



LIFEBOOK

III

**A MANUAL FOR
PERSONAL AND
MINISTRY GROWTH**



**DALE EVRIST
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LIFE BOOK

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LIFE BOOK

Introduction

You have been called to impact your nation and the world for Christ!

This is the emphasis of this third volume in the *LifeBook* series. Building on the previous two manuals the lessons in *LifeBook 3* complete a full year of training in personal and ministry growth.

The twenty lessons in this third *LifeBook* manual represent a capstone of this series. These lessons emphasize your role in helping fulfill Christ's Great Commission by planting and nurturing healthy churches, sharpening your skills, and refining your strategies. All of this is to be in the context of your personal passion to see Jesus known, loved, worshipped, and obeyed by people from every tribe and nation.

As with the previous volumes, we offer these suggestions for receiving the most benefit from *LifeBook 3*:

- *Pray as you read.* Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to you and help you put into practice the truths you learn.
- *Study LifeBook 3 along with an open Bible.* Although many Bible verses are mentioned, in most instances only the verse references are given. This allows you to look up the passages in your Bible, whether you access God's word from a printed book or electronically. By looking up these verses personally, you will interact with Scripture in a more personal way and become more familiar with these powerful truths.
- *Study one session each week.* Reading the same lesson daily for a week will help you lodge the key truth and main ideas in your mind and your spirit.
- *Memorize the Bible passage at the end of each lesson.* One of your greatest tools as a minister is your knowledge of Scripture. The Holy Spirit will use the Word of God you have hidden in your heart.
- *Meditate on the key truth of each lesson.* These truths can change your life! Allow the Holy Spirit to minister to you by putting these life-giving concepts deep in your spirit.
- *Make a plan to act on what you learn.* The "Your Response" section at the end of each lesson is your opportunity to turn life-giving truth into life-changing actions! Determine to act on what you learn.

May your life reach its full potential for the glory of God, the exalting of his Son, and the healing of the nations.

Dale Evrist
David Shibley





Principles of Church Health

Read Matthew 16:18; 2 Peter 3:18

In creation, healthy things grow—they just do. If you plant a fruit tree in healthy soil, provide plenty of sun and rain, feed, trim and prune the tree appropriately, it will bear fruit. If a child receives nutritious food, plenty of rest, exercise, education, and discipline, he or she will have everything needed to grow into a beautiful, mature adult. Let us say it again—healthy things grow! (Read John 15:1-5.)

What is true of trees and children is true of churches, as well: healthy churches grow. That is why our focus should not be on church growth, but rather on church health. Christian A. Schwarz, in his book, *Natural Church Development*, says, “We should not attempt to manufacture church growth, but rather to release the organic potential which God has put into every church. It is our task to minimize the obstacles to growth—both inside and outside the church.” In this lesson, using the *Natural Church Development Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*, we will seek to more clearly understand how to lead healthy, reproducing churches that grow spiritually and numerically.

Quality 1: Empowering Leadership. The Bible reveals to us that Jesus gave gifts to men— and then made gifts of men to others. (Read Ephesians 4:7-12.) When Jesus “*gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers*” it was “*for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry.*” As church leaders we are called to use our gifts and authority to equip and release God’s people into fruitful ministry. Empowering leadership is leadership focused first on teaching, training and mobilizing the flock to be God’s main body of ministers in the earth. This job is priority one for us, and what an exciting job it is!

Quality 2: Gift-Oriented Ministry. Schwarz says, “The role of church leadership is to help its members identify their gifts and integrate them into ministries that match their gifts.” (Read Romans 12:3-5.) Think of it—God has people in our churches who have been uniquely gifted by Him for specific ministries in our churches.

That now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church. Ephesians 3:10





Our task is to help them identify their gifts and use them effectively. There are numbers of gifts tests that are available to help with this. But even if you don't have access to these tests, by observation and conversation, you can help people discover how God has gifted them. What a thrilling notion it is to think of having a church filled with people who have found their God-given fit and function in the Body of Christ.

Quality 3: Passionate Spirituality. Around the world most of the churches that are growing are filled with people with a passion to seek the face of God. God is looking for people who have a passion for the fullness of His spiritual life. (Read Ephesians 5:18-21.) He is not interested in what particular group they represent. Rather, He is interested in the condition of their hearts. God's question is, "Are you hungry for My presence in your midst?" If the answer to the question is, "Yes, absolutely!" then God, by His Word and Spirit, will meet them and transform them. We must help create a spiritual environment where our people can passionately pursue God's presence.

Quality 4: Functional Structures. This simply means that the way our church is organized is helpful in effectively meeting the needs of the people. (Read Acts 6:1-8.) Structures are made for people, not people for structures. A church that is poorly structured can be as hurtful to people as a church that is unstructured. What we are after is a church that is properly configured, according to the Spirit's leading, functioning in a way that serves people well. A church with biblically sound functional systems helps people connect more deeply to the life of the church and its mission.

Quality 5: Inspiring Worship Service. In healthy, growing churches the weekly gathering of believers is a time of inspiration, instruction, and impartation. In these gatherings, worship is vibrant, the Word is relevant, and the Spirit is evident. (Read 1 Corinthians 14.) Observations from churches around the world indicate that none of this is the result of production. There are village churches with rather primitive means that worship every week in an atmosphere charged with the life of God. And there are quite sophisticated churches with tremendous technological resources that are dry and devoid of the life of God. What we are after is dynamic times of genuine worship and devotion dedicated to knowing the God of the Bible, and allowing His Spirit to move and minister in grace and truth.

**On this rock I will build
My church, and the
gates of Hades shall
not prevail
against it.
Matthew 16:18**





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Quality 6: Holistic Small Groups. Schwarz says, “Growing churches have developed a system of small groups where individual Christians can find intimate community, practical help and intensive spiritual interaction.” Holistic small groups are not man’s idea, they are God’s idea. Families are the original holistic small groups. (Read Genesis 2:18-25.) God organized the newly delivered people of Israel according to holistic small groups. (Read Exodus 18:13-27.) The early church was structured around a network of holistic small groups. (Read Acts 2:42-47.) It is the best and most effective way to ensure that every individual receives the comprehensive ministry and care he or she needs. As these groups faithfully follow the pattern found in the New Testament, they become primary contexts for prayer, the study of the Word, and for making mature, reproducing disciples.

Quality 7: Need-Oriented Evangelism. Need-oriented evangelism is basically about meeting people at their point of immediate need, then taking them on to their point of ultimate need – to repent of their sins and place their faith in Christ. Sometimes people’s immediate needs are as basic as food and shelter. Others may need answers to questions they have about God and about the claims of Christ. Still others may be experiencing deep emotional stress or physical infirmity where faith and prayer are needed. (Read Luke 4:16-21.) The gift of the evangelist should be deployed to help model, motivate, and mobilize the ministry of evangelism. Around the world growing churches are marked by a commitment to show the love of Christ to those in need. As Great Commission believers we meet needs and share the gospel both locally and globally.

Quality 8: Loving Relationships. God has constructed His kingdom to function and thrive on the basis of loving relationships. (Read Matthew 22:37-40.) Not surprisingly, people are drawn to churches where they feel they are deeply loved by others. No one wants to feel alone. The church, of all places, should have the cure for the “disease” of loneliness, and we do – it is the love of Christ. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:14.) In most growing churches the people who attend feel deeply connected to others. It is not complicated to lead churches that grow. We simply need to make sure that everything we do is focused on creating a healthy, organic, kingdom environment that is rooted and grounded in love.



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Notes

MEMORIZE:

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2:42).

KEY TRUTH:

Our focus should not be church growth, but rather church health because healthy things grow.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- All of these eight characteristics are important to church health. How many of these do you see in your church? How many are lacking?
- Get with other leaders and seek the Lord on how to pursue greater health in your church.
- Put in writing steps you will take to cultivate greater church health.





Attributes of a True Shepherd

Read John 10:10-16; 1 Peter 5:2-4

To be good and godly leaders we need to cultivate the heart of a true shepherd. The Bible commands us to “*shepherd the flock of God*” willingly, eagerly, lovingly, sacrificially, and effectively. (Read 1 Peter 5:2-4.) Through the prophet Ezekiel God rebuked the shepherds of ancient Israel for failing to shepherd the people well. (Read Ezekiel 34:1-10.) It is extremely important to God that we as Christian leaders shepherd His flock with great attention and care.

In order to possess a true shepherd’s heart and minister to God’s people the way He desires, we need the heart of the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ. (Read Hebrews 13:20.) Below are some attributes of a good shepherd as described by Jesus, referring to Himself. (Read John 10:1-30.) Let’s look at these attributes as we learn to “lay our lives down” for those we serve.

1. The true shepherd calls the sheep by name. In the culture of Jesus’ time, shepherds gave names to the sheep of their flock. They lived with them night and day and became very familiar with them. The true shepherd knew and called them individually. But he didn’t just call them individually; he also cared for them individually. That is the way Jesus relates to us – He calls us by name and cares for our every need. In like manner, it is important that the people in our flocks are known personally and cared for individually.

In most churches it is not possible for the pastor to know everyone well and tend to their needs fully. But if you take the time to know and care for those closest to you, and teach them to do the same for those closest to them, you will develop a culture of value and care for each member of the flock. Having an effective small group ministry is extremely helpful in ensuring quality leadership and care for all. True shepherds work diligently to create a context where each member is known and cared for well. (Read 1 Corinthians 12:25-26.)

2. The true shepherd goes before the flock and leads them out. In the John 10 narrative Jesus contrasts His care for God’s people with

**The hireling flees
because he is a
hireling and does not
care about the sheep.
John 10:13**





the calloused leadership of the Pharisees. (Read John 10:1-16.) They were selfish hypocrites who brought only confusion and condemnation. Jesus contrasted their neglect and lack of righteous leadership with His example of clear direction and loving concern. A true shepherd, Jesus said, gives his sheep a strong and stable leader to follow, one who loves them and leads them well. Like Jesus, we must lead our people with strength and stability, casting clear vision and leading them to green pastures of spiritual nourishment. (Read Psalm 23:1-2.)

3. The true shepherd's voice is known and trusted.

When a shepherd continues to lead his flock to places of safety and satisfaction, they know they can trust him. So, when they hear his voice they follow. (Read John 10:3-5.) Our people will be much more inclined to follow us if we have a history of trustworthiness. We must keep good faith with them by being truthful and consistent. When we are faithful to our flock in word and deed we gain their confidence. We must avoid even the hint of exaggeration and empty promises not rooted in the Word and the Spirit. When we give our word to our people, we must follow through. Being a leader in people's lives is a sacred trust and not one to be taken lightly. (Read 1 Peter 5:2-3.) Sheep are easily unsettled – so are people. Let's lead them carefully and consistently.

4. The true shepherd lays down his life to protect the flock.

Jesus said that a hireling, someone who didn't own the sheep, would flee when the flock was in danger. (Read John 10:12-13.) But the shepherd who owned and loved the sheep would do anything to protect and preserve them, including fighting any thief or predator that would try to harm them. Of course, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ, our Great Shepherd, paid the ultimate price to save and deliver us from the enemies of sin and death. (Read John 10:11.) As shepherds, we must follow the example of our Lord and lay down our lives to protect our people from deception, danger, and destruction. We must serve them sacrificially, ministering the fullness of Christ's truth and grace to them. We must warn them of the dangers of heeding the voices of those who would use them and exploit them or lead them away from sound doctrine. Also, we must not let anything of a "hireling spirit" be present in us that would minister for our gain, rather than their good. (Read 1 Peter 5:2.) We are to model and minister a selfless servanthood that always puts the need of the flock before our own. (Read Mark 10:45.)

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you . . . and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

1 Peter 5:2, 4





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5. The true shepherd leads the flock into a life of abundance. In Psalm 23, King David speaks of the Lord as his shepherd, leading him into places of refreshment and fullness. (Read Psalm 23.) Jesus said that as the good shepherd He would lead His people into the refreshment and fullness of abundant life—a life of richness in Him. Referring to this aspect of pastoral leadership The Nelson Study Bible says, “The thieves take life; the shepherd gives it. Abundant life includes salvation, nourishment, healing and much more.”

This life that Jesus leads His people into is eternal life—not just a life of endless duration, but life with a heavenly quality. In his book *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, Phillip Keller, a pastor and also a literal shepherd, recalls his joy as he watched his flock: “Nothing pleased me more than to see my flock flourish and prosper. To see them content was wonderful.” That is how a true spiritual shepherd views the privilege / responsibility of serving God’s precious people. Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, came to provide for His people a life of abundant blessings. (Read John 10:10; 1 John 3:8.) It is our task as shepherds under the Great Shepherd to lead our people into a deep and abiding, living and loving union with Christ. We do this best by teaching and modeling God’s word, will and ways with precision and power. We must lead our flocks to the rich pastures and the refreshing rivers of the Word and the Spirit.

One day we will give an account to the Chief Shepherd for how we shepherded His flock. If we shepherd the flock well we are promised that we will receive rich rewards from our loving Lord Jesus. Nothing could possibly be better! (Read 1 Peter 5:4.)





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MEMORIZE:

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away (1 Peter 5:2-4).

KEY TRUTH:

If we are to be good and godly leaders we must cultivate the heart of a true shepherd as modeled by Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- Each day, ask Jesus to give you the heart of a true shepherd for your people.
- Gather with other pastors in your community to pray for one another as fellow shepherds of God's flock.
- Look at your people with fresh eyes asking the question, "How can I more fully lay down my life for those Jesus has called me to serve?"

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WEEK 35

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How to Plant a New Church

Read Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 3:20-21

Local churches are at the very center of God's activity in the world today. The church is the largest, most far-reaching network in the world. Jesus has promised that His true church – comprised of all people everywhere who are committed to Him – will be built by Him and will withstand all satanic attacks. (Read Matthew 16:18.)

If you want to do something that will last a year, plant flowers. If you want to do something that may outlast your lifetime, plant a tree. If you want to do something that will last forever, plant a church! Those who plant and nurture churches will have much lasting fruit to lay at the feet of Jesus. (Read John 15:8.)

Jesus Christ is the head of the church. (Read Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18). Through the church God reveals His great wisdom. (Read Ephesians 3:10). The church is referred to as the bride of Christ. As the church's loving husband, Jesus is cleansing His bride of all impurity in order that the church will be presented to Him in all her radiance and beauty. (Read Ephesians 5:25-27). The church is also referred to as the body of Christ. Through the church Jesus shows His love and power to the world. (Read Colossians 1:24).

The church around the world finds its expression in local bodies of believers in Christ. Notice that many of the Apostle Paul's letters were addressed to churches meeting in specific cities. (Read Romans 1:6; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 2:2; Galatians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1.)

