets to receive a foundation to help us understand the prophetic ministry in the early church as well as today. The primary task of the Old Testament prophet was to convey a word from God, by His Spirit, to encourage God's people to remain faithful to their covenant relationship. In addition, at times they would predict the future as the Spirit revealed it to them.

Prophets functioned in the New Testament church in the following ways:

(Acts 2:14-36) They were Spirit-filled proclaimers and interpreters of the word of God, called by God to warn, exhort, comfort and edify.

(Acts 3:12-26) They were to exercise the gift of prophecy.

(1 Corinthians 12:10) . . They were to exercise the gift of prophecy.

(1 Corinthians 14:3) . . . They were to exercise the gift for exhortation, edification and consolation.

(Acts 11:28) They were prophets who foretold the future.

(Acts 21:10, 11) They were seers, who foretold the future.

(Luke 1:14-17) Like the Old Testament prophets, they were called to expose sin, proclaim righteousness, warn of judgment to come, and to combat worldliness and a lukewarm attitude among God's people.

A prophet's character, burden, desire and ability include:

a) A zeal for church purity.

(John 17:15-17)

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

(Galatians 5:22-25)

b) A deep sensitivity to evil and the capacity to identify and hate unrighteousness.

(Romans 12:9)

(Hebrews 1:9)

c) A keen understanding of the dangers of false teachings.

(Matthew 7:15)

(Matthew 24:11, 24)

(Galatians 1:9)

(2 Corinthians 11:12-15)

d) An inherent dependence upon God's word to validate the prophet's message.

(Luke 4:17-19)

(1 Corinthians 15:3, 4)

(2 Timothy 3:16)

e) A concern for the spiritual success of God's kingdom, and a sharing of God's feelings.

(Matthew 21:11-13)

(Matthew 23:37)

(Luke 13:34)

(John 2:14-17)

(Acts 20:27-31)

Messages from a prophet are not to be considered infallible. Their messages are subject to other prophecies, five-fold ministers, God's word, and evaluation by the church. The congregation is challenged to discern and test whether they witness that the message is from God.

(1 Corinthians 14:29-33)

(1 John 4:1)

In *1 Corinthians 14:3*, prophets continue to be essential to God's purposes for His church. A church that rejects God's prophets will be a declining church. It will drift toward worldliness and the compromise of Biblical truth.

On the other hand, if the church and its leaders hear the voice of God through His prophets, they will be moved to renewed life and fellowship with Christ. Sin will be forsaken, and the Spirit's presence will be evident within the body.

(1 Corinthians 14:3)

(Thessalonians 5:19-21)

(Revelation 3:20-22)

3. Evangelists

In the New Testament, evangelists were men gifted and commissioned by God to proclaim the Gospel of salvation to the unsaved. They also helped establish new churches.

(Acts 21:18) The ministry of Philip, the evangelist gives a clear picture of the work of an evangelist according to the New Testament pattern.

(Acts 8:4, 5, 35) . . . Philip preached the Gospel of Christ.

(Acts 8:6, 12) Many were saved and baptized with water.

(Acts 8:6, 7, 13) . . . Signs, miracles, healing and deliverance from evil spirits accompanied his preaching.

(Acts 8:12-17) He wanted new converts to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The evangelist is essential to God's purpose for the church. The church that fails to support the ministry of the evangelist will cease to gain converts as God desires. It will become a static church, devoid of growth and missionary outreach.

The church that values the spiritual gift of the evangelist and maintains an earnest love for the lost, will proclaim the message of salvation with convicting and saving power. *(Acts 2:14-41)*

4. Pastors

Pastors are those who oversee and care for the spiritual needs of a local congregation. They are also called elders and overseers.

(Acts 20:17) Elders

(Titus 1:5) Elders

(1 Timothy 3:1) . . . Overseer

(Titus 1:7) Overseer

(Titus 1:9-11) The task of pastors is to proclaim sound doctrine and refute heresy.

(*Thessalonians 5:12*) . . . They are to teach God's word and exercise leadership in the local church.

(*1 Timothy 3:1-5*) They are to be good role models regarding their household.

(*Titus 2:7, 8*) They are to be examples of purity and sound doctrine.

(*Hebrews 12:15*) They see that all believers remain in divine grace.

(*Hebrews 13:17*) They are to keep watch over our souls.

(*1 Peter 5:2*) They exercise oversight according to the will of God.

(*Acts 20:28-31*) Their task is described as safeguarding apostolic truth and protecting God's flock by watching for false doctrine and false teachers within the church.

(*John 10:11-16*) They place the lives of the flock first.

(*1 Peter 2:25*) Pastors function as shepherds, of which Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is the model.

(*1 Peter 5:2-4*) They prove themselves examples to the flock.

(*Acts 20:28*) The New Testament pattern shows a plurality of pastors (elders) who direct the spiritual life of a local church.

(*Philippians 1:1*) They are bond-servants of Christ Jesus.

Pastors were not chosen through political or legal process, but rather as the Holy Spirit gave wisdom to the body of believers. Pastors are essential to God's purpose for His church.

(*1 Timothy 3:1-7*) The church that fails to raise up godly and faithful pastors will cease to be governed according to the mind of the Spirit.

(*Acts 20:28-31*) It will be a church left open to the destructive forces of Satan and the world.

(*2 Timothy 1: 13,14*) The preaching of the word will be distorted and the standards of the Gospel will be lost.

Members and families of the church will not be cared for according to God's purpose.

(*1 Timothy 4:6*)
 (*1 Timothy 12-16*)
 (*1 Timothy 6:20, 21*)

On the other hand, if godly pastors are raised up, believers will be nourished in the words of faith and sound doctrine, and disciplined for the purpose of godliness.

(*1 Timothy 4:6, 7*)

5. Teachers

Teachers are those who have a special God-given gift to clarify, expound upon and proclaim God's word in order to build up the body of Christ. (*Ephesians 4:12*)

The special task of teachers is to guard, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel entrusted to them. They are to persevere in the task of faithfully pointing the church toward Biblical revelation and to the original message of Christ and the apostles. (*2 Timothy 1:11-14*)

The principle purpose of their Biblical teaching is to preserve truth and to produce holiness as they lead Christ's body into an uncompromising commitment to the godly lifestyle set forth in the word.

Paul states that the goal of Christian instruction is, "...love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (1 Timothy 1:5)

The true evidence of Christian learning is not just in what we know, but how we live. Our lifestyle should reflect the manifestation of love, purity, faith and godliness. For these reasons, teachers remain a vital part of the purposes of God for His church.

We should be encouraged to pursue study of the ministry gifts. Many excellent books deal with the subject in exhaustive detail.

THE POWER OF CHRIST: SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR BELIEVERS

THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS

The purpose is always the most important truth about anything. Discovery of purpose is essential to proper identification and use. Many have discovered spiritual gifts without their purpose and their place, resulting in disorder and misuse. Why has our Lord given us spiritual gifts?

1. For our personal spiritual development.

"For I long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established." (Romans 1:11)

2. For the welfare of the body of Christ.

"For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12, 13)

The emphasis is upon building:

Unity (Ephesians 4:13, 16); (1 Corinthians 12:12-26)

Maturity (Ephesians 4:12, 13)

Christ-likeness . . . (Ephesians 4:13)

Equipping (Ephesians 4:12); (1 Corinthians 12:25)

Edifying (Ephesians 4:12); (1 Corinthians 14:3)

3. For the evangelization of the lost.

"But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you." (1 Corinthians 14:24, 25)

The gifts are most in evidence when the church is properly balanced between evangelizing the lost and building up the body.

