

The Equipping Process

STEP FOUR

Leadership

THE LEADERSHIP COURSE

Step Four of the Equipping Process

The Equipping Process...

The Equipping Process is a discipleship-training course consisting of four steps:

<u>STEP 1</u> FOUNDATIONS	<u>STEP 2</u> DISCIPLINES	<u>STEP 3</u> MINISTRY	<u>STEP 4</u> LEADERSHIP
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The notes provided...

The notes provided in these courses are detailed in order to provide the learner with enough material to thoroughly study the concepts covered. There is always more material added in the notes than what can be covered in the teaching sessions. We urge you to take the time to work through these notes carefully to ensure that you become established in Christ.

These notes make references to numerous Biblical passages. All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.

The Leadership Course...

The principles and concepts that you are about to learn are essential for effective leadership. There are three kinds of people; those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who ask: "What happened?" Our prayer is that you will answer the call of God to be an active participant in the work of God and makes things happen!

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SECTION ONE: Biblical Leadership

INTRODUCTION>

Biblical leadership is distinctly different from secular leadership. We often impose secular definitions or models of, among other things, leadership on the church. The plethora of leadership material available today often makes this mistake. While much of it may be useful for management and leadership in commerce, we must be careful not to impose models of business onto the family of the church. A well-known Christian author and speaker, for example, defined leadership as the ability to take people where they would otherwise not want to go. Definitions like this deviate from Scripture and sadly turn leadership into manipulation and control.

Thus the word “leader” today is often laden with unbiblical connotations and, in fact, does not even appear in the New Testament; even when used in the Old Testament it referred to a community father. In the New Testament, “**elder**” (mature person) and “**deacon**” (servant) are the words used to describe leadership. Jesus Himself spelled out this very different vision for Biblical leadership: “**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**” (Matthew 20:25, 26).

(A) Biblical leadership is founded on FATHERHOOD.

- (1) ***Biblically “church” is defined primarily by “family” (spiritual community) and “leadership” is defined primarily by “fatherhood” (spiritual parenthood)*.***

Paul’s leadership – his encouragement, instruction and correction – was always based on his father-heart to the churches.

“For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many *fathers*; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. *Therefore I urge you, imitate me*” (1 Corinthians 4:15, 16).

“But we were gentle among you, *just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children*. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us...as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, *as a father does his own children*” (1 Thessalonians 2:7-11).

*We use the term “fathers and sons,” a gender neutral phrase, referring to both male and female.

(2) True leadership is all about *revealing the Father*.

▪ ***Biblical leadership is thus parent-leadership.***

Jesus Himself came to reveal the Father (John 14:6), and His ministry and leadership always revealed the Father-heart of God (John 14:7-11).

▪ ***Biblical leadership derives its strength from a relational basis of integrity (servanthood) rather than a structural basis of position (control).***

Parent-leadership appeals to the internal conscience of others through relationship and integrity rather than imposing external conformity through hierarchical pressure.

	<u>Biblical Leadership</u>	<u>Worldly Leadership</u>
Heart >	Fatherhood	Rulership
Influence >	Relational	Structural
Power >	Integrity	Position
Action >	Servanthood	Control

▪ ***Biblical leaders do not use people to fulfill their vision; they give of themselves to serve people in fulfilling their God-given destiny.***

As a father parents his child for his child's ultimate good, with a heart to see his child excel and even exceed him; so Biblical leaders lead others for their ultimate good, desiring to see those they lead excel and exceed them (John 14:12). Think of the father-son relationships in Scripture: Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Samuel and David, and Elijah and Elisha. The "son" in these relationships always fulfilled the destiny started by the "father".

▪ ***Biblical leaders seek to produce disciples of Jesus, not clones of themselves.***

In exhorting the Ephesians elders to shepherd their flock, Paul warned of "**savage wolves**" that would hurt the flock (Acts 20:29). He defined a "**wolf**" as one who attempts to "**draw away the disciples after themselves**" (Acts 20:30); one who draws people away from dependence on the Lord and to a co-dependence on themselves. A true parent-leader has the opposite goal: "**Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ**" (1 Corinthians 11:1); they aim to parent others into an essential dependence on the Lord.

▪ ***One defining aspect of Biblical parent-leadership is gentleness.***

Again, while certainly not associated with business leadership styles, gentleness is the hallmark of a true father. Paul taught Timothy that a leader must be "**gentle to all**" (2 Timothy 2:24). Even when bringing correction, we are taught to do so with gentleness, as a father would discipline his child: "**If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness**" (Galatians 6:1).

(B) Biblical leadership is grounded in SERVANTHOOD.

Servanthood is not a step to greatness; it is greatness.

- ***To lead is to serve.***

Jesus Himself came to reveal the Father through servanthood (Mark 10:45); He modeled servanthood (John 13:1-5) and repeatedly taught a life of servanthood (Matthew 20:25-28).

- ***Leaders are first servants of the Lord before they serve the people.***

“And a servant of the Lord...” (2 Timothy 2:24). We are not called to be servants of the people; we are called to be servants of the Lord who serve people. Thus we do not serve for self-gain, self-recognition or self-promotion; we serve to please the Lord first and foremost. **“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”** (Colossians 3:17).

- ***Leaders serve sacrificially without the need to be recognized or compensated.***

“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23,24). The sad reality is that too many people strive after leadership for the ego-stroking, attention-getting benefits. How tragic that we would seek to serve others only to fill the holes in our own soul? Peter urged the early church elders to serve for one thing, the reward of God Himself: **“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly...and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away”** (1 Peter 5:2-4).

- ***One defining aspect of servanthood is initiative.***

Servant-leaders initiate as they feel led by the Lord rather than having to be told what to do. **“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might”** (Ecclesiastes 9:10). If they see a need, servant-leaders first intercede...and then obey the promptings of the Spirit to intervene.

- ***Leaders are responsible to, not for, the people they lead.***

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ...For each one shall bear his own load” (Galatians 6:2, 5). We are responsible **to** pray and care for those we lead, obeying the leading of the Lord...but we are not responsible **for** people; in fact, we dare not make people dependent on us by removing their sense of personal responsibility. We are to carry people’s **“burdens”** but always point them to God who will enable them to carry their own **“load”**. Leaders do not work for the need; they work for Father.

(C) Biblical leadership is anchored in INTEGRITY.

(1) God prizes integrity (proven character) before gifting.

- ***Leaders are to be faithful; God will make them able.***

“And the things you heard from me...commit these to faithful men who will be able...” (2 Timothy 2:2). The world prizes gifting over character; God prizes character before (not in place of) gifting. A person’s gift should not impress us – it is given by God – but the way they use their God-given gift reveals their character, or lack of it. Gifting is given, skills can be learnt but character is developed through faithfulness.

All the requirements of Biblical leadership revolve around character (1 Timothy 3:1-13); even the requirement that an elder must be **“able to teach”** (1 Timothy 3:2) does not refer to the “gift to teach” but an ability to instruct others as a father would his son.