Pastors are to protect and shepherd the church that has been committed to their care. (Read 1 Timothy 3:5). Pastors and elders who are faithful to their calling to be shepherds of God's flock can joyfully anticipate a crown of glory from the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ. (Read 1 Peter 5:1-4).

The first church in Jerusalem was an evangelistic church. In fact, people were coming to faith in Christ every day. (Read Acts 2:47). Those early believers took seriously our Lord's commission to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world. (Read Mark 16:15). They went out spreading the gospel and planting

**I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.
1 Corinthians 3:6**





To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus. Ephesians 3:21

new churches. (Read Acts 8:4; 3 John 7). Today we continue to obey Christ's commission by planting fellowships of Christ-followers among every people group on earth. (Read Matthew 28:19; Romans 7:9-10).

The following model was prayerfully designed by a team that is actively planting new churches in northern India. This is the area of the world where there remain many yet unreached people groups with very little gospel witness. The model presented in this lesson, prepared by church planters in India, is based on biblical principles and the instructions Jesus gave His disciples before they went to a new area. (Read Matthew 10:11-13; Luke 10:1-9.)

There are other models for starting churches that are equally good. Many churches are formed from evangelistic Bible studies. Other churches begin as home cell groups. You can choose from many excellent church planting strategies as you are led by the Holy Spirit. What is most important is that you commit that, by God's grace, you will become a church planter.

Here are the steps to planting a new church, as outlined by our brothers working among unreached peoples of northern India.

- 1. Receive a vision from God.** This is always the first step. Obviously you cannot conjure up a call from God. However, you can offer yourself to Him, inviting Him to fulfill His purposes through you. Often God will place a city or a people on your heart. Listen and respond to these promptings from the Holy Spirit. (Read Proverbs 29:18).
- 2. Train a team.** When Jesus sent out His disciples, He sent them in pairs. Team ministry from the very beginning of a church will help launch the church from a position of strength. (Read 2 Tim. 2:2.)
- 3. Identify the place.** The Lord will go before you to a city or people where you are received and welcomed. (Read Luke 10:8.)
- 4. Identify the "strong man" of resistance.** In every city or village, long-entrenched demonic powers seek to keep people in darkness. Ask the Holy Spirit for discernment to identify the prevailing spirit that has kept people in your targeted area from living under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Then stand in spiritual strength against this





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“strong man,” claiming victory for Jesus. “Behold I give you power over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means harm you. (Read Mark 3:27.)

5. Fast and prayer walk your targeted area. Go to the specific area where you intend to plant the new church. Literally walk through that area, asking the Holy Spirit for insight on how to minister effectively in that area. As you pray, declare by faith that the new church will be a beachhead for the expanding of the kingdom of God in that area. (Read Joshua 1:3.)

6. Look for receptive people and the “man of peace.” If God has burdened you for a specific place, He has already prepared people to receive you. Also, he is preparing a strategic person, a “man of peace,” to help you in very significant ways. Stay in the house of the man of peace. Begin the church either in his house or in the house of the receptive people. (Read Matthew 10:11-13; Luke 10:5-9).

7. Share the gospel and bring people to faith in Christ. Every church should be an evangelistic church from its beginning. Reaching people with the gospel should be part of the spiritual DNA of the new church. Your fervency in evangelism will also serve as a model for new believers whom you will train to bring others to Christ.

8. Disciple a core group. Teach the receptive people to win their families and friends to Christ. (Read Matthew 4:19.) A special event (such as an evangelistic meeting or an evangelistic Bible study in the home of the man of peace) will provide an opportunity for hospitality and an invitation to friends. Lay hands on the initial group you are training and commission them to win their families and friends to Christ. (Read 2 Timothy 1:6.)

9. Launch the new church on an announced date. At this point, unless the Holy Spirit directs you otherwise, the only advertising you will need is word of mouth. Those you have trained in your core group now go to their respective spheres of influence and invite their families, friends and associates to the first service of the new church.

10. Recognize and appoint spiritual leaders. There will be those from the core group you have trained who will begin to emerge as spiritual leaders. Recognize them, teach them the biblical requirements for church leadership, and appoint them to tasks. Note that Paul entrusted Titus with the task not just to plant churches but to raise up leaders in every town where a church had been planted. (Read Titus 1:5-9.)

11. Do it all again with a new vision from God. There are those reading this lesson who will not only plant churches, they will be used of God to birth entire church planting movements! If something stirred inside of you as you read the previous sentence, embrace the Spirit's work in your life to equip you to launch many new churches for the glory of God.





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Notes

MEMORIZE:

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

KEY TRUTH:

The church is the center of God’s activity in the earth. Planting new churches is a vital component of fulfilling the Great Commission.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- Ask God to give you a vision for a specific region where He wants to extend His glory by raising up a new church.
- Tell Him in advance that you will obey His call to plant a new church.
- When you receive God’s call to plant a new church, begin immediately to take the appropriate steps toward launching the new church.

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WEEK 36

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Making Disciples

Read Matthew 28:19; John 8:31; 13:35; 15:8

A Christian disciple loves Jesus, learns His word, will, and ways, and lives to serve Him, always with the view of bringing Him honor and praise. Jesus calls His followers to become mature disciples and to make mature disciples of others. In order to do this we must understand what biblical discipleship is, and how to help those we serve to live as true disciples.

In the resource *Disciple's Handbook*, biblical discipleship is described as being “motivated by love for Christ, rooted in obedient faith, guided by the Word of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.” Jesus clearly commands His followers to make disciples in the same way He did. (Read Matthew 28:18-20.) This lesson will help us know how to shape faithful believers in Christ to become mature, fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ.

- 1. Jesus specifically called His disciples to follow Him.** In Jesus' time, potential disciples had to ask for permission to follow a certain rabbi. Following a rabbi, listening to his teaching and becoming like him, was usually reserved for the well-educated and the well-off. But Jesus did something quite unusual. He went to His potential disciples and called them to follow Him. (Read Matthew 4:18-22.) He chose ordinary men and made them into extraordinary men. We need to ask the Lord to show us those He is calling us to make into mature, highly effective disciples and “call them out.” We mustn't wait for them to come to us. We must go to them and call them into a dynamic journey of spiritual transformation. They will feel deeply valued, and will be honored to come under our leadership.
- 2. Jesus called His disciples to be with Him.** (Read Mark 3:14.) Jesus knew that in order to teach, train, and transform these men to become effective ministers and men of godly character, He would need to spend a great deal of time with them. Rather than inviting them to attend a class once a week, He invited them to live the life of God's Kingdom with Him, day-by-day. We must

**Go therefore and
make disciples of all
the nations.
Matthew 28:19**





invite people into a “life-to-life” discipleship relationship. When we welcome those we are discipling into our day-to-day lives, we greatly increase the opportunities for sharing life and showing how it is to be lived in Christ.

**By this all will know
that you are My
disciples, if you have
love for one another.
John 13:35**

3. Jesus thoroughly taught His disciples God’s Word. From the beginning of Jesus’ discipling relationship with His followers, He taught them the truths of God’s Word. Jesus was the Word made flesh. (Read John 1:1.) They listened to Jesus teach them and they listened as He preached and taught others. (Read Matthew 5:1-2.) As a result they eventually knew the Word extremely well. (Read Luke 24:44-45.) A large part of making disciples is teaching them the Scriptures. (Read John 8:31.) Use the best discipleship and Bible study materials you have access to, in order to help your student-disciples grow richly in understanding and applying the Word of God.

4. Jesus meticulously modeled Spirit-empowered ministry for His disciples. Jesus didn’t just teach His disciples, He trained them. He showed them how to minister the life and power of the Kingdom of God. (Read Matthew 9:1-38.) Our teaching must not be merely propositional truth. We must take our disciples along and show them how to live and minister by the Holy Spirit’s dynamic direction. This must include every facet of life. It is as important for them to observe us walking in a spirit of humility, forgiveness, sacrifice, and servanthood as it is for them to see us preach and pray in power. We are not discipling people to ourselves, but to Christ. (Read 1 Corinthians 2:2-5.)

5. Jesus intentionally released His disciples into Spirit-empowered ministry. When Jesus felt that He had sufficiently modeled Kingdom ministry for His disciples He sent them out, releasing them to practice what He had modeled for them. (Read Luke 9:1-6.) After we have clearly shown those we are discipling what we do and why we do it, we then release them to minister, as well. There is no substitute for living out the very things that have been modeled for them. Their new ministries may raise as many questions as it answers. Then they will return to us to help answer their questions and to help them grow further.

6. Jesus positively affirmed and encouraged His disciples. Jesus knew that His disciples needed positive feedback to strengthen their





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confidence in the ministry to which Christ had called them. When Peter accurately identified Jesus as the Christ, the Lord told him that he had heard a revelation from heaven. He also told him that he would be used significantly in the building of Christ's church, as he used the "*keys of the kingdom of heaven*," given to him by Jesus Himself. (Read Matthew 16:16-19.) At the end of His earthly ministry Jesus exhorted His disciples that they would do "greater things" after His departure and the coming of the Holy Spirit. (Read John 14:12-14.) Jesus' model must be what we follow. We must identify positive growth and development in those we are investing in and make mention of it to them with enthusiastic encouragement.

7. Jesus directly confronted and corrected His disciples. As much as Jesus wanted to encourage His disciples, there also were times when He had to correct them. He did it because He loved them and wanted to see them know the truth and grow into maturity. (Read Mark 10:35-45.) We must love those we disciple enough to gently but forthrightly correct those attitudes and behaviors in their lives not consistent with Kingdom values.

8. Jesus passionately loved and served His disciples. Jesus was deeply devoted to those He poured His life into. (Read John 13:1-34.) He laid His life down for them in loving service. This, more than any other reason, was why the disciples followed Him. The same will be true for us. If we will love those we disciple and serve them sacrificially, they will be joined to us "at the heart." Remember, everything in the Kingdom functions on the basis of loving, committed relationships. (Read Matthew 22:36-40.)

9. Jesus confidently commissioned His disciples. Once Jesus had thoroughly disciplined His followers He then commissioned them to advance His Kingdom into the peoples' hearts, calmly and confidently. (Read Acts 1:8.) Jesus had trained them well. Everything that needed to be said had been said. All that needed to be done had been done. They were ready. Of course, they needed the moment-by-moment ministry of the Holy Spirit but they were ready to go and minister as Jesus had taught them. (Read John 14:18.)

If we have done well in making disciples we should have this same confidence. We need to commission those we have disciplined to go and make disciples of others. Also, we need to commission them to declare and demonstrate the gospel of the Kingdom wherever they go. (Read Acts 14:21-23.)

10. Jesus constantly strengthened His disciples. When Jesus ascended to heaven and took His place at the right hand of the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit from the Father to empower and guide His disciples. (Read John 15:26-27.) Jesus continued to work with them, never leaving or abandoning them. (Read Mark 16:19-20.) We must continue to make ourselves available to those we have disciplined. They will benefit from our ongoing encouragement and prayer. Although they have grown into maturity there will be times when they need counsel and coaching.

One of the great joys of making disciples is the privilege of giving input to adult sons and daughters in the Lord. As they begin to disciple a new generation, fruitfulness for Christ and His Kingdom becomes exponential. (Read John 15:8; 2 Timothy 2:2.)





LIFE BOOK

Notes

MEMORIZE:

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:35).

KEY TRUTH:

Jesus clearly commanded His followers to make others His followers.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- Seek God regarding individuals that He would have you “call out” to join you in a discipleship relationship.
- Challenge your leaders to do likewise, identifying those that they are to help bring to maturity in Christ.
- Take someone you are discipling with you whenever you minister to someone else. This is an excellent opportunity both to model ministry and to practice “life-to-life” discipleship.





WEEK 37

LIFE BOOK

Team Ministry

Read Romans 12:3-6; Ephesians 4:11-13

When Jesus ascended to heaven He gave gifts *to* men and then made gifts *of* men to equip all believers in Christ for the work of ministry. He gifted and called these individuals to serve together as a team; to organize and mobilize believers according to their God-given fit and function in the body of Christ. (Read Mark 6:7; Ephesians 4:7-16.)

A team may be defined as “a number of people organized to function cooperatively as a group.” Pastor Wayne Cordeiro in his book *Doing Church* as a Team states, “Building teams does not begin with a certain kind of technique. It begins with a certain kind of heart. This is an unselfish, authentic heart, desiring only God’s best. It constantly asks the question, ‘How can I include others?’ It anticipates the joy of sharing experiences, struggles and victories. It realizes that like the body, we work best in teams. That’s the way God designed us to function best.” In this lesson we will discover how to work together in authentic team ministry by fully employing the ministry offices Jesus has appointed in His church. These office gifts are sometimes referred to as the “five-fold ministry.” (Read Ephesians 4:11.)

1. Work together as an apostolic team. While some are hesitant to confer the title of “apostle” on anyone today, we all agree that Christ continues to gift certain leaders to powerfully proclaim the gospel and initiate new works. Today an apostolic gifting operates when someone is sent to proclaim God’s message of repentance and redemption and to establish and reproduce worshipping communities of Christian disciples. Jesus commissioned His apostles to do this very thing. (Read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20.) The Apostle Paul was called by Jesus to be “*an apostle to the Gentiles*” by spreading the gospel and planting churches among the Gentiles. (Read Romans 11:13.) In a ministry team context, it is the task of an apostolic leader to keep the team thinking “apostolically”—that is, to focus on multiplying ministers and ministries in a sustainable manner.

An apostolic team works together to

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them.

Romans 12:6





send and to go, to multiply and establish new outreaches. If there is not an apostolic leader in your ministry team, establish a trusted relationship with someone gifted in this way—someone who will come on a regular basis and keep your team thinking and working towards healthy, organic growth. You will discover that the ministry of such an apostolic leader will motivate your team to think, pray and serve locally and globally.

2. Work together as a prophetic team. A prophet is a spiritually mature spokesperson for the Lord. This is someone gifted to declare the prophetic heart of God to the church. New Testament prophets exhort, edify, and encourage. Also, they help release a prophetic grace throughout the church. In doing so, the revelation of what God is doing in the church and the world becomes increasingly clear. (Read Romans 12:6.)

All of Christ's followers are called to be "prophetic people." (Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-3.) Every believer should learn to hear the voice of the Lord clearly and respond. (Read Colossians 1:9.) A prophetically gifted person is used by Christ to help ministry teams churches seek Him for revelation and direction. If you have people in your midst who are true prophetic ministers, receive from the grace that is on their lives.