Many books have been written which give a thorough and more exhaustive presentation of the spiritual gifts. The following are general truths that give a simplistic approach toward harnessing the important essentials of the gifts.

GENERAL TRUTHS CONCERNING THE GIFTS

- a) The Holy Spirit manifests through a variety of spiritual gifts given to believers, all of which are intended to build up and sanctify the church.
(1 Corinthians 12:7)
- b) These gifts are not the same as those mentioned in:
(Romans 12:6-8)
(Ephesians 4:11)

The above Scriptures refer to believers receiving the power and ability to minister in a more permanent manner in the church.

Manifestations of the Spirit are given according to the will of the Spirit as the need arises, and depending upon the believer's eager desire.

- (1 Corinthians 12:11)
(1 Corinthians 12:31)
(1 Corinthians 14:1)

Some gifts may manifest through an individual on a regular basis, and believers may have more than one gift to minister to particular needs. A believer should desire "gifts," not just one gift.

- (1 Corinthians 12:31)
(1 Corinthians 14:1)

It is unscriptural and unwise to assume that because someone exercises a spectacular gift, that person is more spiritual than someone whose gift is less spectacular. If a person possesses a gift, it does not mean that God approves of all that person does or teaches.

Spiritual manifestation through gifts may be counterfeited by Satan or false workers who disguise themselves as servants of Christ.

- (Matthew 7:21-23)
(Matthew 24:11, 24)
(2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
(2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)

A believer should not believe every spiritual manifestation, but should test the spirits to see if they are from God, for many false prophets are in the world. (1 John 4:1)

THE GIFTS

1. **Word of Wisdom.** This is a wise message spoken through the operation of the Holy Spirit. It applies the revelation of God's word or the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, to a specific situation or problem.
(Acts 6:10)
(Acts 15:13-22)
2. **Word of Knowledge.** A message inspired by the Holy Spirit that reveals knowledge about people, circumstances or Biblical truth. It is often closely connected with prophecy.
(Acts 5:1-10)
(Acts 10:47, 48)
(Acts 15:7-11)
(1 Corinthians 14:24, 25)

3. **Faith.** This is not saving faith, but a special supernatural faith imparted by the Holy Spirit that enables the Christian to believe God for the miraculous. It is the kind of faith that moves mountains. It is often found in combination with other manifestations, such as healing and miracles.
(1 Corinthians 13:2)
4. **Gifts of Healing.** These gifts are given to the church to restore physical health by supernatural means. The plural (gifts) indicates healing of various illnesses, and suggests that every act of healing is a special gift of God.
(Matthew 4:23-25)
(Matthew 10:1)
(Acts 3:6-8)
5. **Miraculous Power.** This is supernatural power that alters the normal course of nature. It includes divine acts in which the power of God is manifested against the power of Satan and evil spirits.
6. **Prophecy.** We must distinguish between prophecy as a temporary manifestation of the Spirit and prophecy as a ministry gift of the church.
(1 Corinthians 12:10)
(Ephesians 4:11)

As a ministry gift, prophecy is given only to some believers, who must then function as prophets within the church.

As a spiritual gift, prophecy is potentially available to every Spirit-filled Christian.

(Acts 2:17, 18)
(1 Corinthians 14:1)

As a spiritual gift, prophecy includes:

- a) A special gift that enables a believer to bring a word or revelation directly from God, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. It is not the delivery of a previously prepared sermon.
(1 Corinthians 14:24, 25)
(1 Corinthians 29-31)
- b) In both the Old and New Testaments, prophecy is not primarily foretelling the future. It proclaims God's will and exhorts and encourages God's people to righteousness, faithfulness and endurance.
- c) The message may expose the condition of a person's heart, or offer strengthening, encouragement, comfort, warning or judgment.
(1 Corinthians 14:3)
(1 Corinthians 14:25, 26, 31)
- d) The church should not receive such prophecy as infallible, but should test it in light of the word of God, and the spirit in which it is given.
(1 John 4:1)

- e) Prophecy operates under the will of God, not the will of human beings. The New Testament never indicates that the church acted on the revelation or direction from those claiming to be prophets. Prophecy was given to the church only when God initiated the message.

(1 Corinthians 12:11)

(2 Peter 1:21)

7. **Discernment of Spirits.** This gift is special Spirit-given ability to properly discern and judge prophecies, and to distinguish whether or not an utterance is from the Holy Spirit. It includes also the supernatural ability to discern the presence of the demonic in people, in meetings, etc. It helps determine the need for and the release of other gifts in ministry settings.

(1 Corinthians 14:29)

8. **Speaking in Tongues.** The following should be noted while discussing tongues as a spiritual gift:

- a) Tongues may be an existing spoken language or a language unknown on earth. Such speech has not been learned and is often unintelligible both to the speaker and the hearers.

(Acts 2:4-6)

(1 Corinthians 13:1)

(1 Corinthians 14: 14,16)

- b) Speaking in tongues involves both the human spirit and the Spirit of God. The believer communicates directly to God in prayer, praise, blessing or thanksgiving. This expression takes place at the level of our spirit, not our mind. We pray for ourselves or others under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, apart from the activity of our mind.

(1 Corinthians 14:2,14)

- c) To be valid, tongues given in a corporate setting must be accompanied by a Spirit given interpretation that reveals the content and meaning of the message to the assembly of believers.

(1 Corinthians 14:3, 27, 28)

9. **Interpretation of Tongues.** This is the Spirit-given ability to understand and communicate the meaning of a message spoken in tongues. When interpreted for the body, tongues function either as a directive to worship and prayer, or as a prophecy. The body of believers can then participate in this Spirit-inspired revelation.

Interpreted tongues can be a means of edification as the whole congregation responds to the utterance, The gift may be given to the one who speaks in tongues, or to someone else. Those who speak in tongues should pray also for the gift of interpretation. *(1 Corinthians 14:13)*

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

In the divine order of God's purpose, there are nine spiritual gifts and nine fruit of the Spirit. When released in us, the fruit, which represents the character of Christ, gives us stability and maturity to handle the power we receive through the gifts.

Fruit is produced in us as we allow the Spirit to direct and influence our lives so that we destroy the power of sin, especially those acts of the sinful nature. We can then walk in fellowship with God. *(Romans 8:5-14)*

The Fruit:

1. **Love.** To care for and seek the highest good for another person, without motives for personal gain.
(Romans 5:5)
(1 Corinthians 13)
(Ephesians 5:2)
2. **Joy.** The feeling of gladness based upon the love, grace, blessing, promises and nearness of God, all of which belong to those who believe in Christ.
(2 Corinthians 6:10)
(2 Corinthians 12:9)
(1 Peter 1:18)
3. **Peace.** Quietness of heart and mind based upon the knowledge that all is well between the believer and his heavenly Father.
(Romans 15:33)
(Philippians 4:7)
(1 Thessalonians 5:23)
(Hebrews 13:20)
4. **Patience.** Endurance; long-suffering; slow to anger or to despair.
(Ephesians 4:2)
(2 Timothy 3:10)
(Hebrews 12:1)
5. **Kindness.** Not wanting to hurt anyone or cause pain.
(Ephesians 4:32)
(Colossians 3:12)
(1 Peter 2:3)
6. **Goodness.** Zeal for truth and righteousness, and a hatred of evil. It can be expressed in acts of kindness or in rebuking and correcting evil.
(Luke 7:37-50)
(Matthew 21:12-13)
7. **Faithfulness.** Firm and unswerving loyalty to a person to whom one is united by promise; commitment, trustworthiness, honesty.
(Matthew 23:23)
(Romans 3:3)
(1 Timothy 2:2; 4:7)
(Titus 2:10)

8. **Gentleness.** Restraint coupled with strength and courage. It describes a person who can be angry when anger is needed, and humbly submissive when submission is needed.
(2 Timothy 2:25)
(1 Peter 3:15)

9. **Self-Control.** Mastering one's own passions and desires, including faithfulness to marriage vows and purity.
(1 Corinthians 7:9)
(1 Corinthians 9:25)
(Titus 1:8; 2:5)

CONCLUSION.