(2) Leadership starts within.

- ***Leadership requires that we first lead ourselves before we can lead others.***

“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city” (Proverbs 16:32; see also Proverbs 25:28). We can only lead others as far as we ourselves have been. Public effectiveness stems from private victory. We can only lead to the extent of the treasure in our own heart.

- ***Leadership requires that we first be accountable to others before we hold others accountable.***

“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14; see also Proverbs 18:1). Biblical accountability means that from our essential submission to God, we make ourselves accountable to others. Although it is helpful to remind ourselves that we do not need other people’s permission; we desperately do need their perspective. ***Being under authority releases authority*** (see Matthew 8:5-13).

(3) Trust is essential to leadership.

- ***Our ministry should be creative, but our behaviour should be predictable.***

“But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No” (2 Corinthians 1:18). Our character must be consistent. The attitude we show today should be the attitude we show tomorrow. Moodiness undermines trust. Is he approachable? The way we acted yesterday should be the way we act today. Inconsistency undermines trust. Is he reliable? Our attitude, our behaviour, and our words must be predictably reliable and consistently trustworthy. Predictability is the degree of confidence others have in our intentions and actions.

SECTION TWO: Sonship

INTRODUCTION>

Church is essentially a community of fathers and sons enjoying fellowship in the Spirit. While volumes are written on leadership and spiritual fatherhood little is said on the most crucial aspect of becoming a parent-leader: **fruitful fathers stem from faithful sons**. It is vital for us to understand the principle of sonship.

Sonship foundationally stems from discovering the Father-heart of God for ourselves as we embrace the supreme privilege, our identity, of being a child of God (John 1:12). We begin this awesome discovery of God's Fatherhood by becoming a child; in childlike faith, allowing God to become our **functional** Father through trusting **obedience** to Him (Hebrews 5:8; 12:5-11). But obedience is not God's highest aspiration for us...**cooperation** is. Like every father, Father God requires obedience from us as we grow up; but His goal is that we then learn His ways and carry His heart. Rather than just blindly obeying Him, Father desires that we become mature sons able to represent Him and cooperate with Him. **"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons [mature son] of God"** (Romans 8:14). In a critical decision, the early church leaders participated in God's will: **"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us"** (Acts 15:28).

Understanding sonship with God is the foundation point but not the whole ball game, as too many in our individualistic society think. It is not just "me and God." Father God has placed us in a spiritual family, His church, and we need to understand sonship within the context of spiritual community; for herein lies the development of proven character.

(A) The POTENTIAL to lead is imputed in the new birth.

Although some have the motivational gift of leadership (Romans 12:8), **every believer is a potential parent-leader**.

- (1) **By virtue of the Presence and character of Christ within**, every believer can lead others to saving faith; every believer can disciple others in essential faith-living; and every believer can, by the grace of God, continue to parent others into the depths of the Spirit they themselves have enjoyed. The potential to lead is unlocked and released through personally experiencing the Father-heart of God and enjoying the fathering of spiritual parents.
- (2) By virtue of Paul's open-ended exhortation – **"If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work"** (1 Timothy 3:1) – every believer can and should nurture the God-imparted desire to parent-lead others. The word **"bishop"** here is synonymous with **"elder"** (see Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4); a believer whose desire to parent-lead others has matured and thus is ordained into the office of an elder. Paul would not write this invitation for all to fan the flames of this noble desire to parent-lead if it was only available to an elite few.

(B) The potential to lead is released through spiritual MATURITY.

To unlock this potential, and purify this desire to lead, spiritual growth is required. Hebrew mentality – the way God thinks – viewed spiritual maturity in three stages: childhood, sonship and fatherhood. John, the apostle, writes his first letter with these three stages of maturity in mind. He addresses “**children**” (1 John 2:12, 13), sons or “**young men**” (1 John 2:13, 14) and “**fathers**” (1 John 2:13, 14). These are not literal age groups but stages of spiritual maturity.

- Children are to know and enjoy the grace of God as they taste God’s forgiveness and mercy, finding their identity in the completed work of Christ.
- Sons are to know and enjoy the Word of God as they appropriate God’s victory personally in their lives, overcoming the works of darkness.
- Fathers are to know and enjoy the heart of God as they share God’s pleasure in parenting others, imparting His life and wisdom.

This is a principle that runs throughout Scripture. Another is found in Isaiah’s famous messianic prophecy of Jesus: “**For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given...And His name will be called...Everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:6). When Jesus was baptized with water and the Spirit, Father God spoke out the Hebrew father’s blessing upon Him: “**This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**” (Matthew 3:16, 17). This was a “come-of-age” blessing conferred upon a mature son. While we become a child when we are born again by the miracle of God, ***in order to be released as a father, we must become a son given.*****

(C) The great need: “SONS IN THE HOUSE”.

- (1) From Hebrews, Chapter 3, we derive this phrase: “A Son in the House.” “**And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant...but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are**” (vv. 5,6). The church is the “**house of God**” and we are to be faithful sons in the house God places us in.
- (2) Sonship involves experiencing life in a spiritual family of fathers and brothers, mothers and sisters; submitting to spiritual parents who mentor us in the ways of God. A Hebrew child learnt obedience as a child and then, into adolescence, was inducted into apprenticeship. Through apprenticeship, and the mentoring he received from his father, his character was perfected and thus he became entrusted with the family legacy. Likewise, as we experience the fullness of the ***love of God*** in spiritual family, we learn and begin to reveal ***God’s character*** (1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Corinthians 5:14, 17-20). In this way, the desire to lead is purified, proven and ultimately released by spiritual fathers (Proverbs 18:16; Luke 6:40).

(3) Examples of Sonship.

From the Old Testament through the New Testament, the backbone in advancing God's cause was the strength of "father and son" relationships; such as Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Samuel and David and the backbone of the early church: Jesus - Peter - Barnabas - Paul - Timothy. Of course, Paul then urged Timothy to continue this legacy (2 Timothy 2:2). Let's consider these two examples:

- Elijah and Elisha (see 1 Kings 18, 19; 2 Kings 2,3).

The prophet Elijah parented a young prophet Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21). At a very crucial point in their relationship, Elijah tested the young man – who was known as the man who washed Elijah's clothing (2 Kings 3:11) – by saying, in essence: "Leave me. Go do your own thing" (2 Kings 2:2). But Elisha replied, "**I will not leave you!**" He was a faithful son to Elijah, and when Elijah left airborne in the fiery chariot, Elisha's cry was "**my father, my father**" (2 Kings 2:12) – not "my prophet, my prophet".