3. Work together as an evangelistic team. An evangelist is one who is gifted and called by Jesus to model, motivate, and mobilize evangelism – the sharing of God's good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. If we are going to have ministry teams that are leading many lost people to Christ, we need the ministry of those anointed as evangelists. (Read Acts 8:4-13; 2 Timothy 4:5.) Regrettably this gift is often neglected in the church. This leads to a lack of evangelistic fervor and thus a lack of lost people coming to Christ. Every believer in Christ is called to share with others the very same gospel that led him to salvation. A few possess the *gifting* of an evangelist but we all have the *privilege* of proclaiming the gospel. Christ has called us to be part of evangelistic teams that impact our communities and nations with the transforming power of the gospel.

4. Work together as a pastoral team. A pastor is a shepherd/overseer called to provide protection and care for the flock of God under his care. Among those with a pastoral gifting there are different

**But you be watchful
in all things, endure
afflictions, do
the work of an
evangelist, fulfill
your ministry.
2 Timothy 4:5**





LIFE BOOK

levels of understanding and experience in leading and feeding the flock of God. (Read 1 Peter 5:1-4.) As we serve one another in humility and honor, we become stronger and more effective in providing loving and nourishing pastoral care for the flock we serve. Jesus calls us to learn more and more about what it means to be a “good shepherd,” just as He was. He is our example. (Read John 10:1-16.) As shepherds’ hearts are developed in the lives of congregational leaders everyone will be blessed and benefited. The smile of Jesus will rest on a pastoral team that prays and confers regularly regarding how they more effectively care for God’s flock.

5. Work together as a teaching team. A teacher is someone called by God to make clear the meaning and application of the Scriptures. While it is true that in most cases pastors are called also to teach, it is helpful to acknowledge that there are certain people who are particularly gifted as teachers of God’s Word. (Read Acts 18:24.) These teachers should be given freedom to help establish sound doctrine and strong preaching and teaching. They should be leading teaching teams who are studying and growing together in understanding of biblical truth. This is what the apostles did in the Early Church. They met together to study and prepare teachings. Then they appointed those who taught others, from house to house, to understand sound doctrine and live it out. (Read Acts 2:42; 2 Timothy 2:2.) When church leaders function together as a teaching team they work in a continuity that strongly establishes truth in people’s hearts.

6. Work together as a spiritually gifted team. In addition to the five-fold ministry offices Jesus appointed to the church, and the gifts of the Spirit distributed as He sees fit, each believer has spiritual gifts that empower him or her for a unique place of fruitful service. (Read Romans 12:3-6; Ephesians 4:15-16.) It is the task of all Christian leaders to help those they serve discover their gifts and be deployed in using them for the glory of God and good of humanity. Remember, no one of us is as gifted as all of us together. Let’s fully function in our unique gifting – church-wide – together for Christ’s glory!





WEEK 38

LIFE BOOK

Heirs Together

Read Ephesians 5:22-29; 1 Peter 3:7

God has called you and your spouse to be dynamic life-partners who serve the Lord Jesus Christ together. He wants your life together to be filled with the blessings of being “*heirs together of the grace of life.*” (Read 1 Peter 3:7-9.) As “*heirs together*” you receive equally all the good things that flow from God’s grace. The rich heritage in Christ’s redemptive work opens the door to the abundant life God intends for you to enjoy together. (Read John 10:10; Proverbs 5:18.) The intent of this lesson is to remind you of the incredible gift God has given of Christian marriage and the privilege of ministry together as a couple under the lordship of Christ.

Heirs Together in Love. Every Christian husband is instructed to love his wife deeply, wholly and sacrificially. (Read Ephesians 5:25-29.) Every Christian wife is instructed to love her husband consistently, respectfully and wholeheartedly. (Read Titus 2:4-5.) As equal recipients of the love of God in Christ Jesus, we are to share that love with our spouse in marriage. What a great privilege we have to give and receive the nourishment of life-giving love. There are very few things more discouraging than a loveless marriage. Conversely, there are very few things more satisfying than a love-filled marriage. Jesus commanded His disciples to love one another as He had loved them. (Read John 13:34-35.) That command applies to all of us who are married, as well. When we obey this command we establish an environment where we are nourished and cherished in a most marvelous way.

Heirs Together in Honor. Paul and Peter tell us that husbands and wives are to honor and respect one another. (Read Ephesians 5:22-29; 1 Peter 3:1-7.) To honor someone means you ascribe great worth and value to that person. You treasure him and show him how much you appreciate the gift of God he is to you. Every married couple has a wonderful opportunity to be ministers of honor to one another. Couples in ministry leadership have the ability to strengthen each other and help each other feel more confident in his or her calling.

**What God has joined together, let not man separate.
Matthew 19:6**





It is very important that we speak words of honor and respect to each other often. It will build up our partner, fortifying their commitment to glorify God with the gifts He has given them. As we honor and respect each other, we honor God who created us as vessels of honor in Christ. (Read Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 4:4.)

Heirs Together in the Grace of Life. Peter tells us that husbands and wives are equal recipients of the joy, favor and fullness of the life of God in Christ Jesus. (1 Peter 3:1-7.) Our marriages should reflect this blessed reality. Under Christ's lordship our marriages can be filled with the joy, favor and fullness of the Spirit. Our homes can be deeply spiritual places where the life of Christ abounds. We can minister the grace of God's life to our mate every day. Pray with and for each other every day. Allow the Holy Spirit to use us be an affirming prophetic voice to your spouse. As we speak words of edification, exhortation, and comfort to our spouse we become a voice of affirmation and encouragement to them. (Read 1 Corinthians 14:3.) We are channels of the very life of God to all who hear us. Let that life flow begin with the precious one to whom we are married.

Heirs Together in Blessing. Peter also says it is the privilege of all believers, including married couples, to inherit a blessing. (Read 1 Peter 3:8-9.) To bless means to "mark out for favor, to give generously, or to make happy." This is how God blesses us and this is how we are to bless each other. As husbands and wives we are to focus our attention on blessing one another. We are to bless with our words and with our actions. Show favor to your spouse by being generous and seeking to bring happiness to your spouse. Be affectionate with each other. Give gifts to each other regularly. These do not need to cost a lot of money; the simple act of giving and receiving sets God's ordained cycle of blessing in motion. Let us speak words of blessing in the name of Jesus. He will honor this and enrich our marriages because we are seeking to bless our partner in love and life.

Heirs Together in Intimacy. God's plan from the beginning was for a man and woman in marriage to live in genuine intimacy. (Read Genesis 2:23-25.) According to the apostle Paul the love, honor, and intimacy of a married couple is a picture of the love and unbroken intimacy of Christ and the church. (Read Ephesians 5:30-32.) Intimacy with your spouse should be on every level: physical, emotional, and spiri-

Husbands, . . . dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.
1 Peter 3:7





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tual. There should be spiritual intimacy, genuinely seeking God's face together in prayer and openly sharing the Word of God with one other. There should be emotional intimacy, communicating with one another honestly, sensitively, and lovingly. There should be physical intimacy, fulfilling God's plan for married couples to enjoy sexual fulfillment within the safe and sanctified bonds of Christian marriage. If our marriages are to communicate the love of Christ and His church (His bride) to the world, we must live in deep and abiding intimacy. This will bring tremendous joy to us, security to our children, and blessing to others.

Heirs Together in Fruitfulness. The creation mandate God gave Adam and Eve was to “be fruitful and multiply.” (Read Genesis 1:26-28.) God intends for married couples to experience a life together of rich fruitfulness. This, of course, includes the blessing of children that the union produces. (Read Psalm 127:3-5.) But it also includes the fruit of a “spiritual union.” We are to be a ministry team, using the influence of a life partnership as a tool of effective ministry. As we live in love and unity we will be used by God as models to initiate love and unity in the lives of others. Jesus has called us individually and together to “go and bear fruit.” His promise to us is that the fruit we bear together will last for eternity. (Read John 15:16-17.)

Heirs Together in Fulfillment. God intends for our marriages to be joyful and fulfilling—spiritually, emotionally and physically. God has given us marriage as a gift of His grace in this life. We must steward this precious relationship well, so we can receive and enjoy the rich fulfillment of intimate friendship and partnership God intends. Commit together that you will celebrate the mate God has given you every day. Then commit to developing a dynamic ministry partnership with your spouse. Let God use you together as a channel of His love and power. (Read Ecclesiastes 4:9.) Many ministry couples have forfeited the blessing of the Lord in marriages. May that never be said of you.





WEEK 39

LIFE BOOK

Studying and Preaching God's Word

**Read Joshua 1:8; Isaiah 40:8;
Jeremiah 23:29; 2 Timothy 3:16**

What is the best-selling book by far year after year? What book has been translated into more languages than any other book? What book has life-transforming power? The answer, of course, is the Bible. The Bible contains 66 books written by over 40 authors over a span of about 1500 years.

The Bible is the very Word of God. It is inspired by Him and breathed out by Him. (Read 2 Timothy 3:16.) The Scriptures reveal a God of infinite love who stretches His merciful hand toward a rebellious creation that is racing toward destruction. God intervenes by the offering of His Son and thus opens the door for alienated humanity to be reconciled to Him. The scarlet thread of redemption is woven throughout the Bible as its master theme. The Bible contains the greatest of all love stories.

It is through God's written Word that we are introduced to the living Word, Jesus Christ. The Bible is designed by God to bring us to Him. The Bible is also the deposit of the Savior's words and teachings. Paul commends Timothy *"that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"* (2 Tim. 3:15).

The Bible provides the moral and ethical base by which people and nations can prosper and live in peace. Loren Cunningham, founder of Youth With A Mission, explains: "Throughout history, the record is clear: when a critical mass of people have the Bible and apply what it teaches in their lives, a nation is transformed." Nothing is more enriching to our lives than knowledge of God and His Word.

Studying God's Word

Daily reading, studying, and meditating on Scripture should be the trademark of every Christian leader. Let God speak to you through His Word. Then, when you preach, tell the people what He said. (Read 2 Timothy 2:15.) Here are some suggestions for gaining a fuller understanding of the greatest book ever written.

**"Is not My word
like a fire?" says
the Lord, "And like a
hammer that breaks
the rock in pieces?"
Jeremiah 23:29**





1. Find your own system of Bible study. You can read through the Bible every year by reading three chapters daily and five chapters on Sundays. Another way to study the Bible is by giving attention to a different Book of the Bible each week. Still another way to study the Bible is to study one passage of Scripture at a time. The Navigators have encouraged diligent study of God's Word since that ministry was birthed in the 1940s. They suggest the "SPECK" method of studying a passage of Scripture. In each passage of Scripture look for:

Sins to avoid
Promises to claim
Examples to follow
Commands to obey
Knowledge of God

It is wise, whatever your personal Bible study method, to always be reading the words of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. They are "*spirit and life*." (Read John 6:33.) His gracious words are to " *dwell richly in us.*" (Read Colossians 3:16.)

2. Read God's Word reverently. Some people find it helpful to read the Bible in a posture of prayer, on their knees. Ask God for revelation and direction. (Read Psalm 119:18.) We should love God's Word because it is an extension of His heart and His nature. The philosopher, Blaise Pascal, observed, "Human knowledge must be understood to be loved, but divine knowledge must be loved to be understood."

3. Listen for the *rhema* directive from the Holy Spirit. *Rhema* is the Greek word that means an "utterance." When the Holy Spirit brings a verse or passage to our attention with application to a current situation or need for direction, this is a *rhema* word from the Lord. These are those wonderful times when God's Spirit takes the *logos* (God's written word) and makes it personal in revelation or application. In his book, *The Secret of Guidance*, F.B. Meyer wrote, "The Word is a wire along which the voice of God will certainly come to you if the heart is hushed and the attention fixed."

4. Use all available translations. Some Bible scholars can read the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in the original Greek. For most of us, reading the Bible in more than one translation will provide a clearer understanding of what the biblical writers were actually saying.

**Preach the word!
Be ready in season
and out of season.
Convince, rebuke,
exhort, with all
longsuffering
and teaching.
2 Timothy 4:2**





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5. Memorize Scripture. Quoting Scripture gives you great authority in preaching. As ministers of the New Covenant, we are not authorized simply to convey our opinions; we are only authorized to proclaim God's Word. (Read Psalm 119:11.)

6. Obedience to God's Word fills your life with blessings and success. When we *speak* God's Word, *meditate* on God's Word, then *obey* God's Word He promises to prosper us and grant us success. (Read Joshua 1:8.)

Preaching God's Word

The great preacher of the nineteenth century, Charles Spurgeon, was asked if he defended the Bible. "Defend the Bible?" he laughed. "That would be like defending a lion. I just let it loose and it defends itself." We do not come to the knowledge that the Bible is true merely by human reasoning. Rather, if we commit to obey Christ, He will reveal to us the reliability of His Word. (Read John 7:17.)

For most pastors, the centerpiece of ministry is preaching. Whenever you proclaim the truth you should expect the powerful Word of God to do its work. First, God speaks to you through your prayerful reading of His Word. Then, God speaks through you. Let God's Word fill your mind and heart throughout the week. Then preach out of overflow.

Pastors need to engrain the example stories of the Old Testament, the simple mandates of the Gospels, and the local church standards of the Epistles into their congregations. You are responsible as a pastor to deliver to your people "*the whole counsel of God.*" (Read Acts 20:27.) Here are some suggestions for making your preaching more effective.

1. Pray before you preach. Be sure there is no unconfessed sin in our life. (Read 1 John 1:9.) Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and anoint the preaching of God's Word. (Read Ephesians 5:18.) Before a major preaching assignment Jesus spent an extended time in prayer. We should follow our Lord's example. (Read Mark 1:35-38.)

2. Preach the word of the Lord to the people. First, let God speak to you through your prayerful reading of His Word throughout the week. Then, let God speak through you. Tell the people what God has told you.

3. Have confidence in the power of preaching God's Word. God uses what some unbelievers consider "*the foolishness of preaching*" to transform lives. (Read 1 Corinthians 1:21.) The Holy Spirit uses the word preached to bring conviction, comfort, and healing. (Read Isaiah 55:11; Hebrews 4:12.) In his book, *Jesus, Author of Our Faith*, A.W. Tozer wrote, "The Word of God is the antibiotic that seeks out and destroys the viruses that would plague the life of the church."

4. Be faithful to the text. God has not authorized you to "*handle the word of God deceitfully.*" (Read 2 Corinthians 4:2.) Do not preach your own opinions and slap a Bible verse on top of your ideas. Rather, unfold the passages of Scripture the Holy Spirit has directed you to share. (Read 2 Timothy 4:1-2.)





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5. Be sure the message has a clear focus. Make clear the primary truth of the passage. (Read 1 Corinthians 14:8.) Someone has suggested that a good method for preaching is “explanation, illustration, application.” Using other Bible stories is an excellent way to illustrate truth. These stories provide knowledge of the Bible and they are relevant and understandable in any culture.

6. Give practical steps of action that come out of the passage. Always preach with the view of changing minds, hearts and actions. The great fourth century preacher, Chrysostom, said, “The mark of a great preacher is not that people go away saying, ‘What a great preacher,’ but rather they say, ‘I will do something.’”