Many good books have been written on the subject of spiritual gifts. Every believer should pursue further study on the subject. Our most important goal is to see and experience the fullness of Jesus restored to His church. As this occurs, the life of His ministry will be released in great measure. As we head into the days and times which lay before us, this is absolutely essential.

Chapter Twelve . . . Spiritual Gifts

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 150)

1. What are some specific ways in which apostles are instrumental in leading the church?

2. What is the main concern of a prophet who has been raised up by God?

3. Why is the evangelist essential to God's purpose for His church?

4. What is the task assigned to pastors?

5. What is the principle purpose of a teacher?

6. Why has our Lord given us spiritual gifts?

7. Name and describe the nine gifts of the Spirit.

8. Name and describe the nine fruit of the Spirit.

Chapter Thirteen

PRAYER AND COMMUNION WITH GOD

INTRODUCTION

He also told them this parable:

"Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. (Luke 6:39, 40)

"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46)

A disciple is not better than his Master. We are called to be disciples of Jesus, to be as He is, to be like Him, to do the things He does.

To understand that, we need first to look at the prayer life of Jesus.

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. (Luke 5:16)

In this Scripture, Luke records a very important statement about the nature of Jesus, and what set Jesus apart. The following Scriptures continue to give us insight to the nature of Jesus and His attitude toward prayer.

(Matthew 14:23) . . . After he had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone.

(Mark 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.

(Mark 6:46) After leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray.

(Luke 6:12) One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

(Luke 9:28) About eight days after Jesus said this, He took Peter, John and James with Him and went up on a mountain to pray.

(Luke 11:1) One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

At the time He returned to Jerusalem, right before the crucifixion period, Jesus always went to the Mount of Olives, where it was His custom to spend His evenings.

- *Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening He went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives,*
- *and all the people came early in the morning to hear Him at the temple. (Luke 21:37, 38)*

- *Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and His disciples followed Him.*
- *On reaching the place, He said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."*
- *He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,*
- *"Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but yours be done. "*
- *An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him.*
- *And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.*
- *When He rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, He found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.*
- *"Why are you sleeping?" He asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." (Luke 22:39-46)*

Jesus always withdrew to a lonely place where He could get alone to pray. Jesus was the Son of God. Observe His prayer life. He didn't just begin to pray when He started His ministry at the age of thirty. There was already a habit formed within His character that prompted Him to pull away from the crowd and go to a place where He could be alone with His Father.

The habit was so firmly established within Him that He did not let His ministry, nor the pressures of the world, nor His own disciples stop Him from doing what He knew He needed to do.

At an early age, He knew who he was. We have the account of His going to the temple when He was twelve years old. At the temple He told them, *"I must be about My Father's business."*

PRAYER AS RELATIONSHIP

What was the purpose of Jesus' prayer life? One of the things handed down to us through the New Testament is the understanding of God; the oneness of God as expressed through the Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The oneness of God shows us something of the nature of God, and the Trinity also shows us something of the nature of God. Both of these together give us a picture of relationship.

A major aspect of the revelation of God to us through the New Testament is the understanding that relationship is central to who God is. It is the revelation of God to us. We will see that prayer is based upon a foundation of relationship with God.

When Jesus was physically on earth, separated from the immediate presence of the Father, their relationship was maintained through prayer. His physical body became tired at times, because

it was constantly bombarded by opposition and other draining stimuli. He was also tempted and distracted the same as we are.

But He knew something deep within His spirit. He realized He needed to get to a place, both physically and spiritually, where He could maintain a relationship with the Father.

- *"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.*
- *But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who 'sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*
- *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.*
- *Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.*
- *"This, then is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name,*
- *Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*
- *Give us today our daily bread.*
- *Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*
- *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. ' " (Matthew 6:5-13)*

The people noticed this habit of prayer practiced by Jesus. He didn't tell them what to do, He did it Himself, then the people asked Him about it. His disciples noticed what He was doing, and they asked Him to explain His actions.

The Lord's Prayer is a sort of encapsulation of what He did when He met with the Father in prayer. If we were asked to encapsulate our relationship with someone, it would be difficult for us to do in as few words as Jesus used. Briefly, Jesus shared the proper attitude we should take in our relationship with the Supreme Being, whom we haven't seen.

When we read the essence of the Lord's Prayer, we find a statement of relationship. Jesus says, *"Our Father."* This is the first time in the Hebrew culture that the term for God is used in the relationship of Father. It makes a mighty statement to His disciples and followers. He reveals an essence of closeness; in some way this mysterious One is close enough to be called Father.

So, Jesus begins to break open the popular traditional thought. He speaks of prayer as relationship. As He speaks the prayer, He shows us that the reality of our lives is wrapped up and summarized in these statements.

He talks about relationship with the Father, about glory due to the Father, and that His kingdom, the heavenly realm of God, can be present here on earth.

He speaks of our relation with one another, about forgiveness and temptation and deliverance. If we reflect about our lives, we see that this is what we deal with as Christians. Whether or not we allow the presence of God to affect us, are we asking Him to do so? If so, where do we see our need? Is it in the physical level, the relational level, the spiritual level, the emotional level?

Jesus models that for us through this prayer. He shows us a different way of looking at God. It is a way of relating that had never been known before. Later, He talks about calling God, Papa.

- *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message,*
- *that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.*
- *I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as we are one;*
- *I in them, and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity that the world may know that You sent Me and have loved them even as you have loved Me.*
- *Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory you have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world.*
- *Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent Me.*
- *I have made You known to them, and will continue to make You known in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."* (John 17:20-26)

This is known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. Again, it shows us the relationship of prayer. We see that prayer, from the perspective of Jesus, is deeply imbedded in relationship. There is a deep sense of oneness, not only with the Father, but in other dimensions. He includes our oneness with Himself, then, through the Holy Spirit, a sense of oneness with one another.

The prayer includes all the Trinitarian aspect of relationship: oneness with the Father, oneness with the Son, and oneness with the Holy Spirit, in one another. This was before the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. The prayer of Jesus was that when the dynamic of the Holy Spirit did occur, the love relationship expressed by God through His Spirit would unite us all.

The love aspect of relationship is shown us first in the Godhead of the Trinity. The dynamic of love is relationship. The Father did not sit in the corner, loving Himself. Love keeps the Trinity in a dynamic relationship. The creation took place out of that form of energy.

God created us out of love, for love, to be loved, and to love.

Prayer, as a means of communication, is a part of that dynamic. Jesus exhibited it first while He was here on earth. Now He wants us to do the same. Part of the dynamic of prayer is that when we pray with one another and for one another, our bond of relationship deepens. That dynamic includes knowledge about one another, and care and love for one another.

When Jesus spent those lonely times with the Father, His prayer expressed the love that existed between the two.

GOD DESIRES TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH US

God is Creator, we are not. We cannot create anything, we are creatures. God is the One who takes the initiative, He is the initiator. He always precedes us. We think we find God, but God is the One who puts His hand on us.

He is the One who calls us. The dynamic of love within the relationship of the Trinity, expresses its desire to include us in the same relationship. That is why He created us. He made us in His image and likeness because He wants to include us in His love relationship. At the same time, He put deep within the core of us, the desire to know and to love Him.