As great a prophet as Elijah was – he had called fire down from heaven in the showdown on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18) – he never defeated the wicked queen Jezebel. So when Elisha asked Elijah for "**a double portion**", he was not just seeking some charismatic thrill; he was requesting the impartation of his spiritual father (2 Kings 2:9). Elisha knew that Elijah failed to defeat Jezebel, and realized that unless he had the ***father's blessing*** – "**a double portion of the spirit**" of his father, he would never be able to defeat Jezebel. It was this same principle that Jesus referred to in John 14:12, "**the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do**". The father's blessing enables the son to build on the foundation of the father and exceed the achievements of the father! It was indeed Elisha who laid hands on Jehu and commissioned him to destroy Jezebel, which he did with absolute ease (see 2 Kings 9:1-10; 30-37). Why did Elijah not just do it himself? The anointing and power was released through the impartation of "fathering" to accomplish the work.

- Paul and Timothy (see Acts 16:1-3; Philippians 2:19-22; 2 Timothy 1:2-5, 3:10-17).

Paul met a young Timothy in Lystra and, after receiving a good report from his local community, a father-son relationship was birthed (Acts 16:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:14). Timothy served as a son to Paul carefully following his "**doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions and afflictions**" (2 Timothy 3:10, 11). And it was Timothy's faithfulness as a son that released him into parent-leadership. To the Philippian church, Paul writes: "**For I have no one like-minded who sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel**" (Philippians 2:20-22). ***From faithful sons, fruitful fathers emerge.***

(4) *Are you a son or a hireling?*

Jesus contrasted Himself, the Good Shepherd, to a self-serving hireling (John 10:11-13). A hireling has no sense of inheritance, no sense of responsibility. He is bent on self-interest and self-promotion. He comes asking: "What is in it for me? How can I benefit here? Who can I rally around my cause?" He is...for hire.

Let us make some key distinctions between a son and a hireling...

- **Sons invest themselves in the house; hirelings invest only in themselves.**
[See Luke 16:12].
- **Sons are given to enlarge the family name; hirelings seek only to advance their own name.**
[See Philippians 2:19-22].
- **Sons bond people to the house; hirelings draw people to themselves.**
[See Acts 20:29, 30].
- **Sons honour headship and cover their father's nakedness; hirelings undermine headship and expose the nakedness of others.**
[See Genesis 9:21-27].
- **Sons take pleasure in making their father's load lighter; hirelings add to the father's load with demands and expectations.**
[See Hebrews 13:17].
- **Sons rejoice when others are honoured; hirelings become jealous at another's success.**
[See Romans 12:10, 15].
- **Sons are content and excel in what is entrusted to them; hirelings compare and compete for self-promotion.**
[See 2 Corinthians 10:12-17].

It will be worth making an important qualification.

The house is God's family, His church. We are not building our "thing"; we are to be the house Jesus is building (Matthew 16:18). Our loyalty is first and foremost to God. Then... out of this loyalty to God comes a loyalty to the specific family He has chosen to place us in (1 Corinthians 12:12, 18). Just as we would not abandon a new born baby to be looked after by the "family of mankind," so God does not leave us as orphans when we are born again. Rather He puts us into a family and out of a devotion to Him must flow a commitment to this family as a "Son in the House".

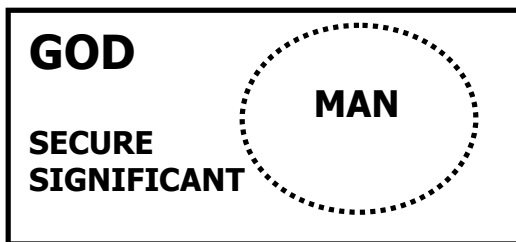
SECTION THREE: Leadership in the Spirit

INTRODUCTION>

To minister to others effectively, and certainly to parent-lead others faithfully, we need to minister and lead in the Spirit. This requires an accurate understanding of the old, selfish nature and the new nature in Christ. Not only must we as ministers and leaders have an honest and humble awareness of our own make-up, but we need to also be clear concerning the frailties and motivations and, of course, the beauty and potential of those we minister to and lead. ***The heart of a parent-leader, enflamed by God's own Spirit (Heart) is to see people saved, set free, living in victory, fulfilling their destiny and parent-leading others to do the same.***

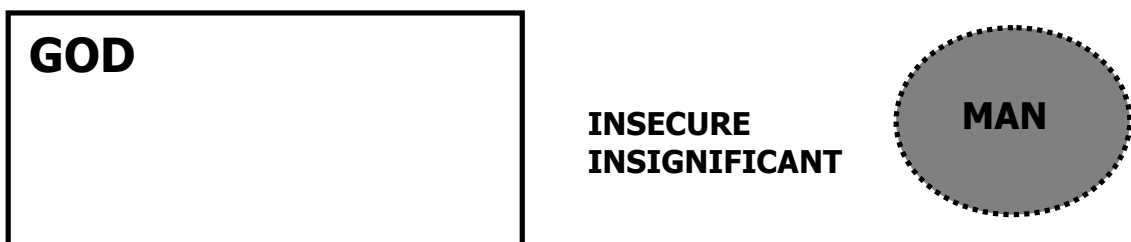
(A) A leader must understand the FALLEN NATURE of mankind.

- (1) God created mankind in harmony with Himself and with the world He had created for them. In this divine connection, mankind had a healthy **personal-worth** (our identity), being **secure** in relationship with God and **significant** in fulfilling His dominion mandate to rule on His behalf.



Mankind in Creation:
Secure and significant in God

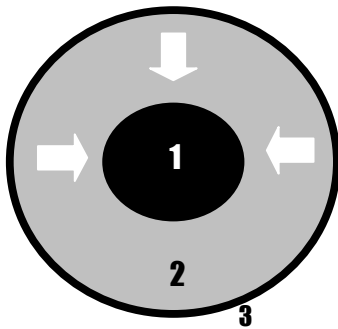
- (2) The effects of The Fall was that mankind's sense of security and significance, formerly **attributes** fulfilled in God, now became driving **needs** disconnected from God (Genesis 3:1-7). Mankind became driven to fill the **void** within; to find security and significance in sources other than in God.



Mankind in The Fall:
Insecure and insignificant without God

- (3) **Our basic human nature is self-centred, contrary to God.** Without Christ we were slaves to sin ruled by our **selfish nature** (Romans 6:15-23), driven by **self-preservation, self-improvement** and/or **self-advancement** in order to meet our need for security and significance (our identity problem). We have a fallen nature: **“the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”** (Jeremiah 17:9).

The Unbeliever – Living Trapped “Outside-In” *
 [The “natural man” (1 Corinthians 2:14)]



1. An unbeliever’s **spirit** is dead, disconnected from God’s light and life.
2. An unbeliever’s **soul** (mind, will and emotions) is inwardly-driven (selfish), solely motivated to meet the need for security and significance. The unbeliever is thus in bondage to the obsessive, selfish nature.
3. An unbeliever’s **body** is often just used to find relief and escapist pleasure through the five physical senses. The unbeliever lives ruled by fear, bitterness, anxiety and despair, dependent on externals (people, circumstances).



The arrows show the direction of the unbeliever’s life-focus: **self-preservation, self-improvement and self-advancement.**

[*The diagrams in this course are based on the trichotomous view of man (1 Thessalonians 5:23)].