7. Pray after you preach, committing the ministry of the Word to God. Believe that the good seed of God’s Word will produce much fruit. (Isaiah 55:11; Luke 8:11, 15; 1 Peter 1:23.)

No matter how difficult your circumstances of ministry may be, keep preaching God’s Word. The Word of God will break the hardest rock. (Read Jeremiah 23:29.)

Another major religion contends that to truly understand the book they consider sacred you must read it in the original language in which it was written. But as Christians we say, “Translate the Bible into every language on Earth and you lose nothing!” This is the power of the true Word of God.





LIFE BOOK

Notes

Lined area for notes.

MEMORIZE:

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8).

KEY TRUTH:

“Let the Bible fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.” (Henrietta Mears)

YOUR RESPONSE:

- Commit to a systematic, daily study of the Bible, starting today.
- Commit to faithfully proclaim God’s Word with the view to bringing your hearers to maturity in Christ. (Read Colossians 1:27-28.)





LIFE BOOK

Sharing the Gospel

WEEK 40

Read Matthew 4:19; John 4:35; Romans 1:16; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Revelation 22:17

Just before Jesus ascended back to heaven He commissioned His followers to proclaim the Good News about Him to every person on earth. (Read Mark 16:15.) It is the great blessing and grand responsibility of every born-again follower of Christ to share this Good News of the saving power of Jesus with others. Jesus said that those who follow Him will fish for people. (Read Matthew 4:19.)

Bible teacher Dawson Trotman said, “The difference between catching men and catching fish is that you catch fish that are alive and they die. You catch men who are dead and bring them to life.” (Read Ephesians 2:1.) In the training resource, *Share Jesus Without Fear* by William Fay and Linda Shepherd Evans, we find these encouraging words: “Do you want to share Jesus without fear? Perhaps the thought of sharing your faith in Jesus Christ causes feelings of fear and guilt in your heart. We need look no further than the first book of the New Testament to see that we are commanded to share God’s good news. (Read Matthew 28:19-20.) However, God did not intend for this command to give you feelings of inadequacy. Instead, this command illustrates God’s desire to include us in His wonderful plan to redeem mankind.”

The plan of salvation is a simple but profoundly powerful message of love and liberation. It can be clearly understood by anyone, and is to be clearly shared with everyone. This lesson deals with how you can effectively share the gospel with others and train the people you lead to share their faith in Christ with those around them.

1. Seek the Lord of the harvest. Remember, the harvest of spiritually lost men and women coming to faith in Christ belongs to God. (Read Matthew 9:37-38.) Ask God to open to you opportunities to share the gospel with others. Look for “divine appointments” that God will arrange for you to connect with people who need Jesus. Pray for those in your relational spheres. God wants to use you to reach friends and family members who do not yet know Christ. Pray that their eyes would be open to see the truth of the claims of Christ. (Read 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.) Ask the Holy Spirit to convict the people you

**Then He said to them, “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.”
Matthew 4:19**





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share with of their need of Christ. (Read John 16:7-11.) Ask the Holy Spirit to draw people to the Father by His truth and love. (Read John 6:44-45.) God will answer your prayer because it is His will for people everywhere to receive His love and forgiveness through faith in Christ. (Read 1 Timothy 2:4.)

2. Start the conversation: Hear his story, tell God's story, tell your story. In an evangelism resource he created called *The God Test*, evangelist Rice Brooks emphasizes the importance of starting a meaningful conversation about faith in Christ. People tend to love to talk about themselves and the things they believe in. It's important to engage them and find out who they are and what they believe. Ask the person to tell you about himself, his background, his family, and his life experiences. Ask him what he believes about God, heaven, and Jesus. If he believes in heaven and believes he is going there, ask him why. Then ask him if he would like to know what the Bible says about these things. If he replies affirmatively, tell him God's story.

God created the universe and everything in it—the plants and animals and, finally, human beings. (Read Genesis 1:1, 26-28; 2:7.) When God created Adam and Eve, the world was without sin. Adam and Eve enjoyed intimacy with God and each other. God created mankind to enjoy an intimate, loving relationship with Him, with each other, and with all of creation. But Adam decided to go his own way and rebel against God (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6-7.) Through Adam and Eve's rebellion, sin entered the world. Now mankind was spiritually separated from God. (Read Romans 5:12.) But that was not even remotely the end of the story, for God had an amazing plan to bring fallen mankind back to Himself. (Read Luke 1:77-79; John 3:16.)

There are three great events in the history of mankind: Creation, The Fall and Redemption. Redemption, through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, is where hope for all mankind is found. (Read Colossians 1:13-14.) What was lost by the "first Adam" was regained by the "last Adam," Jesus Christ—by His death, burial and resurrection. (Read 1 Corinthians 15:45-49.) God so loved the world that He sent His Son, Jesus, to be the sacrifice for our sins. Jesus paid our penalty in full when He died on the cross. (Read John 3:13-18.) By repenting of our own sin and rebellion against God, believing in Christ's sacrifice and confessing Him as Lord, we can be saved. (Read John 1:12; Romans 10:9.) This is God's story!

Now, tell your story! As a believer, you have a testimony of God's saving grace and goodness in your life. When you tell this story, it gives evidence for the truth of His great love and power. Talk about what great things God has done for you, is doing for you and what you are believing He will do in the future. (Read Psalm 126:3.) When you share God's story and your story, you can trust the Holy Spirit to convict and draw people to God. (Read John 16:-8.) Salvation is God's work. Your work is to share the gospel. In fact, delivering the gospel should always be our first priority. (Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.)

3. Share the Scriptures. God's Word will speak for itself, if you will let it. Why not simply open the Bible and have the person you are sharing with read out loud what the Scripture says? If for some reason it doesn't seem helpful to have them read, you can read the Scriptures out loud. For this to work, you will need a Bible and a few salvation passages to read.

Many effective witnesses for Christ share "the Roman road" for salvation: (Read





LIFE BOOK

Romans 3:23, 5:8; 6:23; 10:9-10, 13.) Other salvation passages include the following verses: (Read John 1:12; 3:3, 16; 14:6; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Revelation 3:20.) While there are many other scriptures you can use, these will be very helpful.

4. Seal the Process. If the person you are sharing your faith with is not ready to receive Christ, don't be discouraged. You have done what God called you to do. An excellent definition of evangelism is provided by Roy Fish, long-time professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary: "Evangelism is the compassionate sharing of the Good News of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit with all people for the purpose of guiding them to faith in Christ as Lord and Savior that they, in turn, might share Him with others."

If the person is ready to receive Christ, lead him in a heartfelt prayer where they turn from their sins and receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. A simple presentation of the Gospel is provided in Week 1 of the LifeBook.

When you lead someone to Christ, help him begin a life of prayer, Bible reading and fellowship with God's people in the fellowship of a Bible-believing church. (See Week 3, First Steps.)

As a pastor, it is important for you to be evangelistic in your preaching, clear in your presentation of the gospel, and clear in calling people to faith in Christ. There can be no greater joy than leading someone to Christ. Heaven joins in the celebration when any person comes to faith in Christ. (Read Luke 15:7.) Let's commit ourselves to leading many to the Savior and helping them grow to maturity in Christ.





LIFE BOOK

Notes

Vertical column of horizontal lines for taking notes.

MEMORIZE:

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).

KEY TRUTH:

It is the great blessing, privilege, and responsibility of every follower of Christ to share the good news of the saving power of Jesus with others.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- Take time every day to pray for the lost. Ask God to use you to share your faith and to lead those who don't know Christ to faith in Him.
- Write your story and memorize it so you can share your story easily and with confidence.
- Regularly train other believers to effectively share their faith in Christ. (See Week 1.)





LIFE BOOK

Financing the Vision in Challenging Times

WEEK 41

Read Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; Philippians 4:19

Today many nations are on the brink of economic collapse. As a result, many churches and ministries struggle to have sufficient money to carry out the vision God has given them. Yet God continues to give great vision. How, in these times, can we finance the vision in our hearts?

A story in the Old Testament provides important principles for financing the vision, even in difficult economic times. (Read 2 Kings 4:1-7.) There are principles in this text that give us insight on how to fund the vision, by God's miracle provision, even in the most difficult economic circumstances.

1. Take an inventory of your assets. Elisha asked the woman, "What do you have in the house?" (2 Kings 4:2). In the same way, you must ask yourself, "What do I have in my 'house?' What assets do I currently have?" Your assets may include friends, abilities, relationships, health, ideas, and spiritual gifts, as well as money.

2. Expand your ministry. The prophet told the woman, "Borrow vessels from everywhere . . . do not gather just a few" (2 Kings 4:3). We too should find ways to expand the ministry God has placed in our stewardship. It was necessary for the woman to involve other people in order for her to receive miracle provision. We as well must involve others in the vision and draw from their assets. You will find that many people will let you "borrow their vessels" to see your vision fulfilled!

3. Enlist your "sons" in the ministry. "You and your sons" (2 Kings 4:4). There are spiritual "sons and daughters" God desires to give you. It is important that you invite them to work alongside you in "pouring out" God's supply. (Read Isaiah 60:4.)

4. Pour from what you have. Elisha instructed her to "pour it into the vessels" (2 Kings 4:4). The woman did not think she had much, but when she began to give from the little she had, she experienced a miracle supply. In the same way, when

**Give an account of
your stewardship.
Luke 16:2**





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you activate the resources you currently have God will multiply your supply.

5. Keep bringing new vessels. She said to her son, “*Bring me another vessel*” (2 Kings 4:6). Regrettably, the son said there were no more jars into which they might pour God’s miracle. The inference is clear: As long as there are “empty jars” – people in need of God’s miracle supply – the miracle supply will continue to flow. However, if we think we have “enough;” if we are satisfied with our current size, the flow of God’s supply ceases. It is important to note that it was the woman and her son, not God, who determined both the size and the duration of the miracle. As long as there were more jars there was more miracle! Keep bringing in new people – empty vessels.

What do you have – right now – in your “house?” No matter how needy you may be, you have some resource right now that you can activate in ministry. When you do, the miracle begins. Therefore, find a way, every day, to give something to God and something to people.

As ministers we must not be trapped by a love of money. (Read 1 Timothy 6:10.) However, as stewards who want to honor God, we must pay attention to money and its potential for both great good and great evil. What steps can you take starting now to receive the necessary finances to undergird the vision God has given you?

- *Understand the importance of money.* One day we will stand before the Lord and give an account of our management. (Read Luke 16:2; 2 Corinthians 5:10.) Harold Myra and Marshall Shelly, long time associates of Billy Graham write, “Most ministers – or writers or scholars or musicians – become so absorbed in their craft and mission, they don’t think much about the necessary fiscal structure. Those few who do geometrically expand their influence.”
- *Lead by example.* Your church is watching you, and often imitating you. (Read 1 Peter 5:2-3.) If you let the offering plate go by without giving, people are watching. The Bible warns against giving to be noticed or commended. (Read Matthew 6:3-4.) However, a heart of generosity cannot be hidden. (Read Matthew 5:14-16.)
- *Teach what the Bible says about giving.* Jesus taught a great deal about money and how it is to be used. If Jesus thought this subject was important for His disciples, we should too. As pastors, we are responsible to deliver to our people the entire counsel of God. (Read Acts 20:27.)
- *Assure your congregation of God’s promises to those who give.* (Read Luke 6:38.) God does not promise to give seed to those with good intentions; He gives seed to sowers. (Read 2 Corinthians 9:10.) The wonderful promise that God will supply all our need was written to a church which had given to Paul for his missionary outreach. (Read Philippians 4:19.)

The potential for miracle provision is already in your “house!” Right now you have a dormant asset that you can activate. When you begin to pour from what is already in your house, God will bring His miracle provision.





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Notes

MEMORIZE:

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you (Luke 6:38).

KEY TRUTH:

Take an inventory of what God has given you already. You already have a miracle in your house!

YOUR RESPONSE:

- Determine what you have as current assets and put them into use for the cause of Christ.
- Set an example of giving as a lifestyle.
- Make plans to teach your church family what the Bible says about Christ-honoring stewardship and its benefits.

Notes section with horizontal lines for writing.



Bearing Much Fruit

Read John 15:4-5, 8

A tennis racquet has it – that exact place where your force and the racquet’s shape connect with the greatest power. A cricket bat has it – that exact place where the leveraging of your body and the bat’s shape connect for the most effective hit. Athletes refer to it as “the sweet spot.” It is that place of maximum effectiveness. Athletes learn how to leverage their strength for maximum impact by connecting with the ball at just the right place on his bat.

In the same way, you can “play to your strength” when five specific components meet. Together they form your unique “sweet spot” for ministry. When you’re connecting at that sweet spot in ministry, nothing is more gratifying. You will know it, and those who look to you for leadership will know it.

Your ministry sweet spot is where you will experience your greatest fruitfulness and your most gratifying contributions. The results will be some serious home runs for the kingdom.

But how do you connect at your “sweet spot” in ministry? You must first discover the five components that coalesce to form your ministry sweet spot. Those components are:

- 1. Anointing.** Anointing is more easily described than defined. Essentially, the anointing is the Holy Spirit activated in you in a particular arena of ministry. Anointing unleashes the supernatural. When you minister under the anointing, all things are possible.

Some airports use what some call a “human conveyor belt.” When you walk on this engine-powered belt, although you are exerting no greater physical energy, you are simply getting farther faster. You have the sense that you are being carried along by a power greater than your own. The Spirit’s anointing is much like walking on that conveyor belt. There is a holy momentum in all you do. When you minister in the realm of your anointing, there is a certain ease in what you do. Although you may grow tired physically, there is also a built-in rejuvenation even as you are ministering. Anointed ministry is edifying and fulfilling.

In the Bible, prophets or priests often

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be My disciples.
John 15:8





anointed people for a particular task by rubbing their heads with oil, a type of the Holy Spirit. (Read Psalm 89:20.) When you're anointed, God's enabling grace is dynamically working. This anointing of the Spirit enables you to fulfill your calling, your life assignment. There is a realm of anointing unique to every believer. Some are literally anointed for business. Others are anointed in evangelism, administration, teaching or deliverance. A few believers are anointed for all of the above, and more. Under the Spirit's anointing, spiritual gifts function easily. That leads us to the second component of the sweet spot.

2. Gifts. When the Holy Spirit descended on believers in Christ, He came bearing gifts. (Read Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-10; Ephesians 4:11.) There are certain spiritual gifts that are dominant in your life. These dominant gifts are given to equip you for the unique calling of God on your life and for fruitful ministry. (Read 1 Corinthians 12: 11.) But spiritual gifts can ossify through disuse, or when you rely on past patterns rather than present tense sensitivity to God's Spirit. That is why Paul urged Timothy, "*Stir up the gift of God which is in you*" (2 Timothy 1:6). When spiritual gifts are activated and ministered in the Spirit's anointing, you're finding the sweet spot.