We try to deny it, we try to substitute a lot of other things, but when we get quiet, at our lowest ebb, when we run out of gas, unable to do anything in our own power, we sense the call of God. The Old Testament identifies this moment as the still, small voice of God.

PRAYER AS FOCUS

We become what we focus upon. What did Jesus focus upon when He went out to the lonely places at night? What is our primary focus in prayer? Our primary focus will reveal our beliefs and our understanding, the same as it did with Jesus.

Focus requires practice. Practice requires repetition. Repetition requires discipline. This is not something that comes naturally to our flesh. It is something in which we must persist. Focus requires persistence, but the reward for our continual effort and practice is that we develop the ability to maintain our focus. It is a bit like exercising a muscle. The more we use it, the stronger it becomes.

TWO STATES OF LOVE

1. **Love of the presence.** When we are in the presence of someone we love, there is a sense of completeness. That means we have what we want, we don't strive for something or someone else. We also have a sense of rest and peace and contentment.

2. **Love of desire.** In a state of desire, our whole being is restless. We seek and strive to find, to be with, or to enjoy something. Our emotions become involved. We are unfulfilled.

Deep within each of us is the desire to be with and enjoy the One whom our soul loves. That desire can be satisfied only by the presence of God.

In prayer, as the aspect of the relationship of love deepens, both of these dynamics become part of our experience. At times, when we are in the presence of the Lord, we rest. At other times, no matter what we do we are unable to find God, and there is a restlessness within us.

One of the problems in the aspect of desire is that if we are not sure why God allows it, we can go off the deep end. There is always pleasure in the presence of God. The desire God has put within us is a call to pleasure.

When we understand this, prayer takes on a joyful dimension. We look forward to the experience of sharing our love with God and receiving His love in return.

Unfortunately, we are distracted by many things around us, such as our environment, our work, people close to us. If we are not careful, we may use those things as reasons for not having peace and pleasure.

We must choose to put ourselves in a place where we can experience the presence of the Lord. That is what Jesus did. He removed Himself from the distractions of His ministry and the people around Him. He especially did this when He had something of major importance coming up. He went away to a solitary place.

He did this to find the strength He needed. When we are in the presence of the Lord, what is our primary concern? We should not be worrying about ministry and other people. Our focus should be to draw strength in our identity, and value and worth as a son of the Father.

We should seek oneness with Him as we are filled with His Holy Spirit. That attitude should override everything else when we place ourselves in a quiet place with God. All of our problems, all the pressures upon us, all our wants, everything should become subordinate to our relationship with God.

DO NOT SEEK A STATIC STATE. Jesus flowed from ministry to quiet times, then back to ministry. He never stayed in one state for an extended period of time.

Our tendency is to strive for value, to strive for worth, to strive to be O.K., to strive to rest. Our nature is to work to accomplish and to prove to ourselves and others that we are worthwhile.

Jesus accomplished more than any man, but He did not spend all His energies in doing. He spent many hours in being. He knew who He was; therefore, He wasted no time trying to prove it. We need to reach that same position. Prayer is an important tool to help us reach it.

When we get wrapped up in the busyness of doing, God uses the aspect of desire and withdraws Himself. As a result, we become dry and grouchy and angry. In short, we lose our peace.

Jesus had many demands on His life, yet He took time to pull away. He rose early in the morning to be alone. He didn't go fishing, He went to pray. He kept His daily routine, and He also recognized the Sabbath.

In addition, at special times, He would pull away and spend greater amounts of time alone with the Father. On some occasions, He stayed in prayer all night long.

So we see that we should not strive for a static condition. That is not a healthy state for human beings. As Jesus ministered, a lot of energy flowed from Him. Because of this, He had to replenish His energy supply. His energy source was the Father. It was with the Father that He got rest and refreshment and renewal.

In our own lives, we experience the same movement. We must be receptive to where God has us. It makes no difference whether we are doing ministry, or if He calls us apart to Himself. We should realize there is a continual ebb and flow, and we must learn how to flow with it.

It is a mistake to constantly seek rest and contentment. We will always find ourselves moving in and out of dry restless times, when our desire becomes great. This occurs when we pull away our attention, our focus, from God, and place it upon ourselves and our circumstances.

PRAYER AS A MATURING RELATIONSHIP MODEL

Acquaintance. We all want to move into a relationship with another person. Every relationship begins with a formal acquaintance. Desire sparks an interest in another person, so we move to become acquainted.

After the formal introduction, the relationship moves into an informational mode. We maintain a tone that will not disturb the one with whom we are trying to get acquainted. There is a bit of awkwardness at this stage. As we attempt to break the ice, our feelings of inadequacy or inferiority or fear surface. We seek safe things to talk about as we look for a mutual level upon which to meet.

Friendliness. In this mode, we become less formal and more conversational. We begin to share our personal likes and dislikes. We don't have to guard our conversation as much. We no longer feel that we have to impress the other person. A reciprocal relationship begins to take place. There is a sense of ease as we discover more about each other.

Friendship. Friendliness develops into a deeper desire to know the other person, and a friendship results. In this stage a sense of faithfulness comes into play. We begin to depend upon each other to do what we say we will do. This brings commitment into play, and it begins to be tested. The relationship can now move into a commitment to each other at a deeper level.

Instead of the fear lessening, we may experience an increase of fear at this point. This increase is brought out because of the dynamics of faithfulness and commitment. If we make a promise we fail to keep, we may fear our friendship will suffer. This will impact our areas of faithfulness and commitment.

In this scenario, the relationship experiences a crisis of trust. Faithfulness cannot be developed without testing our ability to trust. Events will come up to challenge our commitment and faithfulness in every relationship. How we handle these crises depends upon our co-dependent nature.

A co-dependent person needs someone to tell him who he is, and how important he is. He gets his significance as he responds to the needs of others. This is unhealthy. In such a case, the crisis of trust is overlooked. In the process, faithfulness and commitment begin on shaky ground.

The co-dependent doesn't want to challenge the trust level. He is afraid that if he does, he may lose the friendship. So the friendship is built without healthy trust. When this is the case, many of us vacillate about our commitment. This is a problem especially in unhealthy marriages.

A lot of people are faithless and uncommitted with their spouses because they haven't passed the test of crisis. The result is that their relationship stagnates, or eventually, disintegrates.

Marriage toward union of life. At this stage, the dynamic of communication becomes intimacy and surrender. Jesus surrendered Himself into the Father's hands, especially when He got to the cross. That was a great expression of trust. He actually let go of His life. He relinquished total control.

In a marriage, the dynamic of the communication level moves from intimacy into a deep sense of surrendering our being to the other. We begin with intimate communication, but if the marriage is to grow and fulfill and to meet the expectations of what God wants the marriage to be, it will move toward union. This can be accomplished only through surrender.

It becomes unnecessary to speak verbally to one another, just being together enables each to know what is happening within the other. The trust level becomes more firmly established until it matures into reality. No matter what one does, the other trusts, because they are in union with each other.

We call this process the purification of our hearts. We discover what really motivates us, because this dynamic exposes and separates us from our selves. Because of the relationship and the communion level, we can sense the heart-motive of our mate.

We actually come to the position of being able to help each other let go of ourselves. Purification takes place through the union of married life.

When this union takes place, one always points toward the other, because he is no longer concerned with himself being number one. The Father sent the Son, He sent the 'other,' and the 'other' did not say, "No," because the 'other' was not worried about Himself.

The love dynamic really takes on a deep meaning, as two people move in the relationship of union. Of course, this is ideal. In reality, we never reach the totality of this kind of relationship, because we are not God. The fallen nature within which we are encased, never allows us to fully realize the completeness. However, it is a dynamic that always moves toward perfection, because God is at its center.