- (4) In order to meet our need for security and significance we, in our mind, **establish a goal** that we believe will be the solution to our inner void: “I need (.....affection.....) to feel secure” or “I need to (...achieve....) to be significant.” This goal is determined by basic assumptions, **our belief system**, we have unconsciously developed from our family upbringing, our background, our education, from authority figures and through positive and negative life experiences. We are then, often obsessively, **motivated** to obtain this goal. However, this belief system, stored in the unconscious mind, is largely based on false assumptions (lies, including half-truths).
- (5) As we pursue our “establish goal” three outcomes are possible.

1> Despair/Hopelessness: Unrealistic Goal

Many of our goals are unrealistic and can never be achieved. Consistently missing this elusive goal breeds a sense of guilt and despair, and when we finally accept that it is unrealistic we may become overwhelmed with a sense of hopelessness. We can become cynical and ultimately depressed.

2> Frustration/Anger: Blocked Goal

Many of our goals may (seem to) be blocked from being achieved by circumstances or people. In our minds, someone or something has robbed us of the opportunity to achieve this goal we need. The inevitable outcome is frustration and anger. We can become bitter, resentful and wallow in self-pity.

3> Disappointment/Fear: Achieved Goal

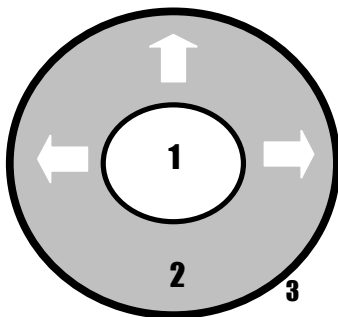
Many of our goals may actually be achieved. We obtain them...wow! We enjoy a sense of satisfaction...temporarily that is...and then face the reality that it did not deliver on the promise. We then establish another goal and begin again. Over time we become increasingly disillusioned and anxious. We can even become fearful that true peace and joy is not possible for us.

(B) A leader must understand the NEW CREATION reality.

- (1) ***Our new nature is Christ-centred, connected to God.*** In Christ, we are delivered from sin and freed from our self-centred nature. The Bible uses the phrase the “**new man**” (Ephesians 4:20-24) to describe the “**new creation**” miracle.

The Victorious Believer – Living Free “Inside-Out”

[The “**spiritual [man]**” (1 Corinthians 3:1)]



1. A believer's **spirit** is born again, connected to God's light and life.
2. A believer's **soul** (mind, will and emotions) is liberated from the bondage of the selfish nature; enabling the believer to grow in the truth, governed by the Lordship of Christ.
3. A believer's **body** is the temple of the Holy Spirit, to be used for the glory of God and in service to Him. The believer enjoys the pleasures of God – righteousness, peace and joy – drawing on the internal resources of the indwelling Spirit.



The arrows show the direction of the believer's life-focus: **passion for Christ** and **compassion for others**.

- (2) ***In Christ we are saints, not sinners.*** When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church – clearly a church with many faults and problems – he begins his letter by reminding them of their identity in Christ: “**To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be SAINTS...**” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

Until we grasp our identity in Christ we will, like the Corinthians, continue to be “**carnal** [governed by the flesh] **behaving** [walking according to man] **like mere** [unbelieving] **men**” (1 Corinthians 3:3). But for the grace of God we would still be sinners; but because of the grace of God we are saints!

- (3) We have a new identity in Christ: secure in relationship with Him, significant in fulfilling His will for our lives.

“**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a NEW** [literally, “new in form and quality”] **CREATION; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become NEW... For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in Him**” (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21).

“**But as many as received Him, to them He gave the RIGHT** [refers to our “privilege and authority”] **to become CHILDREN of God, to those who believe in His name**” (John 1:12).

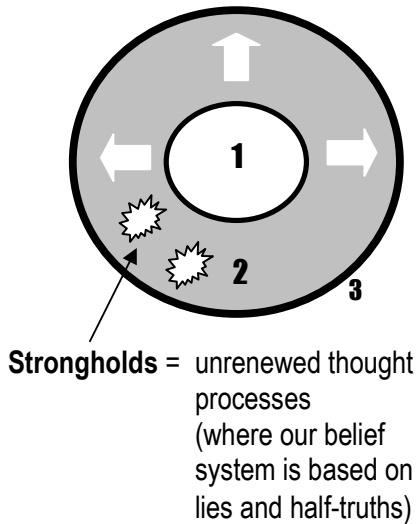
“**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are SONS of God... The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – HEIRS of God and joint heirs with Christ...**” (Romans 8:14-17).

“**But God who is rich and mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us ALIVE together with Christ...and raised us up together, and made us SIT together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus** (Ephesians 2:4-6).

“**Yet in all these things we are more than CONQUERORS through Him who loved us**” (Romans 8:37).

- (4) Despite our new identity in Christ we still have to deal with our old, selfish nature, the flesh. The Bible makes it clear that our **first war** is, not against the devil, but with the flesh itself (Romans 7:23; 1 Peter 2:11). In fact, **even temptation arises, not from the devil, but from our old undisciplined, unrestrained selfish nature: the flesh** (James 1:14). Yes, the devil is a master at exploiting our selfish nature but the responsibility lies directly in the believer’s faithfulness. This is a core truth to living victoriously and thus, leading others to live victoriously.

- (5) The Bible reveals that the **soul** (mind, will and emotions) is the battleground, specifically the **mind**, and describes the incorrect and ungodly thinking of a believer as “**strongholds**” (2 Corinthians 10:4). It is through these wrong belief patterns – the false goals we establish through our life experiences – that the believer lives in defeat and is open to exploitation.



While our **spirit** (1) is instantly saved, our **soul** (2) requires the continual transforming work of the Spirit (the process of sanctification).

The soul consists of the **mind**, **will** and **emotions**; the key part of the soul being the mind. When our mind is illuminated by the truth of God, our will is enabled to obey God’s will and our emotions follow suit. But when we neglect our responsibility to grow in the truth (Philippians 2:12), it is through the **unrenewed thought processes** in our soul – “**strongholds**” – that we remain bound and open ourselves to demonic oppression.

Strongholds, incorrect thinking, develop through our upbringing and our exposure to negative life experiences. Whenever we believe something that is not the truth of God – His light – we believe a lie and become entrapped in darkness. For example, if I believe God does not heal today, my stronghold of unbelief will keep me from experiencing His healing touch. If I believe that God is distant and disapproving, my stronghold of fear will keep me from experiencing intimacy with God and security in my relationship with Him.

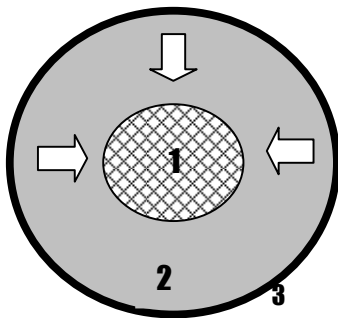
- (6) **The believer is to consider the old, selfish nature dead.** [The Bible uses the words “**flesh**” (“**sinful nature**” NIV) in, for example, Galatians 5:16-21 and “**old man**” (“**old self**” NIV) in, for example, Ephesians 4:20-24 to describe our former, self-centred nature]. The believer’s old nature **has been** crucified with Christ (past tense), and the believer must, in faith, **consider** his old nature dead (Colossians 3:3; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; Romans 6:6, 11).