3. Abilities. Even those who do not know Christ are often endowed with natural abilities. Natural abilities are not spiritual gifts but they almost always complement them. An ability to speak well is often coupled with the spiritual gift of exhortation. A desire to study and research is often linked with the spiritual gift of teaching. A keen sense of justice and injustice may be tied to a prophetic gifting. Sensitivity to suffering is often heightened by the spiritual gift of mercy. Natural leadership qualities can dovetail with the spiritual gift of leadership.

God has blessed you with some natural abilities, but we need the help of others in areas where we are not strong. Some pastors are great at creating and maintaining their church's web site. The rest of us need outside help. Some pastors are energized by counseling; others find it draining. That is why developing a ministry team is so important.

The film *Chariots of Fire* shows the compelling story of Eric Liddell, a gold medal Olympian who later served as a missionary in China. In the film Liddell makes a profound statement about natural

**For a good tree does
not bear bad fruit,
nor does a bad tree
bear good fruit.
Luke 6:43**





...for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:16

abilities and finding your unique calling and sweet spot. “God made me for a purpose – for China,” Liddell observed in reference to his destiny, “but He also made me fast, and when I run I feel His pleasure.” This is a reference to the smile of God on Liddell’s employing of a God-given natural ability. What abilities do you have that, when you exercise them, you feel God’s pleasure?

Ministry consultant Reggie McNeal observes, “Great leaders differ from good leaders, in part, because of the degree to which they have developed and built on their strengths. These leaders have figured out that their best shot at making their greatest contribution to the world is for them to get better at what they are already good at.”

4. Passion. What do all great leaders possess in common? In a word, passion. Passion is the internal fuel that propels you toward your God-ordained destiny. Before great ministries can be built somebody’s heart has to be in white-hot upheaval. In a tribute to Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision and Samaritan’s Purse, Paul Rees observed that these ministries were not first organizations; they were “the spurt-ing blood from Bob Pierce’s broken heart.” Dr. Pierce’s costly prayer also set the tone for his life: “Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God.”

What breaks your heart? What conditions in the world make you angry? What conditions in your city make you weep? This is a huge clue to your core passion. And your core passion is a huge clue to your distinct destiny.

5. Need. What do you personally view as an intolerable condition? William Wilberforce came to see slavery anywhere in the British Empire as unacceptable and intolerable. William Carey could not tolerate an unevangelized, illiterate India. Martin Luther could not tolerate a perversion of the gospel, and Martin Luther King, Jr. could not tolerate a segregated America.

If you can rest comfortably with a blind eye to the ravaged conditions of our world, then frankly, you are way too comfortable. A colossal iniquity is that far too many Christians are aimlessly spending their lives with no sense of holy calling and mission. The Apostle Paul wrote, “*Necessity is laid upon me*” (1 Corinthians 9:16). What is your holy imperative? Where is your laser focus of need? What work does your heart say, “This I must do”?

Our world is engulfed in human need – but the whole global





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tsunami of pain is not your assignment. That would be literally overwhelming. Yet if you will search your soul, God will trigger your passion; a clear call to throw your life into alleviating a specific need will tug at your heart. It will demand your involvement and intervention. That is your specific assignment and an indispensable component in your ministry sweet spot. Where the Spirit's anointing, spiritual gifts, natural abilities, dominant passion and human need connect – you have discovered your ministry sweet spot. When these five components meet, you will bear much fruit. The more you connect there, the greater your impact will be.

In church ministry, there are some tasks you just must do. There are meetings you must attend, people pleading for your time, emails and text messages screaming for your response. While many “urgent” assignments beg for your attention, they should not have all or even most of your focus. I believe one of the master strategies of the devil in our day is distraction. The tyranny of the urgent can be a full court press against your life calling and lasting fruitfulness.

Probably many things today will try to pull you away from your sweet spot. And if you allow that, your fruitfulness for Christ will be limited. So I urge you to schedule today and everyday to spend maximum time in your sweet spot of ministry. One thing is certain: the more you are in God's presence, the more you will hit at your ministry sweet spot. Our prayer is that you will connect at the sweet spot and, as a result, bear much fruit for Christ and His kingdom.





LIFE BOOK

Notes

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of approximately 25 horizontal lines.

MEMORIZE:

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing (John 15:5).

KEY TRUTH:

You “sweet spot” of ministry is where anointing, gifts, abilities, passion and need meet. This is the place of your greatest fruitfulness.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- In what arenas of ministry do you experience a supernatural touch of the Spirit’s power and enablement?
- What are your dominant spiritual gifts?
- What abilities do you possess that, when exercised, you feel God’s pleasure?
- What breaks your heart and makes you want to pound the pulpit?
- What condition do you view as intolerable?





LIFE BOOK

WEEK 43

Raising and Releasing Young Leaders

Read Psalm 78:1; John 15:9-16

One of the greatest things we can do to ensure that the church remains strong in the future is to richly invest our lives in the raising up and releasing of young leaders. Psalm 78 tells us that every older generation is responsible to pass their faith in God and the knowledge of His ways to the next generation. (Read Psalm 78:1-7.)

God commanded Israel to train up the next generation to know Him, love Him and know how to walk in His ways. (Read Deuteronomy 6:1-6.) The Apostle Paul instructed His spiritual son, Timothy, to raise up other leaders the way that Paul had raised him up, committing the transformational truths of God’s Word to them, personally and powerfully. (Read 2 Timothy 2:2.) Consider what Jesus did with His closest followers: He poured his truth, life and love into them, helping them become mature disciples and highly effective ministers. (Read John 15:9-16.)

God is a God of succession; He wants the knowledge of His goodness and glory to be passed down to every generation. (Read Psalm 78:4; 100:5.) This is true in the building of Christ’s church, as well. Christ wants every young leader to have a *heritage to receive* from older leaders, and every older leader to have a *legacy to leave* for younger leaders. This lesson will suggest to you six ways established leaders can help develop and deploy emerging leaders in Christ’s service.

1. Time. It takes time to thoroughly train someone to be highly effective in life and ministry. There are no shortcuts; there are no substitutes. Jesus chose the twelve disciples in order “*that they might be with Him.*” His goal was “*to send them out to preach.*” (Read Mark 3:14.) As leaders in Jesus’ church, it is often challenging for us to know how to steward our time wisely. This is why we must know our ministry priorities. After ministry to our families, the most important priority should be spending ample time pouring our lives into the next generation of leaders. For without them being well loved and well trained we have no strong future.

This is exactly what Jesus believed and practiced. He spent the greatest amount of time with the men who would be charged with de-

**We will not hide
them from their
children,
telling to the
generation to
come the praises
of the Lord, and His
strength and His
wonderful works that
He has done.
Psalm 78:4**





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claring and demonstrating the power of the Kingdom of God after He was gone. (Read Luke 3:13-15.) One reason Jesus was able to spend a great deal of time with the disciples was that He lived in close community with these emerging leaders. He practiced a “life-to-life” style of ministry that gave Him proximity to them. He intentionally took them with Him; they watched Him preach, heal, and cast out demons. For Jesus, the “curriculum” for His discipleship training was Kingdom life itself. As He took the time to be with them and live out His life before them, over time they understood what it meant to live and lead in anointing, excellence, and effectiveness. Jesus is our master teacher. Let’s follow His example.

2. Talk. Everything in God’s Kingdom operates on the basis of healthy covenantal relationships. Jesus said that the two Great Commandments—to love God with all of our lives heart, and to love others with all of our lives—summed up the Law and the Prophets. (Read Matthew 21:34-40.) These two commandments are all about relationships. We are called to rightly relate to God and others in word and deed. (Read Colossians 3:17.) To relate well to young leaders we must have ample time to talk with them. We need to hear their hearts and they need to hear ours. Jesus often engaged His followers in conversational dialogue, drawing them out and His words into them. (Read Matthew 16:13-19; John 6:33.) This helped the disciples receive the kind of personal mentoring and coaching they needed to keep learning and growing. Like Jesus, we must pursue opportunities to have meaningful conversations with emerging leaders. We must talk with them formally and informally, relationally and regularly, lovingly and forthrightly—and they will love us for it.

3. Touch. The apostle Paul deeply loved his young apprentice, Timothy. In his final letter to him he refers to him as a “*beloved son*.” (Read 2 Timothy 1:2.) He was very mindful of the condition of Timothy’s spiritual, emotional and relational life. (Read 2 Timothy 1:3-7.) Whether they were walking side-by-side or living at a distance, Paul always kept a father’s touch on Timothy’s life. In the same way, our young leaders need to feel a loving touch from us. They need loving words and loving actions to communicate to them how much we treasure them as spiritual sons and daughters. They need to feel we have taken the time to inquire about their well-being, to love them and minister to them. As part of the family of God, we are to relate to our spiritual sons and daughters with affection and deep care.

4. Teaching. Jesus knew the truths that his disciples would need to understand how to guide their lives and ministries. He taught them thoroughly and convincingly concerning all that pertained to life in the Kingdom. (Read Matthew 5 - 7.) Because of this, He could commission them to go and teach others what He had taught them. (Read Matt. 28:18-20.) With our emerging leaders we must follow the example of Jesus, Paul, and others—we must teach them well. Remember: If we teach our young leaders sound doctrine we will produce sound disciples who will teach others sound doctrine. Whether we are using a prepared curriculum, teaching verse-by-verse through the Scriptures, or both, we must teach, teach, *teach*. And much of teaching is example. (Read 1 Peter 5:2-3.)

5. Training. If we look at teaching as the “what” and look at training as the “how,” it gives us a clearer and more complete view of how to raise and release these young leaders. Ev-



ery growing young leader needs lots of “hands on” experience. They need our mentoring and modeling, but we must also release them to do the work of ministry. Consider the model Jesus left us: He taught his disciples, modeled Spirit-filled ministry, then He released them into the very ministry he had modeled. (Read Luke 9:1-6.) If Jesus released into ministry those who were still growing in their competence, we should too. Whatever our training process might be, it must “mirror” the model of Jesus—showing ministry and sharing ministry.

6. Tracking. Tracking is about measuring progress. We are to mentor our young leaders well, helping them have a good sense of where they are in the teaching and training process. We must help them measure character development, as well as Bible knowledge and ministry skills. We can do this by asking questions, giving tests, making observations, and giving biblical, Spirit-led counsel. All this must be done within an ongoing relational context. We must know well those we are raising and releasing as they emerge to become the next generation of fruitful leaders. One of the greatest joys of ministry is seeing spiritual sons and daughters do great exploits for God’s kingdom, producing even greater fruit than we produced. (Read John 14:12; 3 John 4.)

Moses successfully trained Joshua to lead God’s people. Certainly Joshua should have seen the value of such mentoring. Yet the great tragedy of Joshua’s life was that he left no qualified successor. Joshua had great successes but failed to prepare the coming generation for the challenges they would face. As a result the people slid quickly into spiritual chaos. (Read Judges 2:7-12.) You can be sure of this: Whatever time you invest in the next generation will be richly blessed by God. There could be no wiser investment.

**Let no one despise
your youth, but be
an example to
the believers.
1 Timothy 4:12**





LIFE BOOK

Notes

Lined area for taking notes.

MEMORIZE:

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).

KEY TRUTH:

One of the greatest things you can do to ensure that the church remains strong in the future is richly invest your life in the raising and releasing of young leaders.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- If you haven't already done so, ask the Holy Spirit to identify one or more young leaders for you to invite into a teaching and training process.
- If you know other ministers who have a proven process for raising up young leaders, ask to meet with them and look for whatever resources they might have to help you.
- Spend thirty days in the Gospel of Luke considering Jesus' model for training emerging leaders.





LIFE BOOK

Time Management

WEEK 44

Read Psalm 90:12; John 9:4; Ephesians 5:15-18; Colossians 3:17

Every minute counts – and we will give an account for every minute. Time is God’s greatest gift to us; all His other blessings happen within the context of time. If time is God’s gift to us, what we do with time is our gift to him.

Different cultures view time in different ways. Many people in non-Western cultures feel that Westerners are subservient to time. With a smile, a man from Africa observed, “Westerners have the watches but no time. Africans have the time but no watches.” A Filipino referred to the expensive watches some Westerners wear as “the god on their wrist.”

Whatever our view of time may be, one thing is certain: We will give an account to Jesus for how we used the time allotted to us. (Read 1 Corinthians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10.) No wonder the Psalmist prayed, “*Teach us to number our days*” (Psalm 90:12) and Paul urged believers to “*redeem the time.*” (Read Ephesians 5:15-16; Colossians 4:5.) Fruitfulness for Christ requires that we appreciate the value of time and learn how to maximize opportunities.

Jesus was never nervous about time. (Read Luke 13:32.) He commended Mary for resisting the pressures around her to simply sit at His feet. (Read Luke 10:38-42.) Here are some suggestions to help you “*make the most of every opportunity*” (Ephesians 5:16, NIV).

1. Begin your day the night before. In the presence of the Lord review the day just past. Commit the day to Him, asking that much eternal fruit will be the result of your labor that day. Make a list of appointments and what must have your attention tomorrow. Commit these things to the Lord and ask Him to go before you with His favor. As you lie down to sleep, meditate on God’s goodness. Let your heart sing praises. (Read Ephesians 5:19.) Dawson Trotman recommended that we drift to sleep with “HWLW” – “His Word the last word.”

2. When you awake, give the first part of your day to God. Make your first appointment of

**See then
that you walk
circumspectly, not
as fools but as wise,
redeeming the time,
because the days
are evil.
Ephesians 5:15-16**





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the day with the Lord, offering this time with him as a kind of firstfruits offering. (Read Deuteronomy 26:10.) When we give the first part of the day to God in worship, prayer and the reading of His Word, time is multiplied back to us. (Read Luke 6:38.) Martin Luther commented, “I have so much to do today that I must pray two hours instead of one!”

3. Ask God for your assignments for the day. Pray over your day. During your morning time in God’s presence, invite the Holy Spirit to give you clear direction for the day. (Read Psalm 31:3.)

4. Live for eternity. The best time management technique I know is to live for eternity. Living with eternity’s values helps you quickly sort out what is truly important. (Read Psalm 39:4.)

5. Life in light of the judgment seat of Christ. Ultimate success in this life is to hear the Lord pronounce His “*Well done*” over our life. Live *this* day in light of *that* day when you stand before Jesus to account for your use of the time He gave you. (Read Matthew 25:21; Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10.)

6. Repent of all laziness. Procrastination is indeed a “deadly sin” because it can rob you of your effectiveness. (Read Proverbs 18:9; 20:4; Proverbs 24:30-34.)