Love is never for selfish gain, it is something to be ministered to another person. For example, a fully mature parent is more concerned about his child than his own selfish desires. It should be the same in a marriage relationship.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING vs STUDY OF THE WORD

Differences.

1. **Relational.** We can sit in the corner and think all day long about building a relationship with someone, but nothing will happen. It may make sense in our minds, but we won't know the relationship until we put our thoughts into action and begin to experience it. This is hands-on treatment.

2. **Study.** In study, we are more abstract and depersonalized.

Example:

- a) We want to get married, and someone tells us about a person who also wants to get married.
- b) We begin to write letters to that person, because he/she is out of town. In the exchange of our letters, we talk about some of the things we have in common.
- c) Then we exchange pictures. Of course, we send the best pictures we have of ourselves.

- d) Next, we make a phone call and learn about the voice of the other person. If we are really interested, we can ask for the person's medical record, complete with x-rays, psychological profile, etc.
- e) Finally, we exchange videos and decide that this is the person for us. We make arrangements to get married and hold the marriage ceremony over the phone.

We know a lot about that person, what he/she looks like, the mental capacity, the physical capacity, we know how each of us moves and talks, some of the things we think. We have a lot of knowledge, and that knowledge has led us to make the decision to marry. But would that be a good marriage?

It is the same situation when we limit our understanding to the study of the word of God. For example, we can study the difference between the Hebrew and the Greek concept of knowledge. The Greek concept is based more upon abstract, depersonalized understanding. It involves propositions and speculations about truth.

The Hebrew understanding of knowledge is a more experiential, hands-on type. The New Testament is given us through the Greek thought; the Old Testament is mostly Hebrew. So there is a difference in the influence of the culture through which the word is passed along.

We say that God is a God of love and power, but we have to ask ourselves how much of that is simply a statement gleaned from study, and how much is from our first-hand experience? How do we gain personal knowledge?

One of the best forms of relational knowledge takes place as we build a relationship through prayer. Prayer is a form in which we can experience hands-on knowledge of God, rather than simply knowledge about God through study.

There is nothing wrong with study, nothing wrong with accumulating information, but there is a big difference between knowing about, and knowing first-hand. If we restrict our knowledge about God to what we study, we miss the desire of God's heart for us to have a relationship with Him.

Jesus was very specific with the Pharisees. They studied the word in minute detail, so they knew a lot about God. But Jesus said that even though they studied and searched the Scriptures, they did not know Him, who was of God. We in the western world are enthralled with knowledge.

If we are not careful, we can become so transfixed, for example, with the knowledge of 'good' we received in the garden of Eden, that we actually hinder our ability to build a relationship with Jesus.

Prayer balances study of the word and brings harmony into our relationship with God. We should bring the study of the word into our prayer life. Actually, prayer moves into our study of the word, so that prayer impacts the study.

The result is that we get more revelation from God and we receive a fuller understanding of God. The Spirit is free to move and not be stuck in the human mind.

FOUR STEPS IN WHICH PRAYER CAN PARALLEL THE RELATIONAL MODEL

1. **Reading of Scripture.** This has been handed down to us through all of Christendom. It developed especially through the monastic orders. It was also a part of the Hebrew culture. There is a difference between reading the Scripture and study. We link reading with listening. In old times, most people could not read. Those who could, would read the Scriptures aloud.

The letters of Paul, for example, were distributed among the people and those who could read would read aloud to the rest of the people. Listening involves listening to the Spirit of the word with rapt attention. Today, as we read Scripture, we should also listen to the movement of the Spirit of the word. In this way, the word becomes personalized and relational.

2. **Reflection.** By reflection, we mean pondering, musing, meditating upon the Scriptures. We use this as a basis for conversation with Christ. We read, with a listening sense, then we take that reading into a pondering dynamic.

We speak to ourselves as we meditate. It is a verbalized self-talk, based upon the Scripture that is being read. The Scripture then becomes the foundation for our relationship with God at that time.

3. **Response.** Response is identified as spontaneous acts of love and adoration and petition. This comes out of our conversation with God, and is led by God. First, we listen, then we meditate, then we begin to converse with God. This type response comes from our heart.

4. **Resting in God.** After we have read the Scripture with our lips, reflected upon it with our minds and responded to it with our hearts, we are ready to simply rest in Him. We enter into a prayer of being, otherwise known as contemplative prayer. It is an expression of knowing God's love by experience. This aspect involves the whole self. There has been a growing relationship building to this point. It is a type of maturing in God.

Many of the old masters speak very little, for their knowledge, based upon a maturing relationship has taken them deep inside themselves to a point that goes beyond words. They don't have words to describe their experience. Actually, words weaken and tear down what God has built in their relationship. To try to describe the experience would be to degrade the experience.

INSIGHTS AND NOTES

We are never in a static state, we flow throughout these modes as we go through our day, or as God takes us from one dimension into another. Actually, all four modes exist within our daily lives, but a pattern of growth in one area will show up as a place in which God is working in us.

Those in the monastic order sought resting in God as a lifestyle. They felt that God had called them to devote themselves to seek the contemplative way of life. We are all called to contemplative prayer and rest in God. We all have that capacity. A contemplative is nothing more than someone who listens or contemplates at a deep level.

Even though we may be called to a lifestyle of work or ministry, we still have the capacity to experience contemplative prayer. It was that way with Jesus. He ministered all day long, then He withdrew to a contemplative time of resting in the Father.

As disciples of Jesus, we are to intentionally seek a prayer life of this nature. We are to discipline ourselves until we reach this fullness of relationship.

Everyone is called to a different lifestyle, but we are all called to a deeper life with the Lord, and that deeper life with the Lord will affect our lifestyle.

Peter Lord said until we know and experience God as Father, as loving Papa, we will receive interaction from God as Lord, only through commands and laws. That means we will relate only to do, not be free to be. It is important that we learn to sit in His presence, in His lap, being held by Him tenderly, compassionately and gently.

Coming from dysfunctional lifestyles, most of us have problems sensing love, compassion and gentleness from a father or authority figure. Our tendency then, is to relate by obeying the authority of the laws and commands. Our relationship, therefore, with God, is one of doing.

We need to develop the experience with God as Father and as loving Papa. This is the God Jesus described to us, and to whom He related. He told us we are to be in that same kind of relationship, not only with the Father, but also with one another.

He told us to love God with all our heart, soul and spirit, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. To do that, we must listen, and sense the gentleness in what the Father says to us as we sit in His presence, even in His lap. We are to allow the impact of that kind of relationship to change us, as we begin to see ourselves through the Father's eyes.

We are worthy to receive His love, not only in the abstract, but also in His gentle, compassionate embrace. This begins to break away the misconceptions we have had of our identity and worth. These misconceptions have kept us from loving ourselves in a healthy way.

If we are not able to love ourselves, we will not be able to love others, and we will find ourselves doing for others the same as we do for God, simply obeying commands and laws. Because of our sinful nature, that is how we initially come to God.

His desire is to bring us ever more fully into that sense of being totally loved, unconditionally. When we reach this state, we can love ourselves unconditionally, without judging ourselves. Out of this, we will be able to love others unconditionally.

We are not to live under laws and commands, we are to live under grace and the unconditional love of God. We know this intellectually, as we study the word, but we don't know it experientially. We then busy ourselves with acts of doing to justify our own existence and worth.

Being loved by God, being in relationship with Jesus Christ, is our identity, not doing good works.