This is another core aspect of foundational faith-living to live in the victory Christ has provided for us. The tendency is to attempt to fight off or resist the selfish nature’s attempt to re-exert its corruptions. This is incorrect and not the Biblical response to the flesh. It is a matter of faith: we are to ignore it altogether – considering it dead (powerless) – and thus deliberately, trusting in the enabling grace of God, “**walk in the Spirit, [thus] not fulfilling the lust of the flesh**” (Galatians 5:16).

(7) **The believer is to renew their mind to the truth of God.** Through decisive discipline, Biblical meditation and sensitive responding to the Spirit’s perfecting work, the believer is to reprogram their mind’s database – our basic assumptions (belief system) – with God’s truth. If a believer does not deliberately “**renew their mind**” (Romans 12:2), they live “**according to the flesh**” (Romans 8:12) in direct contradiction to their new nature, inviting personal confusion and demonic exploitation.

The Defeated Believer – Living Confused “Outside-Out?”

[The “**carnal** [man]” (1 Corinthians 3:3)]



The defeated believer has access to God’s indwelling Presence and power but through ignorance, unbelief, apathy or deliberate wilfulness, they live like an unbeliever. The word “**carnal**” is a derivative of the word “**flesh**” and refers to a life governed by the selfish nature rather than the Spirit of God. The chaos and confusion is tremendously acute for the believer who has seen the light but does not walk in it.



The arrows show the direction of the defeated believer’s life-focus: rather than directed outwardly from the overflow of a Christ-governed centre, they point inwardly contradicting the new nature.

(C) A leader must MINISTER IN THE SPIRIT.

What does this actually mean? Consider an analogy.

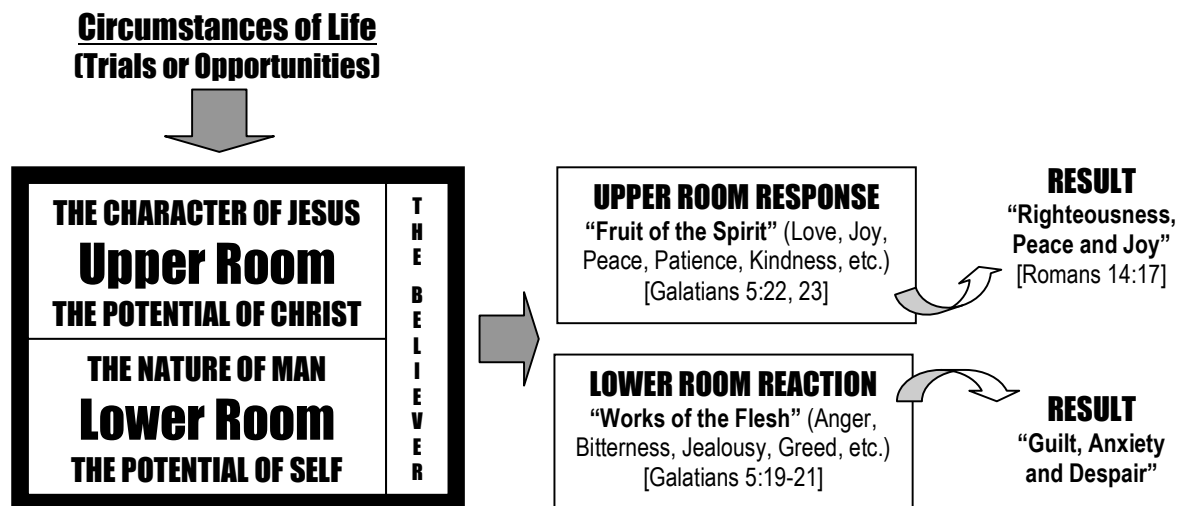
Think of your life as a house with two rooms: one upper and lower room.

- **The Upper Room of the New Nature**

The upper room is the new man in Christ – the real, new you! This is your identity, and you have the potential of Christ within you! In every circumstance of life, both good and bad, we are to draw on the indwelling Spirit’s resources and release our new nature. **“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk** [literally, “walk in line with”, “to follow exactly”] **in the Spirit”** (Galatians 5:25).

- **The Lower Room of the Old Nature**

The lower room is the old man; which is no longer your identity! You are no longer defined by the septic thoughts and desires of your old nature! As we face the circumstances of life we will be tempted to draw from the foul contents of this lower room; but we need to deny (ignore) the thoughts and desires that arise from this septic tank of the selfish nature, and release (ignite) the godly thoughts and desires of the Christ-filled new nature.



Thus ministering in the Spirit requires the following:

(1) We need to learn to COMMUNE.

The leader must live from the Upper Room of his new nature.

- He must learn to commune with God in the secret place and then walk in fellowship with God on the public stage; thus learning to be aware of His nearness, to tune into His voice and to draw on His counsel and resources (Galatians 5:16, 25).
- He must learn to **release** (nurture) the “good desires” of his new identity – thus, “**put on the new man**” (Ephesians 4:24).
- He must learn to discern when he is no longer full of the Spirit, and thus seek infillings of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

(2) We need to learn to DISCERN.

The leader must be aware of the influence of the Lower Room of his old nature.

- He must rule over his own spirit well; thus, exercising self-control (Proverbs 16:32; 25:28; Galatians 5:23).
- He must be sober in his own estimation of himself (Romans 12:3); thus, walking in humility: “**let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall**” (1 Corinthians 10:12).
- He must live a disciplined spiritual life; thus living by conviction rather than convenience (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).
- He must learn to **deny** (ignore) the “bad urges” of the old, self-centred nature – thus, “**put off the old man...giving no place to the devil**” (Ephesians 4:22, 27).

(3) We need to learn to ENCOURAGE.

The leader must see and affirm the potential of Christ in the Upper Room of others.

- He must learn to no longer judge according to the flesh (worldly standards, prejudices, etc.); thus, learning to see others as God sees them (2 Corinthians 5:16, 17).
- He must be secure in the Lord to affirm (envision, encourage and honour) others sincerely; thus, imparting courage (John 13:1-5). [Encourage = “enthuse with courage”].
- He must encourage the “good desires” in others; thus, unlocking and celebrating the character of Christ in them.

(4) We need to learn to ADMONISH.

The leader may have the privilege of speaking into the Lower Room of others.

- He must, when necessary, learn to lovingly hold others accountable to the truth without judgment (Matthew 7:1-5).
- He must learn to sensitively help others to discern their “bad desires” and thus, take responsibility for them.