7. Live by priorities, not by personal preferences. The apostle Paul’s desire was to visit and minister in Rome. However, his priority commitment to the unreached prevented him from getting to Rome sooner than he did. What are your priorities for the investment of your time? (Read Romans 15:20-22.)

Many people aim at nothing – and hit it! They achieve little because they have no worthy goals. Only a few things in our lives are truly urgent and important although many things cry out for our immediate attention. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern what is genuinely imperative and truly important.

8. Invest in your family. I know a Ugandan pastor who makes it a practice to have a cup of tea and converse with his wife every evening. As a result their marriage has become a Christ-honoring model that has impressed many people. (Read Matthew 5:16.) Time investments with your spouse and children will pay huge dividends.

9. Win “minute victories.” A godly Scottish pastor was honored because he had achieved “a thousand minute victories.” He had learned to “buy up the opportunities,” filling small portions of time with meaningful things such as prayer, quick words of encouragement, reading God’s Word, and putting in a good word of witness for Christ. The car-maker, Henry Ford, noted, “It has been my observation that most successful people get ahead during the time other people waste.”

A well-known time management consultant suggests that everything you need to do that takes two minutes or less – do those things right now. This will help clear the way for larger assignments.



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10. Invest time in developing and using your predominant spiritual gifts. God has given you a unique set of natural abilities and predominant spiritual gifts. The more time you spend ministering from your strengths, the greater your fruitfulness will be. (Read John 15:8.)

11. Learn to delegate whenever and wherever possible. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, taught him one of the greatest leadership lessons. Delegation vastly multiplies your impact and saves you from depleting your limited supply of energy. (Read Exodus 18:13-24.)

12. Begin your day early. If you get up early, you're in good company – Jesus was known to rise early to pray. (Read Mark 1:35.) A survey of the heads of many of America's top businesses found that the single most commonly-held trait of these corporate leaders is early rising.

Cell phones, tablet computers, the Internet, FaceBook, blogging, texting, tweeting – these tools should work *for* us, not against us. These tools can greatly enhance your effectiveness. However, if used improperly, they can also help destroy your effectiveness. Do not let technology master you. Rather, you master technology to the glory of God.

Dr. Joseph Stowell suggests that to manage time well we should:

- Renew *daily* by beginning each day with the Lord,
- Refresh *weekly* by doing something enjoyable with your spouse each week,
- Retreat *monthly* by taking a day of solitude each month to hear God's voice, and
- Review *annually*, taking stock of the year and checking to see that you are on track in pursuing God's will for your life.

There is so much more that could be said about effective time management. Just remember that your days are lived out before Jesus. Ultimately, you are accountable to Him for what occupies your time.

*Only one life,
It will soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ
Will last.*





LIFE BOOK

Notes

Lined area for notes.

MEMORIZE:

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time (Colossians 4:5).

KEY TRUTH:

Every minute counts – and we will give an account for every minute.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- What 2 or 3 things, if done on a daily basis, would make a great difference in your personal effectiveness?
- Have you done the will of God today?
- Are you accomplishing the will of God for your life?





LIFE BOOK

WEEK 45

Ministering to Workplace Ministers

**Read Genesis 12:1-2; Deuteronomy 8:18;
Psalm 67:1-2; Matthew 5:16; 6:33; Luke 6:18**

Throughout the church's history the gospel has advanced most rapidly when there was a joint effort of those called to minister in the roles of church leadership and those called to minister in the workplace. Jesus deliberately picked businessmen to be His disciples. While He was on Earth, Jesus' preferred platform for displaying His power and glory was the marketplace. When it came to ministry and miracles, Jesus clearly preferred the public square to the cloistered confines of the temple.

The apostle Paul cultivated relationships with those in the marketplace. A medical doctor traveled with him on many of his missionary journeys (Luke). A woman in business he befriended became the key to planting the gospel in a previously unreached area (Lydia). While traveling he apprenticed a younger man from another cultural background (Timothy). He earned the respect of government officials (Felix and Festus). For a season Paul made tents to help finance his outreaches. (Read Acts 18:3.)

Over the last several years the Holy Spirit has turned the spotlight on *marketplace ministry*. The "marketplace" covers the spheres of life that influence culture: the arts and entertainment, business, education, family, government, media, religion (or faith), and sports. Some refer to these arenas as "seven mountains" that must be scaled and the flag of Christ's Kingdom planted at the summit in order to redemptively transform all of culture. Together these seven spheres mold society, shape belief systems, and house the keys to the global spiritual harvest. (Read Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:15.)

A large part of the pastor's responsibility is to equip those under his care to minister effectively in every sphere of life. (Read Ephesians 4:11-12.) Pastors should see those called to business (and all spheres of the marketplace) as strategic ministers of the gospel. Pastors should respect the holy calling of believers, value their role in Christ's Kingdom, and help them be successful. Here are some ways we can help those called as marketplace ministers glorify God and transform their spheres of influence by the power of Christ.

**Blessed are
those who hunger
and thirst for
righteousness, for
they shall be filled.
Matthew 5:6**





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1. Work is ordained by God and should be seen as worship to God. Most Christians compartmentalize their lives into what they perceive as *sacred* and *secular*. But for the biblically-informed Christian there is no fence between the two. All of life is to be viewed as sacred – as both stewardship and worship to God. (Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.) Work (or business) done to the glory of God with a kingdom mindset is a holy calling. It is just as sacred a calling as the call to be a pastor or an evangelist. (Read Revelation 1:6; 5:10.)

God Himself is a worker – and His greatest masterpiece is people. (Read John 4:34; 5:17; Ephesians 4:10.) Jesus declared He had finished the work given Him by His Father. (Read John 17:4.) Jesus said we were to pray for workers in the spiritual harvest. (Read Matthew 9:38.) In all spheres of life our work should be done *with excellence, with focus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, with the right motives, with gratitude, for the glory of God and the extending of His Kingdom, and with a view toward eternity*. (Read Matthew 6:3-4; Romans 12:10-11; Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:10-11; Revelation 14:13.) Oswald Chambers wrote, “My life as a worker is the way I say ‘thank you’ to God for His unspeakable salvation.”

2. One of the greatest fields of evangelism is the workplace. The average businessperson will interact with many more lost people on a weekly basis than most pastors or professional ministers. The harvest of souls is located in the marketplace. Believers in the business world should see themselves sent by God as “marketplace missionaries.” (Read Matthew 9:37; 1 Timothy 2:4.)

Jesus Christ has issued His Great Commission to all His followers. He has called us to turn His foes into His friends and His friends into His devoted followers. (Read Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 16:15.) We have also been mandated to steward and govern the earth, bringing all spheres of human activity into alignment with God’s Kingdom. (Read Genesis 1:28.) These assignments are to be carried out in the multiple facets of the marketplace. We partner with God in bringing His rule to earth. God is pleased when we design, build, create, solve problems, bring order, generate resources, reach others. God is using His people in business and throughout the marketplace to transform lives. He uses the marketplace to open doors of opportunity where traditional missions or a preaching ministry may not be allowed.

3. As those in covenant with God we are called to bless all nations. As the spiritual seed of Abraham, connected to God and His covenant of blessing through faith in Christ, we are called to extend these blessings to all the peoples of the world. As Christ’s ambassadors we are called to bring the light of Christ and the transforming power of the gospel into all aspects of life. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.) We are blessed – to be a blessing – to all of the world. This is the “covenant cycle” of blessing. (Read Genesis 12:1-3; Psalm 67:1-2; Galatians 3:13-14.)

4. God gives those in covenant with Him the ability to generate wealth. The Holy Spirit is your “competitive advantage” in the workplace. You become anointed for business, receiving creative, productive ideas as gifts from God. (Read Deuteronomy 8:18.) Supernatural skills, insight, favor and discernment are available to kingdom people in business. (Read Exodus 31:1-5; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Isaiah 48:17; Colossians 1:16.) With supernatural



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resources available our work should be excellent. Theologian Elton Trueblood wrote, “Deliberate mediocrity is a sin.”

5. As businesspersons in covenant with God, our minds are transformed and our vision expanded. Our focus is no longer just meeting our needs and the needs of our family. God has already promised to do that. (Read Philippians 4:19.) Rather, we now see ourselves as ministers of Christ’s kingdom, called to extend the blessings of the gospel everywhere we are. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:20.) Cultivate a “more than enough” mentality. (Read 2 Corinthians 9:8.)

6. We should model “giving living,” looking for opportunities to be a blessing, eradicate poverty, and extend Christ’s kingdom agenda. The foundation of a lifestyle of giving is tithing. When we give a tenth of our income to God, we are promised financial protection. (Read Malachi 3:10-11.) Pastor Robert Morris writes, “When Satan comes against you with fear and says, ‘You’re going to go broke, your marriage is going to fail, you’re going to get a disease,’ you can firmly reply, ‘No, I’m a tither, and because I tithe the Bible says that God will rebuke the Devourer *for my sake*. Yes, for *my sake*! God is first in my life, and God is going to redeem and protect everything else in my life!”

The nations will notice God’s quality care of His servants and be pointed to faith in Him. (Read Malachi 3:12.) This is why missionary Jim Elliot prayed, “Lord, make my way prosperous, not that I achieve high station, but that my life may be an exhibit to the value of knowing God.”

God promises that those who give to the poor will lack nothing. (Read Proverbs 28:27.) A lifestyle of giving includes money, but it goes far beyond just giving money. You can give your time, your prayers, your encouragement, your “intellectual capital,” and other resources you have at your disposal. Whenever we give, and whatever we give, we should view it as a seed we are sowing that will produce a harvest. (Read Genesis 8:22.) Jesus taught that whenever we give, whatever we give, we should expect a return on our investment. Find a way, every day, to give something to God and something to people.

7. As a pastor, look for ways to encourage businesspersons (and those in every profession) in your church and affirm their calling to marketplace ministry. We ordain those who are called to a preaching ministry. Why not ordain those called to marketplace ministry? Lay hands on those serving Christ in the “seven mountains” of culture and invoke the anointing of God’s Spirit on their assignments and calling. Go to their places of business and pray on-site that God will cause them to prosper. Pastors should model tithing, honesty, integrity, generosity, vision and a kingdom mindset to workplace ministers. (Read 1 Peter 5:2-3.)

Help those who serve in the marketplace understand their vital role in extending Christ’s kingdom. Help business owners build “Great Commission businesses.” The benefits for your church and for Christ’s kingdom will be great.





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Notes

Vertical column of horizontal lines for taking notes.

MEMORIZE:

He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor: his righteousness endures forever" (2 Corinthians 9:6-9).

KEY TRUTH:

All of life is sacred. All believers in Christ have a priestly role. For Christians, every vocation should be a sacred calling.

YOUR RESPONSE:

Adopt a "Kingdom business" attitude: "I am ordained by God to work at the place where He has stationed me, knowing that all my needs will be met by Him. I will be successful as I obey Him. As one who is in covenant with God through faith in His Son, I am blessed to be a blessing to all nations. Today, as Christ's ambassador, I have the privilege of glorifying God, demonstrating the gospel, eradicating poverty, transforming my spheres of influence with the love, light, and life of Jesus Christ."



LIFE BOOK

WEEK 46

*Becoming a
Great Commission Leader*

Read Psalm 78:72; Matthew 28:19

A great, global harvest of souls is coming. Some missions observers believe at least one billion people will come to faith in Christ in the next ten years. Since the church around the world will experience great growth, it will be necessary for every church leader to rise to his next level of influence for Christ. More leaders and better leaders will be needed to assimilate the vast numbers of new believers.

God is calling you to become a Great Commission leader – a leader whose heart burns for God’s glory and for the discipling of the nations to Christ. The prayer of Great Commission leaders is, “*Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts*” (Isaiah 26:8, NIV).

But be on your guard. When a person seriously commits himself to fulfilling the Great Commission, he will be on the devil’s radar. Of course, this does not mean we retreat from evangelism and missions. It does mean we realize this is a real war with real casualties. (Read Ephesians 6:10-18.) In the last few years I have witnessed how the devil has aimed his big guns at those who have brought leadership to world missions. We must pray more for each other and commit to protect our comrades from the enemy’s attacks. (Review Lessons 14 and 32.)

In his book, *A Work of Heart*, Reggie McNeal observes, “Those called to be spiritual leaders feel connected to the big picture of God’s movement, His kingdom agenda. They feel personally responsible for partnering with God in His mission. They may work in very obscure places, but changing the world is their aim. This concern is not fitted in around the edges of life; it is the preoccupation of the called.”

The following outline was provided by Dr. Bill Bright shortly before his death. It is used by permission from the Global Pastors Network. In this outline Dr. Bright noted the characteristics that Great Commission leaders express. A pastor or Christian leader who exhibits the ten characteristics of Great Commission leadership will lead:

**So he
shepherded
them according
to the integrity
of his heart, and
guided them by the
skillfulness of
his hands.
Psalm 78:72**





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- 1. A surrendered life.** A Great Commission leader is fully surrendered to the Lordship of Christ in every area of his life. Daily he will place himself “on the altar” to be used by God for His purposes. (Read Romans 12:1-2.)
- 2. A scriptural life.** A Great Commission leader honors the Bible as God’s written revelation to humanity. He measures his worldview and life’s experiences by the plumb line of Scripture. He will seek to align his life with God’s Word. (Read Joshua 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.)
- 3. A Spirit-filled life.** Evangelist D. L. Moody stated, “A person can breathe without air as easily as a Christian can live without the Holy Spirit.” A Great Commission leader allows the Holy Spirit to fill and control him. He welcomes and expects supernatural intervention and anointing. (Read Ephesians 5:18.)
- 4. A soul winning life.** A Great Commission leader lovingly shares his faith in Christ with others. He encourages fellow believers to witness to others about Christ, as well. He lives with evangelistic intent and longs to see people come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. (Read Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3.)
- 5. A serving life.** Following the example of his Lord, a Great Commission leader seeks to be a servant-leader. He serves Christ and His purposes in his generation. (Read Matthew 23:11; Acts 13:36; Galatians 5:13.)
- 6. A sanctified life.** A Great Commission leader sets himself apart for God and God alone. He deals ruthlessly with any sin in his life and desires to please God in all he says, thinks, and does. He is, as Paul said, “*separated to the gospel of God*” (Romans 1:1). (Read 2 Timothy 2:21; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.)
- 7. A selfless life.** Great Commission leaders do not live to please themselves. They live for Christ and for others. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:15; Philippians 1:21.)
- 8. A sacrificial life.** Great Commission leaders count the cost. Then they forget the cost. They just pay the cost to accomplish God’s will. (Read 2 Corinthians 12:15; 1 Peter 2:21-23.)
- 9. A stewardship life.** A Great Commission leader lives in light of his coming appointment with Christ, where he will give an account to Him for his use of time, resources, and influence. (Read Romans 14:10-12.)
- 10. A successful life.** A Great Commission leader longs to receive Christ’s “Well done” pronounced over his life. A Great Commission leader understands that a truly successful life is measured not by its duration but by its direction; not by its parties but by its purpose, not by what was amassed but by what was dispersed, not by the embracing of things but





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by embracing the One Thing – to love Jesus supremely and to make Him loved by people everywhere. (Read Matthew 25:21.)