MATURING RELATIONSHIP MODEL

BODY INVOLVEMENT

STATES OF PRAYER

1. <u>Acquaintanceship</u> Formal and informational communication.	Lips	<u>Reading of Scriptures</u> Listening to Spirit with rapt attention.
2. <u>Friendliness</u> Conversational and informal communication.	Mind	<u>Reflection</u> Pondering, musing, meditating over Scripture as basis of conversation with Christ
3. <u>Friendship</u> Faithfulness and commitment. (crisis of trust appears)	Heart	<u>Response</u> Spontaneous acts of love, adoration and petition.
4. <u>Marriage: Union of life</u> Intimacy and surrender; Purification of heart desire.	Whole Being	<u>Resting in God</u> Contemplative, centering prayer, prayer in being, knowing love, by experience.

Chapter Thirteen . . . Prayer And Communion With God

Personal And Group Exercise (see page 151)

1. Why did Jesus withdraw to a lonely place to pray?

2. Why does Jesus want us to come into a personal relationship with Him?

3. What did Jesus focus upon when He prayed?

4. Why should we avoid a static state in our lifestyle?

5. Why is study of the word not enough in itself to build a relationship with Jesus?

6. Describe each of the four steps utilized to align prayer with study of the word.

7. Why is it important for us to know God the Father as our loving Papa?

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Chapter One . . . Introduction

Points For Discussion (see pages 8, 9)

1. A leader of God's people must, first of all, be a servant. The center of servanthood is service to God. Jesus was our prime example. A servant-leader realizes that every bit of his life that is of any value, he owes to his redemption. Therefore, he is a willing bondsman to Christ. All this is manifested in his inner attitudes and motivation.
2. The leaders in the Bible all experienced emptiness of self. As God prepared them, part of the process was that they reserved nothing for themselves. They became empty vessels through which God could pour Himself. When a leader is conscious of his sacrifice, he is occupied with his own martyrdom. In that condition, he is of little value to God.
3. An "Ebed" type servant has relinquished all his rights to his Master. He does not look for things to do for God, he looks to God. As God directs, he responds. He is a living sacrifice of devotion to Jesus, ready to identify with Him in suffering, in death and in resurrection.
4. An "Abad" type servant is willing to confront his brother, to till the fallow ground in his brother's heart, not because he is devoted to the cause of humanity, but because he is devoted to his Lord, Jesus Christ. He does not become sentimentally involved with his brother. Instead, he is willing to risk his relationship with his brother if that is the cost of bringing his brother into a deeper relationship with the Lord.
5. A "Sharath" type servant is one who willingly submits to those whom God has put over him. He realizes that God's wisdom is perfect, that God knows what is best for him at any time because He sees the end from the beginning. As he learns the principle of submission, he grows in his ability as a leader, then, in the fullness of God's timing, God will raise him into a position of leadership.
6. The attitude of a deacon is simply the attitude of a servant. A deacon understands that God has not called him to be served, but to serve. He understands that his success or failure has nothing to do with himself, it is entirely in the hands of God. Although he is a servant, he has not been called to successful service, but to faithfulness.

Chapter Two . . . Servanthood As Seen By Jesus

Points For Discussion (see pages 18, 19)

1. Leaders in the world, for the most part, become leaders for the sake of power and personal gain. They function in the power of their flesh. The nature of flesh is never to be satisfied; therefore, leaders in the world are never satisfied, they always want more. On the other hand, leaders in the kingdom are primarily servants, dedicated to the exaltation of their Lord.
2. The heart motive of every servant of God is to allow God to use him to God's highest and best use. He is not interested in preferential treatment, he is interested only in the use of his gifts to glorify God. In the process of serving God, he serves God's people.
3. To be true servants, we must be humble. This is not accomplished through performance, it is a reflection of attitude. True humility begins with God. We must first humble ourselves to our Lord. When we do this, He allows our humility to flow to our fellow-men. If we are truly humble before God, we will be willing to wash even the feet of our enemies.
4. We serve God for the wrong reasons when we don't know who we are in Christ. Unless we understand our true identity, we automatically fall into a performance mode. We attempt to accomplish our worth and our significance by performing good deeds in the eyes of men and God.
5. Unless we realize we are spiritually bankrupt, we will constantly try to accomplish great things for God. We must understand that we have nothing to give to God that has any value to it. God doesn't need us, we need Him. The more we understand our destitution, the more we are willing to open ourselves to receive from His fullness.
6. We can never become a peacemaker unless we have peace within ourselves. Since peace is one of the fruit of the Spirit, we cannot have true peace without the Holy Spirit. As we allow His peace to manifest itself in us, we can then radiate that peace to others.

Chapter Three . . . Discipleship

Points For Discussion (see page 27)

1. God's first system of discipleship was the family. Jesus did not tell us to go and talk about making disciples, He told us to make disciples. When parents are uncompromising in their conviction about discipleship, they will pass that baton to their children. If the parents have no conviction of their own, they have nothing to pass along to their children.
2. When the baton is not passed, the race is never completed. Unless a father can identify himself with God's interest in his children, he will never be able to show his children what God has shown him. God gives parents ample opportunity to pass the baton, but the parents must first have the baton firmly in their own grasp.
3. There is an evangelical emphasis within the church that says we can't go wrong if we shoot the shotgun straight up in the air, because a flock of ducks will fly over sooner or later and we will surely hit the mark. But, as we observe God, we see more of a rifle approach. He zeroes in on specific targets, those who choose to come into proximity to Him. If we will wait upon God, He will keep us busy teaching discipleship to those who have expressed a hunger for a deeper walk with Him.
4. The disciple is Christ's own, and the disciple is not above his Master. When a disciple disciples another, the one being disciplined should be able to see the nature of Christ in his teacher. The one being disciplined should honor Christ in his teacher; therefore, he should honor his teacher.
5. His union with Christ is the source of the strength of the disciple. The disciple holds the hand of his Lord, and allows Him to drive His Word through him. He allows Jesus to grind him under His Divine millstone, to bake him in His intense heat, that he might become broken bread to feed God's children. If the disciple disconnects from his Lord, he will become spiritually dry, as a branch cut off from the vine.

Chapter Four . . . Inner Healing - Part One

Points For Discussion (see pages 36, 37)

1. Emotional healing is healing from painful life circumstances as we give God access to those wounded areas of our lives. Inner healing comes as we see that we are worthwhile human beings because of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.
2. A display of emotion indicates that we have gotten in touch with an area in which we have been hurt, but it does not necessarily mean that anything has happened as a result of getting in touch. The simple expression of emotion does not indicate healing is taking place.
3. The religious addict does not understand the concept of unconditional love; therefore, he is unable to minister unconditional love to anyone else, including his family. Because of this, his addiction is just as harmful and damaging to his family as drug or alcohol addiction. His stern legalism demands performance from others beyond their capabilities, and generates dysfunction in their relationships.
4. Children emulate those in authority. This includes their parents, their older siblings, their teachers and Sunday school teachers, and anyone else they see as greater than themselves. If their parents are unable to deal with their own emotions, the children have no healthy point of reference for dealing with their emotions. We mimic those we respect.
5. A dysfunctional family cannot handle trauma. They are incapable of talking about an incident without blowing up, emotionally. Because of this, they maintain silence. They prefer not to talk about an incident because they dread the repercussions. It is much easier to act as if nothing has happened.
6. A healthy family handles trauma by talking about it. They understand that the people involved need love and support. This creates an opportunity for emotional discharge without fear of reprisal. If a child needs to cry, he is given permission to cry. He is allowed to express whatever emotion he is feeling. In this way, his emotion can be dealt with in a loving, caring way. This procedure brings emotional health.