SECTION FOUR: Counsel-Giving

INTRODUCTION>

All the ingredients of life change and victory are found in the two essential building blocks of society deigned by God: (1) the nuclear family of father, mother and children, and (2) the spiritual family of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters. The literal meltdown of the nuclear family unit makes it even more critical that we, God's people, learn to reveal the love and life of God as spiritual families. With the enabling of the Counsellor [Greek: *parakletos*, a word also meaning Comforter, Helper, Advocate and Standby], we can trust to become healing, life-giving communities. The early church "**multiplied**" as they walked "**in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort** [Greek: *paraklesis*] **of the Holy Spirit**" (Acts 9:31).

No wonder Paul had such confidence in the church in Rome to be a counsel-giving community: "**Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness** [Greek: *agathosune*, referring to the nature of God], **filled with all knowledge** [Greek: *gnosis*, referring to a knowledge of God's truth], **able also to admonish** [Greek: *noutheteo*, literally, "to put in mind;" thus, "to instruct and counsel by word"] **one another**" (Romans 15:14). The Amplified version reads: "**competent to admonish and counsel and instruct one another**".

(A) Counsel-giving involves AFFIRMATION, INSTRUCTION, DIRECTION and CORRECTION.

(1) Affirmation.

Affirming people is our primary form of counsel-giving. We are to nurture an environment of "**faith, hope and love**" (1 Corinthians 13:13). In this atmosphere of love, people feel edified and comforted. **To affirm a person is to encourage them to be faithful to the revealed, known will of God in the Scriptures**; to live Christ-centred lives with gratitude and joy; to build godly marriages and families; to nurture Christ-honouring relationships; to be faithful in work and ministry and to do so exuding the passion of our adventure with Him.

(2) Instruction.

Instructing people is another primary form of counsel-giving. **To instruct a person is to inform and impart the knowledge of God's will**. We are to feed and teach God's truth in love, in example and with patience. In an environment where God's Word is upheld as the final authority; where it is loved, cherished, taught and modeled, people grow in the likeness of Christ and fulfill His will with gratitude and joy.

(3) **Direction**.

A secondary form of counsel-giving is helping people find direction in life. In soberness and humility, we will have the privilege to speak into people's lives as they seek God's unknown will in making life-affecting and life-changing decisions. It is perhaps wise to again state that people benefit from our perspective in these situations; but do not require our permission. **They** have to make the decisions that they will live with. Yet, with our perspective they can make informed, wise decisions. Our aim should be to primarily confirm what they sense the Lord saying to them, unless we sense a clear directive word from the Lord. Even in this case, we should urge people to seek further counsel and confirmation.

(4) **Correction**.

Another secondary form of counsel-giving is to bring correction to people's lives. In soberness and gentleness, we will have to, when necessary, help others realign their lives with God's will for their lives, their attitudes; their behaviour, their marriages and families, and their testimony in the world.

(B) The GOAL of counsel-giving.

Our goal in counsel-giving, especially when people are struggling with sinful living, negative attitudes and inner turmoil, is two-fold:

(1) *Behaviour Change: Immediate obedience to God's Word.*

When people's lives are out of alignment with God's will, revealed through His Word, we need to encourage people to repent and realign with the truth. No healing is possible if we continue to live in contradiction to the will of God.

(2) *Mind Renewal: Permanent character change to Christ's likeness.*

Biblical counsel-giving must go beyond just saying, "Do the Word brother!" Consistent behavioural obedience to God's Word requires a renewed belief system. Our behaviour is always a reflection of what we believe (Proverbs 23:7). Through genuine care and sensitivity to the Spirit's counsel, we are to help people identify the wrong goal they may have adopted and the wrong basic assumptions they may be making [See pages 11, 12].

The goal of counsel-giving is not to make people feel happy. Most people seeking counsel want to arrive at this wrong goal; a goal that is unbiblical and also unrealistic. All change involves negative emotions, honest self-examination and in most cases, hard work. Change is threatening and thus causes a degree of "unhappiness". But only through embracing change can we experience the joyous rewards of change. We need to make people aware of the challenge of change if they sincerely seek healing and help in Christ.

(C) The INGREDIENTS of counsel-giving.

The ingredients of counsel-giving are not complicated. Do not be underwhelmed by their simplicity. These simple ingredients, under the anointing of God, release the life-giving Presence of God into people's lives.

(1) Listen attentively to people and the voice of the Spirit.

The number one ingredient in effective counselling is the ability to listen; to hear and thus, understand. We need to be listening to both...

The Person.

- ***We must listen to the person without jumping to conclusions; without making assumptions; without presumption.*** We must show the person we are conversing with respect, taking the conversation on its merits. Nothing is more disrespectful or dangerous than, on a quick assumption, leaning on our own understanding and giving a clichéd piece of advice.
- ***We must listen to the person in such a way that we let their story impact (move) us.*** Only in this way, will we catch their burden and sense their desperation. Only then will we be moved with compassion for them, enabled to seek the Lord with them and trust God to intervene in their situation.
- ***We must especially pay attention to (1) the way they express their feelings, and (2) the way they explain their actions.*** Both the emotions expressed and behaviour exhibited reveal the clues to the unrenewed thinking processes, the wrong basic assumptions, held to. Asking caring, inquiring questions – providing sincere verbal and non-verbal feedback – encourages people to open up and share their hearts.

The Voice of God.

- ***We must listen to the Spirit's voice.*** As we listen to the person we are ministering to, we need to be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit whose desire to heal, touch and change the person is so much more than ours. We are the vessel; we are to cooperate with His ministry.
- ***As we tune into His voice, He will bring revelation and insight to us.*** He will help us identify the unrenewed thinking that needs to be addressed. He will anoint us to speak, pray and minister through the gifts He gives (1 Corinthians 12:7-11). He will anoint us to bring counsel to the directionless, deliverance to the oppressed and healing to the wounded. This is the joy, and adventure, of cooperating with Him!

(2) Help people discern their unrenewed thinking, and encourage them to believe and apply God's revealed truth.

Through listening to the person's story, allowing them to express their feelings and explain their behavioural choices we can begin to discern the mindset from which they have drawn their conclusions. Invite them into this process of self-reflection. Self-awareness is the beginning of freedom and healing.

We must encourage people to immediately re-align their behaviour to God's Word, reminding them of the benefits of following the Lord's design for our lives (first part of our goal: behaviour change). Then we must urge people to consistently and ruthlessly reject thinking that is based on their false assumptions (repentance), decisively choosing to, instead, believe God's truth (second part of our goal: mind renewal).

Disciplined Bible meditation is vital in this process of mind renewal. We urge you to make use of "Our Identity in Christ" Tool available on our website: www.crosswaveglobal.com. Also the attachment to these notes called, "Soul Check-Up," may assist you in reviewing your own basic assumptions, and may assist you in helping others.

(3) Seek the Lord together through prayer and fasting.