A Great Commission leader will measure everything he does as to whether or not it helps him to fulfill the Great Commission. He will have a fruitful ministry where his congregation is becoming more like Christ and souls are being added to the Kingdom of God.

As a developing leader, we must find times of solitude to be exclusively in the presence of the Lord. In his book, *Courageous Leadership*, Bill Hybels calls us to an annual review in God's presence. These are the questions he asks himself during this personal review of the year:

- Is my calling sure?
- Is my vision clear
- Is my passion hot?
- Am I developing my gifts?
- Is my character submitted to Christ?
- Is my pride subdued?
- Am I overcoming fear?
- Are interior issues undermining my leadership?
- Is my pace sustainable?
- Is my love for God and people increasing?

May God anoint you to be a Great Commission leader.





LIFE BOOK

Notes

Lined area for taking notes.

MEMORIZE:

I have become all things to all men that by all means I might save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you. (1 Corinthians 9:22b-23)

KEY TRUTH:

God is calling you to be a Great Commission leader, measuring all you do by whether or not it helps you fulfill the Great Commission.

YOUR RESPONSE:

Commit today that, by God's grace, you will be a Great Commission leader.



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WEEK 47

Seven Voices That Will Change Your Life

Read Isaiah 6:8; 1 Samuel 3:9; Matthew 11:15

In the late 1940s, a recent college graduate wrote in his journal, "Consider the call from the Throne above, 'Go ye,' and from round about, 'Come over and help us,' and even the call from the damned souls below, 'Send Lazarus to my brothers, that they come not to this place.' Impelled, then, by these voices, I dare not stay home while Quichuas perish." Young Jim Elliot heard voices that changed his life. A few years later, "impelled by these voices," he laid down his life in an attempt to get the gospel to the remote Waodoni tribe.

Isaiah's dramatic encounter with God culminated in a missionary call. (Read Isaiah 6:1-8.) Isaiah heard the voice from above, and His life was marked from that day.

Eight times in the Gospels Jesus cried out, "*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*" Do you have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying – to you, to your nation, to the church, to the world? There are seven sounds – seven voices – that will change your life. Once you hear these voices you will never be the same.

1. The voice from above is the command of authority.

"Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Isaiah heard this authoritative command from heaven's Throne. He had tuned in to God's missionary heart. His immediate response was, "*Here am I! Send me*" (Isaiah 6:8). This voice from above, this command of authority, came through loud and clear again when the risen Christ issued His Great Commission. (Read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8.)

2. The voice from below is the cry of eternity.

Jesus tells us clearly that the only options we have are everlasting life with God or perishing without Him. (Read John 3:16.) We must ask God to give us a burden for the lost. It is good to remember the eternal destiny of those without Christ. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, said that he felt that if his workers to a trip to hell for five minutes it would prepare them for a lifetime

Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Whome shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." Isaiah 6:8





The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!
Revelation 11:15

of compassionate ministry. It is disturbing to contemplate these things; it should disturb us enough to move us to compassionate evangelism. (Read Luke 16:24; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.)

3. The voice from without is the plea of humanity. When Jesus saw the multitudes, He had compassion on them. May God help us to truly see the multitudes and their need for Christ. (Read Matthew 9:36; Joel 3:14.) People all over the world are in spiritual darkness. Their hearts are pleading for someone to show them the way out of the darkness. (Read Acts 16:9.)

4. The voice from within is the whisper of necessity. Is there any holy imperative in your life? The apostle Paul sensed a deep obligation to get the gospel to people everywhere. Do you also have that sense of a holy imperative to reach people with the liberating power of the gospel? (Read Romans 1:14-16; 1 Corinthians 16:9.)

5. The voice from the past is the march of history. Many gallant soldiers of the cross have gone before us. They are now in heaven, cheering us on in our race. (Read Hebrews 12:1.) Be encouraged today: History is moving toward a climax when Jesus will reign supreme over all peoples and nations! (Read Isaiah 9:6-7; Revelation 11:15.)

6. The voice from present is the call of opportunity. Look around you; everywhere you look there is opportunity to extend Christ's kingdom purposes. May God grant you great vision. (Read Proverbs 28:19.) May you have eyes to see the ripe harvest all around you. (Read John 4:35; Romans 13:11; Galatians 6:9; Ephesians 5:16.)

7. The voice from the future is the shout of destiny. One day the Great Commission will be the Great Completion! There will be redeemed people from every tribe, language, and nation worshipping God and His Son, Jesus Christ. We have been given the dignity, privilege and high calling of moving history toward that wonderful event. (Read Revelation 5:9-10; Revelation 7:9-10.)





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MEMORIZE:

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

KEY TRUTH:

When you hear these seven voices, they will change the focus and priorities of your life.

YOUR RESPONSE:

Allow these seven voices to be heard clearly in your spirit. They will motivate you to Christ-honoring action.

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Reaching Your City for Christ

Read Jeremiah 29:7; Jonah 4:11; 2 Peter 3:9

How many churches are there in your city or town? From God's perspective there is only one— that's right, one! The apostle Paul told the Church in Ephesus, "*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling*" (Ephesians 4:1-6.) He was writing followers of Christ residing in Ephesus and exhorting them to function together in unity—for the growth of the church and the glory of God. Years later, when the apostle John sent a letter from Jesus to this church, He addressed it to the church of Ephesus; what we might call a city church—one church made up of many congregations. (Read Revelation 2:1.)

Right before Jesus ascended to heaven He told His disciples to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and reach Jerusalem with the gospel. (Read Acts 1:8.) That is exactly what they did. (Read Acts 2:42-47.) In this passage you will notice that the people were reaching the city of Jerusalem with the gospel through a unified effort, as the Lord was adding newly saved souls to the church moment by moment, day by day.

In order to reach and transform your city by the power of God you must work together with the Body of Christ in a concerted and cooperative manner. In this lesson you will see three key components for reaching cities that many pastors worldwide are finding to be effective and even transformational.

- 1. The developing of authentic relationships with other Christian leaders.** Jack Dennison in his book, *City Reaching*, writes about the need for leaders in a city to move from "fellowship to friendship to functional unity." We must break down every barrier that divides us if we are to see the power of Christ that comes through unity. We must move beyond our preferences and prejudices to be with people who might be different from us in certain ways. They are precious to God and should be precious to us. In His high priestly prayer, Jesus prayed that all of His followers would live and minister together in love and unity in order that that the world would believe the gospel. (Read John 17:21-23.) The loving

**There is one body
and one Spirit, just
as you were called in
one hope of
your calling.
Ephesians 4:4**





relationship of believers to each other is one of the greatest witnesses to Jesus Christ – His mission, His message and His ministry. It is also one of the greatest “attractors” of the presence of God. (Read Psalm 133; John 13:35.)

Additionally, the Lord wants us as leaders to develop deep friendships with one another that nourish and strengthen us. Some of the loneliest people in the world are Christian leaders. The devil seeks to divide us and isolate us, but the Spirit of God seeks to unite us and bless us with partners we can love and trust. There is no greater joy then to get up every day and advance the Kingdom of God with friends throughout the Body of Christ. Let God provide you with rich friendships as you reach out in faith to other Christian leaders. Such friendships do not just happen; you must be intentional in developing them.

2. Unified, transformational prayer. Nothing significant will happen in your community without unified, concerted prayer. One of the hallmarks of this vital, growing city church was there steadfast commitment to prayer. (Read Acts 2:42.) In Steve Hawthorne’s prayer resource, *Seek God for the City*, he quotes a pastor who said, “These prayers are too big to pray alone.” If we are going to pray for God’s kingdom to break in on our city and transform it, we must be united in prayer. God’s call for His people to come together and pray is found throughout the Scriptures. God told King Solomon that when there was judgment in the land they were to engage in sincere, humble, united prayer. (Read 2 Chronicles 7:12-14.) God assured His people that if they would pray together in humility and faith He would hear and answer with help and healing. When Peter and John were severely threatened by Jewish leaders for preaching Christ as Lord, they went to their companions and told them what had happened. When their friends and comrades heard their report, they went to prayer. They prayed for boldness and they prayed for a powerful manifestation of God’s presence in Jerusalem. Together, they prayed into their difficult situation. God answered by shaking the place they were gathered, and filling them with the Holy Spirit. As a result, they saw an increase in God’s power in their city. (Read Acts 4:23-31.)

Wherever you find God’s people coming together for united prayer for their city, region or nation God moves and things change for the better. In many places around the world there are leaders coming together weekly to pray in their locality. Then, regularly, all of these groups are coming together for regional prayer summits to

**If you abide in Me, and
My words abide in you,
you will ask what you
desire, and it shall be
done for you.
John 15:7**





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pray and believe God for greater and greater redemptive impact in their area. If there is a gathering of leaders praying in your community, join them. If there is not – start one! God will honor it.

3. Intentional, united mission. God has a strategy for reaching your community with the gospel. God has a strategy to transform your region by His gracious hand through His people. Once you have come together in fellowship, and have grown together in friendship and trust, it is a time to begin to function together missionally. When a unified people gather together in an atmosphere of humility and honor, God speaks. God begins to reveal what He wants done to serve people in His Name. (Read Acts 15.) Through worship, prayer, listening to the Holy Spirit and discussion, vision becomes clearer. Then, as is the experience of city church movements everywhere, the Spirit of God begins to identify servant-leaders who are set apart to function as a city church team. This team helps to implement the vision that God has revealed.

When we walk in a spirit of humility it isn't difficult to discover what God's calling for each believer and each local congregation in reaching the city. It is important to remember that to effectively reach a region we must understand something of its history, its particular characteristics and needs. Regional leaders see their role as facilitating ways to help each group of leaders be effective in their locale, realizing that God has placed them and graced them for ministry there. And what keeps everything moving forward well is that friends in ministry – brothers and sisters in Christ – are seeking God's face together in prayer for their city. Pray for those who govern in your city. (Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4.) As you pray for God's peace to prevail in your city, you will have peace. (Read Jeremiah 29:7.)



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Notes

MEMORIZE:

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me (John 17:20-21).

KEY TRUTH:

In order to reach and transform your city by the power of God you must work with the greater Body of Christ in a concerted, cooperative manner.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- Pray daily for unity among the congregations in your community.
- Seek out other pastors for fellowship, joint prayer, and united mission to the city.
- Involve your church in any cooperative efforts with other congregations to take the transforming power of the gospel to your community.





WEEK 49

LIFE BOOK

Mobilizing Your Church for the Harvest

Read Luke 10:2; John 4:35; Revelation 14:15

The spiritual harvest is the ingathering of lost and broken humanity into new life and profound destiny in Christ. It is also the ingathering of committed disciples and leaders who are growing into their life's purpose of bringing many, many people to faith in Christ. (Read Matthew 4:19.) As leaders we must be involved in helping people be motivated and mobilized for the harvest of precious souls. We also need to be involved in motivating and mobilizing people to help bring in a harvest of "harvesters," – additional people who are passionately involved in bringing Jesus to people and people to Jesus.

The following are seven truths we need to consider concerning the spiritual harvest:

- 1. The harvest is something Jesus cares about deeply.** As Jesus traveled from city to city preaching, teaching, and healing, he noticed how broken and lost the people were. When He saw their condition He was deeply saddened in His soul. Their plight moved Him with compassion. Then, it moved Him to commitment, a commitment to see these lost sheep find Him as their true shepherd. (Read Matthew 9:35-38.) The same is true today— Jesus cares deeply about the brokenness and weariness of unredeemed people, and so should we.
- 2. The harvest is vast and plentiful.** (Read Matthew 9:37.) Jesus sent seventy of His followers out into cities and towns where He was about to go and preach. As He did this He said to them, "*The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest*" (Luke 10:1-2). Jesus spoke those words 2000 years ago. The harvest today is far greater. In fact, over two thirds of the world's population have no identification with Him in any way. We have a grand call of privileged responsibility to move into the vast harvest fields of the earth and encourage others to do the same.
- 3. The harvest is ripe and at risk.** On another occasion Jesus told His disciples that the harvest was not only ripe but was "white." (Read

**And let the beauty
of the Lord our God
be upon us, and
establish the work
of our hands.
Psalm 90:17**





John 4:35-38.) When wheat becomes white it is considered over-ripe and in need of immediate harvesting. If not harvested right away the harvest can be lost. As leaders, we must foster a sense of urgency in our people. Every day is the right day, every time is the right time, and every person is the right person in sharing the gospel. We must remember the words of theologian Carl Henry who said, “The gospel is only good news if it arrives in time.”

**And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.
Matthew 14:14**

4. The harvest is made up of multitudes of dearly loved but deeply lost people. God has created people with great potential and grand purpose. However, their full potential and purpose can only be realized in Him. Sin perverts and distorts the human condition, rendering it broken, marred and unusable for God’s will and work. (Read Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:12.) God loves people so much that He offers His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Savior and sacrifice for their sins. When we and the people we lead realize how hopeless and helpless people are without Christ’s life and leadership, it will move us to love, compassion, and redemptive action in the same way it moved Jesus. (Read Matthew 9:36; 14:14.)

5. The harvest is in need of dedicated harvesters. We must train our people for evangelism—the sharing of God’s good news of salvation through Christ with others. Missions expert Donald McGavran said, “The world has more winnable people than ever before...but it is possible to come out of a ripe field empty-handed.” The way to keep our people from living an “empty-handed” life is by motivating them for evangelism through preaching and teaching, by winning people to Christ yourself and modeling effective evangelism, and by encouraging your people to share with others their experience of coming to know Christ. Additionally, bringing in trusted evangelists who are gifted to mobilize God’s people to share the gospel with others is very useful and extremely helpful.

6. The harvest workers must be prayed in and planned for. We must make every effort to mobilize every member of our churches for evangelism. We must pray that God would help them to see opportunities and needs, and sense deeply His love and compassion for the lost. We also must have a plan for helping them to see their place, and train them to do their part in bringing broken and bound





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people to Christ. Additionally, as we pray and plan we must be ready to immediately send new believers as “harvesters” into their relational spheres. Remember, a great harvest requires a great amount of workers to bring in the harvest.