Chapter Five . . . Inner Healing - Part Two

Points For Discussion (see pages 46, 47)

1. We have surrounded ourselves with protective layers of defense to keep us from becoming vulnerable to anything uncomfortable. Unfortunately, these same protective layers insulate us from the pure love of God. We have developed an attitude of distrust; therefore, it is difficult for us to trust even God.
2. We constantly receive input in one form or another. If we do not receive proper spiritual feeding, we are subject to the lies of the enemy. As a result, we have low self-esteem and we feel insecure. The way we feel dictates our behavior. We are sensitive to the spiritual influences around us, and we are prone to react according to the dominant influence in our lives.
3. The three basic types of sin are: inherited generational sin, parental sin and personal sin. Inherited generational sin began with Adam, and has been passed along through every generation. Parental sin is passed along from the parental role model to the child. Personal sin comes as a result of poor relationship with God.
4. Sin that is not dealt with incubates within us, just as a seed incubates. Eventually it will bring forth negative or evil fruit. The diabolical nature of sin is that it hates God. When it is face to face with God, there is no escape. Sin dwells in human nature, but it has no right there. When it is brought into the light of God, it ceases to exist.
5. As we mature through the renewing of our mind, our basic belief systems begin to change. We are what we believe; therefore, as our beliefs change, we change. This means we come out from under the bondage of the lies and deceptions that have affected our lives and our behavior. We begin to experience freedom for the first time in our lives.
6. When we confess our sins to God, we are beginning to see ourselves from God's perspective. He loved us while we were yet sinners. Fortunately, He loves us too much to allow us to remain sinners. As we confess our sins, we begin to feel cleaner. It is easier for us to draw near to God. It is not that He has held us at bay, but we have kept away from Him because we did not want to deal with our sins. Confession eliminates that problem.

Chapter Six . . . Confrontation

Points For Discussion (see pages 60, 61)

1. If we confront only on principle, we deal solely with performance; therefore, we place the person under the bondage of a legal set of rules. However, if we minister only the love of Jesus, we enable the person because he feels free to behave according to his feelings, knowing that Jesus loves him, regardless. Because of these potentially destructive conditions, we must maintain balance during confrontation.
2. Discernment is a gift from God. Without discernment we really don't know what we are confronting. Unless we realize what we are actually confronting, we will not know how to properly raise an issue which needs to be dealt with. The issue to be dealt with is usually hidden beneath a cover of dysfunctional behavior, not easily seen without spiritual discernment.
3. Confrontation is necessary because none of us is perfect, and because we all hide behind our imperfections. These protective barriers keep us at a distance from God, that is why they must be confronted. Confrontation of the flesh brings release to the spirit, and that is where we must communicate with God.
4. Unless we are relevant when confronting a person, we will not be able to relate to him. Unless we can relate to him, he will not accept what we are telling him. Without relevancy, there is communication breakdown. The person will not be able to apply our conversation to his needs.
5. We confront a person for rule infraction and attitude problems because we want to get to the spiritual need that is the cause of his problem. Unless the spiritual need is met, the rule infraction and the attitude will continue, and we will have missed the purpose of the confrontation.
6. The nature of love is giving. To speak the truth in love, we must put the needs of the other person ahead of our own personal needs. This can be accomplished when we realize that God has met our needs. When we speak for another person's highest good, we are speaking the truth in love.

Chapter Seven . . . Small Groups - Part One

Points For Discussion (see pages 71, 72)

1. There is comfort within a small group that cannot exist in a large group. In a small group, the people learn how to relax with one another. They get to know each other's personal problems. They feel free to be their natural selves, and behave as they would outside the group. When this condition exists, the leader of the group can relate more easily to all the members. Because Jesus worked His small group to perfection, Christianity still plays a dominant role in the world today.
2. As coach, you are to facilitate your group, giving every member full opportunity to practice what he has learned. You allow your group freedom of expression, and freedom to minister to one another. You learn their strengths and their weaknesses, and you minister to their needs. A good coach leads by example, always demonstrating the love of Christ to every member of his group.
3. If you avoid confronting a member of the group who needs confrontation, the rest of your group will recognize it. When you compromise, you will lose the respect of your group. They look to you to set the standard of stability. When that standard is missing, they will not flow with you.
4. The group learns through watching you. As you confront a member, the rest of the group concentrates upon what is happening. They learn through association. It does no good to tell your group one thing, then behave contrary to what you have told them. If you confront well, your group will learn how to confront well. That is the way it will be with every activity within your group.
5. 1. To encourage people to share; 2. To affirm them as they work through their problems; 3. To pray for them and with them; 4. To be patient with those who are struggling; 5. To let someone cry if he needs to. Everyone in the group should be a burden bearer, because each has the Spirit of Christ within him.
6. Unless you know how a normal DMI looks for each member of your group, you will not recognize an abnormal DMI when it appears. You can also recognize abnormalities as you listen to the members of the group speak into each other's lives. If what they are saying is different from what is appearing on the DMI, something is abnormal. The DMI is the gauge from which to recognize the direction the person is headed.

Chapter Eight . . . Small Groups - Part Two

Points For Discussion (see pages 81, 82)

1. Unless the members of your group understand the boundaries within which they must operate, they will take over the group. They will push these boundaries until they recognize the limits, then they will enforce the boundaries themselves. If your group doesn't function in the proper order, the Holy Spirit will not be able to minister and the group will be operating in the flesh.
2. Content is the basic subject matter, the issue that is being discussed. Process is the way the subject matter is being worked. You should not allow yourself to be drawn away from the content if the process gets out of hand for a time. Simply bring the process back into line, then resume the content.
3. The primary purpose of confrontation is to raise an issue that needs to be handled. As you listen to the members share, you discern an issue that should not be overlooked. You stop the general discussion at that point and focus on the issue. As you process the issue, the person involved has an opportunity to receive healing.
4. Most defenses are erected because of fear. Sometimes it is best to deal with defensiveness through affirmation and encouragement. Often, a group can accomplish this better than an individual. When confronting defensiveness, always be specific about defended.
5.
 1. To initiate action within your group. The group should function according to your direction;
 2. To facilitate interaction between the group members. It is your job to draw out those who are reluctant, and to control those who are too eager;
 3. To avoid lecturing. When you lecture, the group is no longer involved, you are doing all the work. This will not allow the group to grow;
 4. To encourage prayer. Every member of the group should become comfortable talking to God;
 5. To facilitate reconciliation. It is your responsibility to settle all differences of opinion between members of your group.
6.
 1. Be involved in personal prayer, to keep yourself in right relationship with the Lord;
 2. Intercede in prayer for your group. There is power in intercession. Jesus prayed for His disciples, and you should do the same;
 3. Do your homework, get to know the members of your group on a personal level;
 4. Be led by the Spirit in your prayers, your preparation, your homework and in your group facilitation.