Once we have entered into the story of the person we are ministering to, thus being moved with the Lord's compassion, we should commit to pray for God's intervention. This may be done, in part, immediately during the actual time together, but should also involve praying into the insights discovered and instructions given during the session. Although we may experience the touch of God in a moment, mind renewal involves a process of time. Often committing to fasting one day a week together is a powerful way of connecting with God and enhancing the power of agreement prayer.

(4) Ensure you provide genuine, caring follow up.

Habitual change is difficult and requires aggressive action. We all need plenty of encouragement and supportive relationships to do this. Explain the benefits of accountability and look to involve others, with the person's consent, in the support system. By nature we tend to do what is inspected, not what is expected. Be sure to follow up any personal commitment you make in the process. Nothing undermines one's ministry and leadership faster than failing to keep our word.

(D) Ministering to the OPPRESSED.

When we discern the presence of demonic influence in those we are ministering to, we should confront the devil as the Spirit of God leads us.

- Jesus made it clear that He expelled demons by the “**Spirit of God**” (Matthew 12:28), and as with all ministry, **dependence** on the Spirit’s guidance is crucial. There are no formulas to successful ministry; we need to learn to cooperate with the Holy Spirit who is well able to set captives free. And it is through the gifts of the Spirit that we discern demonic activity and thus the appropriate action we should take in every occasion (1 Corinthians 12:10). Jesus was anointed “**with the Holy Spirit and with power...healing all who were oppressed by the devil**” (Acts 10:38).
- Often, ministering to others requires that we **counsel** them; that is, to help them realize the problem they have, repent of their sin and embrace the truth of God. A person must be willing to be free before they can be free. Paul urged Timothy to counsel those “**ensnared by the devil**” with gentleness, patience and humility, so that “**they may come to their senses,**” find “**repentance...and know the truth**” (2 Timothy 2:24-26).
- We must first urge the person to “**submit to God**” – bring their lives into alignment with God’s truth through discipline and Bible meditation – then we should proceed to **expel** the demon in the Name of Jesus (James 4:7; Mark 16:17, 18). Remember, demons are not impressed with noise, they respond to authority in the Name of Jesus. The only Biblical example we have of someone ministering deliverance – in this case, casting out a demon from a demon possessed woman (Acts 16:16) – Paul used the terminology: “**I command you in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out**” (Acts 16:18). This is, of course, very similar to the words used by Jesus Himself (see Mark 1:25; 5:8; 9:25).

Our authority is derived from the Name of Jesus. Jesus said: “**And these signs will follow those who believe: In My Name they will cast out demons...**” (Mark 16:17). The Name of Jesus is not a magic formula that we chant to guarantee results; rather, the Name of Jesus refers to the authority of Jesus derived from His Nature as the Resurrected King of kings and Lord of lords! **It is because of our identity as the redeemed that we can stand in the authority of our Redeemer.** The sons of Sceva discovered the hard way that the authority of His Name is linked to His nature within us (Acts 19:13-16).

- Should there be an obstruction to deliverance; the obstacle needs to be **identified**. Demons often put up a struggle; they are not happy to leave and will cling on if they have any right to stay, especially if they can play on any unwillingness to repent in the person they are oppressing. Unconfessed sin or unforgiveness are common obstacles to liberty. Patient but firm counsel and persevering prayer is required at times like this.

- Adequate **follow up** for the individual who has been delivered is important. Since demons seek to return to where they were once expelled (Matthew 12:43, 44), adequate follow-up covering repentance, renewing the mind and baptism with water and the Spirit are vital **“lest the last state of [the] man [be] worse than the first”** (Matthew 12:45). Unless a person is filled with God’s Spirit they will always be vulnerable to counter attacks of the enemy.

(E) Counsel-giving WISDOM from the Proverbs.

- **Always be gentle, speaking words that edify.**
“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1). In counseling, emotions can often be a hindrance to the Lord’s will. A gentle disposition and edifying words dissipate unnecessary emotionalism. **“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit...be kind hearted to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you”** (Ephesians 4:29-32). Avoid harsh and critical speech, allowing gentleness, joy and laughter to soften your words and make them more palatable.
- **Speak the truth in love.**
“Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck...and so find favour and high esteem in the sight of God and man” (Proverbs 3:3, 4). We must always exude the mercy, forgiveness and love of God, **“for love will cover a multitude of sin”** (1 Peter 4:8). Love does not **expose**; it provides a safe place for people to be honest with themselves and with God. But love does not **excuse** either; it creates a safe place for the truth to be shared. In the safe place of love, we must be faithful to reveal the truth. Without the truth shared in love, people will not grow (Ephesians 4:15).
- **Always give hope; hope centred in God’s promises.**
“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint” (Proverbs 29:18). Whether we are sharing encouragement or correction we must always impart hope. We should envision people as to what could be, and by God’s grace, will be. Rooted in God’s goodness and His promises, we can avoid empty sentimentality and breathe true hope into the sails of people’s hearts.
- **Be transparent and honest.**
“Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid” (Proverbs 12:1). If you want to impress people, share your successes; but if you want to impact people, share your failures. To impart a hunger to learn and grow we need to share not just our victories but also our setbacks. Obviously discretion is important: we should only share our failures, to people who seek our counsel, in which we have obtained a measure of Christ’s victory. Spilling our pain on people who themselves are seeking help will just compound their pain!

When we asked questions, avoid the temptation to claim to know something when you do not. We do not have to be Mr. Answer, simply Mr. Honest. Telling people that you do not know something makes you more believable when you do! Acknowledge what you do not know, assuring the person that together you can find out.

- ***Avoid making assumptions and jumping to conclusions prematurely.***

“The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbour comes and examines him” (Proverbs 18:17). In resolving conflict situations, avoid taking sides... remember there is always two sides to every story. In other counsel-giving situations, avoid giving directive advice until you have all the evidence possible.

- ***Refuse to listen to gossip, help aggrieved people face their aggressor.***

“He who...meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears” (Proverbs 26:17). We can offer people a shoulder to cry on but we must help, and urge people to face their aggressor and seek reconciliation. In this process we must refuse to fall for “second-hand” offence and encourage the person to follow the very clear three-stage process of reconciliation taught by Jesus (Matthew 18:15-18). Step one of Jesus explicit instructions is: **“if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault *between you and him alone*”** (v. 15). If reconciliation fails, then step two involves a mediator (v. 16). Only at this point should we offer to assist, but it requires that we have maintained our objectivity in the first place!

- ***Protect yourself by ministering in team.***

“Where there is no counsel, the people fail; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). Firstly, we want to avoid people becoming dependent on us alone. Team ministry goes along way in preventing this. Second, just as Jesus sent His disciples out in twos, we protect ourselves when we honour this principle. When it comes to counseling people of the opposite gender, we should ensure we are well protected.

- ***Never promise “absolute confidentiality”.***

“A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment” (Proverbs 18:1). While we must obviously keep in confidence what is shared with us, we must always reserve the right to seek further counsel should we need, or have, to. Some might feel that if we do not promise absolute confidentiality, then people will not be honest. This is not true. People will be honest if they trust you to be wise with what they share with you, and know that you too are accountable to others for counsel when you need it. People who will not be honest until absolute confidence is guaranteed can be encouraged, through your faithfulness, to trust your discretion in the matter...or else they may indeed be carrying a dark secret that will only trap you in guilt or worse, should you be bound by absolute confidentiality.

SECTION FIVE: Biblical Structure

INTRODUCTION>

Some people get nervous when we mention the words “structure” and “church” in the same breath. The same people however never complain about the skeletal structure that gives their physical body shape and definition. In the same way that God created our skeleton to prevent our body from becoming a heap of skin and muscle tissue on the floor, God created a skeletal structure of leadership to give his Body, the church, shape and definition.

Admittedly, the contemporary church is over structured and therefore cumbersome and often void of organic life. In the same way that our skeletal structure is unseen, yet vital; Biblical structure likewise, should be unseen, yet firm and sound. While structure will never create spiritual life, only the Father can do that, unbiblical structure does restrict spiritual life. ***Biblical structure facilitates the life the Father creates!***

(A) Defining the CHURCH.

Biblically the local church – believers in a specific location, joined by a common vision and covenant relationships, living out the responsibilities of Scripture to one another daily – is defined by two units.

- (1) The ***smallest unit*** of the local church is the ***Home Church***; a family of believers fathered by elders that finds its life through a home: “...greet the church that is in their house” (Romans 16:5; also see 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15 and Philemon 1:2). Building on a structure that views these small groups as just a Bible Study Group or as just a Cell Group misses the Lord’s full intent for them. A home church is overseen by an elder(s), and a support team of deacons.
- (2) The ***broadest unit*** of the local church is found in the ***Corporate Church***; a network of home churches in a specific local region: “the church of the Thessalonians” (1 Thessalonians 1:1; also see 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1 and 2 Thessalonians 1:1). Here Paul was writing to the numerous home churches that were within his apostolic responsibility in Thessalonica, and he referred to their corporate network of home churches as “**church**”. The corporate church is overseen by an apostolic team, supported by the eldership; the collective team of home church elders (1 Timothy 5:17, 18).

(B) The New Testament STRUCTURE of leadership.

- (1) The “**elders**” are the **first** or senior office of leadership in a church.
 - The elders are to **shepherd the flock entrusted to them** (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4); that is, they are to parent-lead a home church, a spiritual family of believers. Their gifts and grace, and the team of deacons that serve on team with them, determines how they lead and shepherd their flock.
 - The elders then serve as an “**eldership**” over the corporate church, the network of home churches, in support and submission to their apostolic oversight (1 Timothy 4:14). Again their gifting and grace will determine the role they play in the eldership.

- (2) The “**deacons**” are the **second** office of leadership in a church.
 - A deacon is so much more than an usher or some church steward as many traditional churches’ view them; a deacon is an office of leadership. The deacons **serve on team with an elder and support them in leading the home church**. In Acts 6:1-7, when the apostles’ were serving in a local eldership role, they delegated responsibility to the seven men who served them in a local deaconate role. The “**seven**” were more than just table waiters; their role involved handling interpersonal relations and conflict. It is from our faithful deacons that future elders will be raised.
 - Deacons also serve in various roles within the corporate church. Any ministry or administrative function that requires a level on integrity and thus, one of proven character according to 1 Timothy 3:8-13, should be entrusted to deacons.

(C) Biblical QUALIFICATIONS for deacons.

First Timothy 3:8-13 gives us the qualifications for deacons. Notice that they all revolve around character and a person's lifestyle around their home, family and standing in the community. ***Always remember: people learn a little by what we say, a little more by what we do – but they learn most of all by whom we are!***

- **“reverent”** (v 8); **“worthy of respect”** (NIV).
A deacon must be a godly example of Christ's likeness.
- **“not double-tongued”** (v. 8); **“sincere”** (NIV).
A deacon must be honest, transparent and void of double standards and personal agendas.
- **“not given to much wine”** (v. 8).
A deacon must not be addicted to alcohol, or to anything for that matter.
- **“not greedy for money”** (v. 8).
A deacon must be free from the grip of **“mammon”** (Matthew 6:24): demonstrating that liberty through the spiritual discipline of tithing and giving offerings.
- **“pure conscience”** (v. 9).
A deacon must have strong moral character: a person who ***lives by conviction rather than preference***.
- **“first be tested”** (v. 10).
A person must first demonstrate a servant heart: a willingness to **selflessly serve**. Then this initiative should be proven through the opportunity to be faithful in “few things” (Matthew 25:21) – lesser responsibilities. If the person is true, and has the character to match, they should be **released to serve as a deacon**. Note the implication in this verse: **“let them serve;”** in other words, release them rather than holding them back from service. We do not have to wait for some “job position” to open up before appointing a deacon: there is no restriction on how many deacons can serve in a Home Church.
- **“Likewise *their* wives”** (v. 11).
The word **“*their*”** was added at the privilege of the translators (hence, the reason it is written in italics in the NKJV), and the word for **“wives”** should be translated **“women”**. Therefore this verse is not speaking to the wives of the ‘men’ deacons but referring to ‘woman’ deacons. It is Biblical for a woman to serve as a deacon; Phoebe is an outstanding example (Romans 16:1).
- **“not slanderers”** (v. 11).
A deacon must not gossip; but be one who can control their tongue.

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- **“temperate”** (v. 11).
A deacon must live a disciplined life: spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. Spiritual disciplines include daily meditation in and regular study of the Word, daily prayer, regular fasting, dedicated fellowship and lifestyle of generous giving. Becoming a deacon will not help people become disciplined; these qualities must be in a person before they become a deacon!
- **“faithful”** (v. 11).
A deacon must be trustworthy and reliable.
- **“husband of one wife”** (v. 12).
This phrase confronted polygamy, a rampant first century practice, but the implication here is also monogamous fidelity: a faithful spouse. One cannot look after the Lord’s bride until one can look after his own. Does a person have to be married before he can be a deacon? Preferably, but this is more a guiding principle than a binding law.
- **“ruling their children”** (v. 12).
This emphasizes the importance of establishing one’s authority correctly in the home before being given responsibility over others. One cannot look after the Lord’s children until one can look after his own. Does a person have to have children before he can be a deacon? Preferably, but this is more a guiding principle than a binding law.
- **“good standing”** (v. 13).
A deacon must have a good testimony; people must speak well of them. This verse also indicates that faithfulness to God as a deacon positions one for growth and greater fruitfulness.

Again, notice the complete emphasis on character, and the absence of talent or gifting as a qualification for leadership. In other words, while talent and gifting will influence **how** we lead, **character qualifies to lead in the first place**. For example, one leader’s spiritual gifting will enable him to lead differently to another leader’s spiritual gifting. But both are leaders based on their character. Talent is a gift, but character is a choice: **a daily choice to behave consistently with what we believe**.

This course is part of the Equipping Process.

For other resources please contact us...

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