Chapter Nine . . . Counseling

Points For Discussion (see pages 88, 89)

1. If you are walking in the Lord, you must believe that the Lord brought the counseling session into existence. If that is the case, He has something He wants to accomplish in the life of the counselee as well. If you see the counseling session as something designed by God, you will not treat it lightly, nor allow yourself to get emotionally involved.
2. All of man's problems stem from his sinful nature, his sin of unbelief. When man doubts God and goes in a direction apart from God, he always falls into sin. There is no solution to sin without God. It is not within the power of man to overcome sin. If that were so, we would not need a Savior, we would simply follow the Ten Commandments.
3. The part man plays in the war between flesh and spirit, lies within the decision of his will. God has given man freedom of choice, and that choice determines the outcome of his personal war. If he chooses to walk in the flesh, the result is death. If he chooses to walk in the spirit, the result is life.
4. The proper setting is important because both the counselor and the counselee must be able to focus without distraction. Temperature control, elimination of noise, necessary tools, such as a Bible, should all be taken care of in advance, to avoid interruption.
5. Prayer should always be the first order of business. If the Lord has called for the session, He should be put in charge. Only the Lord knows what He wants to accomplish during the session; therefore, He should be consulted initially and throughout the session.
6. It is always appropriate when the counselor feels that he has lost control, or when the counselee refuses to respond. Again, the Lord should be consulted. You should pray for discernment at a time such as this because other spiritual forces could be at work to disrupt the session. If that is the case, you should bind those forces, plead the blood of Jesus and attempt to proceed. If you are still unsuccessful, feel free to terminate the session.

Chapter Ten . . . Spiritual Warfare

Points For Discussion (see page 99)

1. We need wisdom because we are dealing with an extraordinary spiritual being. Even though Satan has been defeated, he is still a formidable foe. If we think we can handle Satan on our own, because of our position in Christ, we are mistaken. Our position in Christ dictates that we must bring Christ into the battle. Anything we attempt on our own power is nothing more than an expression of ignorant ego.
2. Unless we are walking an overcoming life, it is foolhardy to believe we can overcome the spiritual forces against us. Jesus has overcome the world, and He must overcome the world in us. We enable Him to accomplish this by submitting our minds to the truth of the Gospel. Jesus renews our minds, our lifestyle changes, and the strongholds are removed.
3. Strongholds are established as we entertain unwholesome thoughts. The longer we entertain a sinful thought, the stronger it becomes, until it finally takes control. At this point, our behavior changes and we begin to sin. We now have a stronghold in our lives. If we indulge in practices the Holy Spirit condemns, or in sinful imaginations, we open ourselves to Satanic strongholds.
4. We overcome by what we are, rather than what we do. Overcoming always begins within ourselves. We cannot expect to help someone else overcome a stronghold unless we have experienced overcoming in our own lives. We overcome Satan and his forces by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. If we have no testimony, we have a problem. That is why we must come to the realization that we cannot overcome anything without Jesus Christ.
5. If Satan came to us as hideously evil, we would have nothing to do with him. But Satan is a master at deception and temptation. He comes to us as something to be desired, as if he could benefit us in some way. This is why we need spiritual discernment. We are in a battle with supernatural forces; therefore, we need the supernatural force of God on our side.
6. If we become preoccupied with the devil and his attacks, our focus is not on God and His grace. We should take the throne room perspective, aware that we are in Christ and Christ is in us. Our true position is above all the principalities and powers of the devil. But this is true only so long as we stay put. Our power is in our position, and our position is at the feet of God, our Father.

Chapter Eleven . . . Relationships

Points For Discussion (see page 109)

1. God wants relationship with man, and He has accomplished it through Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, we come into real communion with God. In the process, we come into right relationship with our fellow-men and with ourselves. God demonstrated His desire to have a relationship with man as He walked in the garden with Adam.
2. Unless our basic needs for survival have been met, it is difficult for us to relate to others. We must understand this as we attempt to communicate with those in need. Sometimes the best way to relate to others is to feed them and let them know they are worthwhile human beings.
3. Unless we are willing to be vulnerable to God, we will never have an intimate relationship with Him. The same is true with human beings. The key to being intimate lies in our willingness to be vulnerable. It is difficult for many people to allow themselves to become vulnerable. They may have been hurt deeply by another, and they are fearful of being hurt again. But healing comes through our willingness to be vulnerable to God and His representatives.
4. He is to submit to her, as she is called to submit to him. And he is to love his wife, unconditionally. This means he is to place no behavioral conditions upon their relationship. He is also to wash his wife with the water of the Word. He does this by taking the role of priest of his house. The Word is his responsibility. He is to share it with his family, and he is to walk in it as a role model.
5. Without a father, the family is out of Divine order, and it suffers accordingly. If the father is present, but doesn't take his proper place as priest, pointing his family to God, it is the same as if he wasn't in the family at all. Families get love from the mother, but stability is to come from the father. If that role model is not there, the entire family suffers.

Chapter Twelve . . . Spiritual Gifts

Point For Discussion (see pages 123,124)

1. Apostles lead the church by bringing the message of God to the body. They give direction to the church leaders. They appoint church leaders as they are led by the Spirit. They guide and establish any new work of the church. They are the forerunners of new ministry. They work with church elders to establish and maintain order in the body. They often move with miracles and signs.
2. The main concern of the prophet is the purity of the spiritual life of the church. Prophets speak under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, to bring correction when needed, and to encourage when applicable. Their focus is on the covenant relationship between God and His people. They will expose sin, proclaim righteousness, etc.
3. The evangelist is used by God to bring people into the kingdom. For this reason, the evangelist is essential to God's purpose. Every church body should have a missionary outreach. This is not possible without the evangelist.
4. Pastors proclaim sound doctrine and refute heresy. They protect the flock from false doctrine and false teachers. They are to seek the mind of Christ for the government of that part of the body for which they are responsible. In this manner, they act as shepherds of God's flock.
5. The teacher's principle purpose is to preserve truth and produce holiness within the body of Christ. They lead the saints to an uncompromising commitment to a godly lifestyle. In the process, they point the church toward Biblical revelation and life-changing truth.
6. Through the spiritual gifts, we become established within the body of Christ, and develop into spiritual maturity. In this way, we contribute to the welfare of the entire body, and the evangelization of the lost. This brings about unity and Christ-likeness.
7. See pages 119 and 121.
8. See page 122 and 123.

Chapter Thirteen . . . Prayer And Communion With God

Points For Discussion (see pages 136,137)

1. Jesus understood that He couldn't let anything stand between Him and the Father. His ministry was intense, He was always in demand. He was under constant pressure to preach and to pray for people. His own disciples had many questions at the end of each day. Jesus could let none of this eat into His time with God, the Father. It was in prayer that Jesus filled His spiritual reservoir, as He tapped into the Source of all power.
2. We can never experience the fullness of forgiveness, and deliverance, and strength to resist temptation, without a personal relationship with Jesus. We are temporal beings; therefore, we are capable of temporary changes only. This is not enough if we intend to walk as disciples of Christ. When we come into a personal relationship with Jesus, He makes permanent changes in our minds and our spirits.
3. Jesus focused solely upon His relationship with the Father. He made no move while He was on this earth, without specific direction from the Father. Every word He spoke, every healing and deliverance came as a result of His quiet times with the Father. As His disciplined followers, it becomes obvious where our focus should be.
4. If we are static, nothing is happening in our lives. Jesus used massive amounts of energy while He was with people. Afterward, He withdrew to spend quiet times with the Father. It was in those quiet times that His energy was restored, both physical and spiritual.
5. We can know a lot about Jesus without knowing Him. We can never know Jesus personally until we take the time to commune with Him in prayer. We can receive His message to the body of Christ as we study the word, and that is good. But we can receive personal ministry from Him only as we deliberately set aside a time and place to be alone with Him.
6. 1. As we read the Scripture, we listen to the movement and message of the Holy Spirit; 2. We verbalize, or self-talk, based upon the Scripture we read; 3. We respond out of our heart, talking to God about the Scripture; 4. We rest and relax, as in the arms of God, and allow Him to give us further revelation, if He chooses.
7. Until we know Him as Papa, we will obey out of fear of reprisal. Once we know Him as Papa, we will obey out of love. When we accept Him as Papa, we will begin to experience His unconditional love, and we will no longer feel that we need to perform to be accepted.