7. The harvest process is purposeful and productive. Jesus was focused and purposeful in the way He lived and ministered. He went to every city, town, and village throughout Palestine, leaving a rich witness of His love and power. Jesus bore tremendous fruit wherever He went; the sick were healed, the demonized were set free, and the people heard with conviction and clarity the truth about how they could be right with God.

Jesus came to earth with a mission to redeem mankind and with the Father’s plan to fulfill it. (Read Luke 19:10.) On the cross He cried out, “*It is finished!*” (John 19:30) The work that He was sent to do had been accomplished. Jesus is our greatest mentor and model for fulfilling the mission and ministry He has called us to. We must pray for the harvest—lost and broken people. We must pray for the harvesters—more people to bring in the harvest of newly saved, spiritually transformed souls. And we must make working with and for the Lord of the harvest our highest priority. Then we will bear much eternal fruit. (Read John 15:8.) The harvest is great. Let’s go bring it in!



LIFE BOOK

Notes

MEMORIZE:

Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2).

KEY TRUTH:

The harvest is the ingathering of lost and broken humanity into new life and profound destiny in Jesus Christ.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- Pray for the lost daily and lead your church to do likewise.

- Make a daily commitment to the Lord of the harvest that you will seize every opportunity to share the gospel and your testimony with others.

- Regularly exhort and equip those under your leadership to bring people to Christ as partners in His harvest.

- Build strong relationships with trusted, fruitful evangelists who can help motivate and mobilize your people for evangelism.





Keys to the Harvest

Read Matthew 9:35-38

In the last four verses of Matthew 9, Jesus gives us ten keys that will unlock the spiritual harvest of souls. These keys will work in any culture and any country. They are the keys Jesus used to bring people to Him.

1. The key of saturation. *“Jesus went to all the cities and villages”* (Matthew 9:35.) With Jesus, there are no insignificant places and no insignificant people. Our world today is quickly urbanizing. Many missions experts suggest that we should only go to cities or “strategic” places. Yet in a short three years of ministry, Jesus ministered in *“all the cities and villages”* of His region. This key reminds us that high volume church planting must be a priority. May God put a fire in your heart to invest your life in planting a Christ-honoring, gospel-preaching church in every city and every village. Our Lord has directed us to call everyone everywhere to His great feast. (Read Luke 14:12-23; Revelation 19:9, 17.)

2. The key of proclamation. As He went to every city and village, He was *“teaching and preaching”* (Matthew 9:35). As ministers of the gospel, we are always to be ready to “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2). We are to preach the Good News of the kingdom of God. (Read Luke 9:60.) We are to preach the Good News of Christ’s death and resurrection for us. (Read Mark 16:15; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.) This glorious gospel has power to save all who hear it and put their faith in Christ. (Read Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:21.)

3. The key of demonstration. Not only did Christ preach and teach, He went about *“healing every kind of disease and sickness”* (Matthew 9:35.) We are to follow the pattern of our Lord: preach, teach, and heal. This is, in fact, what the early disciples did in obedience to the Great Commission. (Read Mark 16:20.) The early church evangelist, Phillip, also followed this model in his evangelistic meetings in the cities of Samaria. (Read Acts 8:5-8.) Miraculous signs and wonders demonstrate that Jesus is alive. This combination of gospel preaching, deed of compassion, and miracles open nations to

**He died for all,
that those who
live should live
no longer for
themselves, but for
Him who died for
them and rose again.
2 Corinthians 5:15**





the reality of Christ. (Read Matthew 5:16; Romans 15:18-19.)

4. The key of perception. Jesus truly “*saw the multitudes*” (Matthew 9:36) Jesus did not walk indifferently through a mass of humanity, His heart went out to each needy person. Jesus “sees” people; He sees their needs, their sins, their heartaches. As our faithful High Priest, He sympathizes with our weaknesses. (Read Hebrews 4:15.) But He does not leave us in our brokenness. As God’s anointed Messiah, He liberates and heals us. (Read Luke 4:18-19; 1 John 3:8.)

5. The key of compassion. When Jesus saw the needy masses, “*He was moved with compassion for them*” (Matthew 9:36). All true ministry springs from the love of God. “*The fruit of the Spirit is love*” (Galatians 5:22). It was love that compelled God to send His Son. (Read John 3:16; Romans 5:8.) It is love that compels us to go in Christ’s name. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.) Faith works by love. (Read Galatians 5:6.) The Holy Spirit pours out God’s love in us. (Read Romans 5:5).

6. The key of leadership. Christ’s compassion for the people was stirred because He saw that they were “*like sheep having no shepherd*” (Matthew 9:36). There was no one to lead them to peace and a satisfying life. (Read Psalm 23:1-3). Jesus taught that those who would lead in His kingdom would, like Him, be servants. (Read Mark 10:42-45.) The great qualification for Christian leadership is to be in the presence of Jesus. Thank God, this is available to every believer in Christ, no matter his or her status or level of formal training. (Read Acts 4:13.)

7. The key of vision. Seeing the vast needs and the responsiveness of people to Him, Jesus said, “*The harvest truly is plentiful*” (Matthew 9:37). While others can only see overwhelming needs, the Christian leader sees overwhelming harvest. No matter how resistant to the gospel people in your area may be, there is a God-ordained spiritual harvest for you, your church, and your ministry. But you must put in the sickle of evangelism in order to reap the harvest! (Read Revelation 14:15-16.) God asked Jeremiah, “*What do you see?*” (Jeremiah 1:11). Today He asks you, “What do you see; what is your vision?” Leaders are called to transmit God’s vision. God-inspired vision focuses people and brings hope for a better future. (Read Proverbs 29:18.)

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.
Mark 10:45





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8. The key of realism. Jesus said, “*The laborers are few*” (Matthew 9:37). He was making a realistic assessment. The harvest is vast. However, there currently are not enough workers to gather the harvest. We are to be people with faith in our mouths and hope in our hearts. But we are not to embrace the heresy of denying reality. In ministry, we are to be people of faith and we are to speak faith. We are encouraged to “*call those things which do not exist as though they did*” (Romans 4:17). But faith is not falsehood. We are to take a real view of the situation, refuse to be troubled, and bring the need before God in believing prayer. (Read Philippians 4:6).

9. The key of intercession. Once the true need has been identified, we are to “*pray to the Lord of the harvest*” (Matthew 9:38). This is a victorious title Jesus gives Himself. It is His harvest and He is Lord over it! This is why we can boldly pray for the salvation of those who have not committed their lives to Christ. We know He wants to save the lost. (Read Matthew 18:11-14; 2 Peter 3:9.) We should pray largely and believe largely. The Lord of the harvest delights in seeing a great harvest of souls gathered in. (Read Jeremiah 33:3; Ephesians 3:20-21.)

10. The key of sending. Jesus taught that we are to “*pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest*” (Matthew 9:38). He used a very forceful verb which literally means to thrust workers into the harvest. The need for workers is enormous. That is why we are to pray that many new workers will be forcibly sent into the world’s ripe spiritual harvest. (Read John 4:35; Revelation 14:15-16.)



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Notes

MEMORIZE:

Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest (John 4:35).

KEY TRUTH:

These ten keys will unlock the spiritual harvest anywhere in the world.

YOUR RESPONSE:

- Commit to reaping the spiritual harvest in the field God has assigned you.
- Begin today to use these ten keys to seeing a great harvest of souls for Christ, His church, and His kingdom.

A large vertical rectangular area on the right side of the page, intended for taking notes. It features a dark header with the text 'LIFE BOOK' and 'Notes', followed by a series of horizontal lines for writing.





LIFE BOOK
Why We Go

Read Mark 16:15; 3 John 7

An old Chinese proverb states, “He who knows why can endure any how.” In other words, the person who knows the reasons behind his actions can endure any hardships in carrying out those actions. God’s Word gives abundant reasons why we are to go with the transforming message of Christ. Of course, we should increase our efforts to spread the gospel in our own nation. But renewed evangelism here is tied to renewed missions worldwide. Here are ten biblical reasons why we also are to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

1. First and foremost, we go because Jesus is worthy. Jesus is worthy to be known, obeyed and lavishly worshiped by every people and nation. The Bible says that the early Christian disciples “went forth for His name’s sake” (3 John 7).

This is what has spurred missionaries to go with the gospel ever since Jesus issued His Great Commission to His followers. The apostolic leader of the Moravians, Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, challenged Christians “to win for the Lamb the reward of His sacrifice.” Missions isn’t first about a cause, it’s about Christ. We go “for the sake of His name.”

2. We go because the Father is longing. Ever since Man’s fall in the Garden of Eden, the Father-heart of God has been wooing humanity back to Himself. (Read Genesis 3:8-9). The Bible says that God does not desire for anyone to be apart from Him. He wants all people everywhere to turn from their sins and turn to Him. God longs to bring people everywhere into His loving embrace. (Read 2 Peter 3:9.) Do you want proof that God loves you? Look at the cross! The love of God for you is proven by Christ’s atoning sacrifice for you. (Read Romans 5:8.)

3. We go because the Spirit is moving. God promised the prophet Joel that in the latter days He would pour out His Spirit on people all over the world. (Read Joel 2:28.) This is being fulfilled in our time. In the last several years Jesus Himself has appeared to hundreds of non-Chris-

**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.
Mark 16:15**





tians in dreams and visions, bringing them to faith in Him. All over the world God's Spirit is moving, drawing millions to faith in Jesus Christ. He is revealing His resurrection glory "by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3).

**So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."
John 20:21**

4. We go because the harvest is ripe. I have been preaching the gospel since I was a teenager. In all these years I've never seen such great spiritual hunger as there is today. The harvest is ripe. We must intentionally look over the fence and see a bigger world. When it is harvest time, there is nothing else on the farmer's agenda. His only job is to gather the harvest safely in, before the season of harvest is over. Our job *now* is to reap the ripe harvest of humanity. As John Wesley told his preachers, "You have one job: to win souls." (Read John 4:35.)

5. We go because people are lost. People are lost without Jesus Christ. They are away from God and cut off from His blessings and promises. (Read Isaiah 53:6; Ephesians 2:12.) Even the most tender verse in the Bible presents eternal options. (Read John 3:16). Those who put their faith in Jesus Christ have everlasting life. Those who do not put their faith in Him will perish. There could not be a more serious issue. The Apostle Paul wrote soberly of the coming judgment "*when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power*" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

God is very serious about getting the Good News of Christ to those who are sincerely seeking a relationship with Him. Cornelius was devout, prayed often, gave generously to the poor and even had an angelic visitation. Yet God went to great lengths to get the gospel to him so he could come to know Jesus Christ and be saved! The account in Acts 10 and 11 clearly shows that Peter did not consider Cornelius forgiven of his sins until he believed the message of the gospel. In fact, the angel instructed Cornelius to send for Peter "*who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved*" [future tense] (Acts 11:14). Then the Holy Spirit profoundly verified Cornelius' act of faith.

6. We go because the nations are deserving. Many years ago the missionary- statesman, Oswald J. Smith, asked the piercing ques-





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tion, “Why should anyone hear the gospel twice until everyone has heard it once?” Those without the gospel deserve to hear it. It is the most basic human right. God is determined to receive glory from every people and nation. (Read Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 15:4.)

7. We go because we are commissioned. The King of kings has commanded us to go. If we are truly His disciples, we will joyfully obey His command. Our hearts should beat in sync with God’s heart to see His global glory drench the entire earth and see His son worshiped by all tribes and nations. (Read John 5:23).

Jesus issued the Great Commission in some form in all of the Gospels and also in the Book of Acts:

- “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19).
- “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).
- “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations” (Luke 24:47).
- “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21).
- “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witness to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

This is a supernatural assignment. It is far beyond our very best human efforts. That is why Christ also promised supernatural power – the power of the Holy Spirit – each time He gave this supreme commission.

8. We go because we must give an account. The Bible reminds us that, as believers in Jesus Christ, we must give an account of our post-conversion life to Him. How did we spend our time? How did we steward our gifts? How did we invest our resources? All of this will come up for review at the judgment seat of Christ. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (Read Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10.)

9. We go because the opportunities are brief and urgent. Multitudes of people go into a Christ-less eternity every minute. This is why the evangelistic mandate is always urgent. Further, today’s opportunities are not open-ended. Harvest is always seasonal. The time to put in the sickle and reap is now! (Read Revelation 14:15). Jesus warned that night is coming and we must work in our short day of opportunity. (Read John 9:4; Romans 13:11.)

10. We go because we are people of destiny. “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Christians have been reading that verse for almost 2000 years. But if ever a group of Christians should read this passage and shout, “He’s talking about us,” it is today’s followers of Christ.

It has fallen on our generation to have within our grasp that for which other gener-





ations of Christians have prayed, dreamed and died – the completion of the Great Commission. And if it is not this generation of Christians God wants to use to evangelize the world, then who else is it?

This is not simply championing a righteous cause – even a cause as noble as world missions. It is a call to so freshly fall in love with Jesus that what is precious to Him becomes precious to us, and what is priority for Him becomes priority for us. And on this point our Lord's priority is very clear: "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

It is the love of Christ that motivates us to go with His Good News. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.) This is why we go. Far too many Christians are couch potato-ing their way through life, with no sense of God's purpose and no thrill of God's passion. How tragic, and how dishonoring to Jesus. I challenge you to become involved in God's global drama to bring worldwide honor to His Son. Fulfilling the Great Commission is – fulfilling!

**I must work the works
of Him who sent Me
while it is day; the
night is coming when
no one can work.
John 9:4**





LIFE BOOK

WEEK 52

Your Role in God's Global Plan

**Read Psalm 138:8; John 17:4; Acts 20:24;
Colossians 4:17**

In this final lesson of the *LifeBook*, I want to share with you from my heart. God knew exactly what He was doing when He ordained that you represent Jesus Christ in the new millennium. God has always had wonderful servants in every generation. But He has given you the honor of representing Him and declaring His glory in your generation. Just as David served his generation, you are to serve your generation. (Read Acts 13:36). God fashioned former leaders for their day; He is shaping you for this new century of ministry.

As you serve the Lord, remember that you are a model. Others are watching you. Someone has said, "You are the only 'Bible' that some people will read." *"You are our epistle. . . known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 3:2-3).

While we should always express God's grace to others, as ministers of the gospel we should be ruthless with ourselves, not allowing any sin or disobedience in our lives. Jesus said, *"You are the light of the world . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 5:14, 16). The light of Jesus shines through our lives as we allow the Holy Spirit to control our thoughts, words and actions.

As an effective minister, you must also be a *soulwinner*. It is your privilege and responsibility to take the initiative in sharing the gospel with others. Timothy was not an evangelist; he was a pastor. Scripture suggests that he may not have had an aggressive personality, preferring studying and teaching. Nevertheless, Paul urged him, *"Do the work of an evangelist, fulfilling your ministry"* (2 Timothy 4:5). The idea in the original language is that evangelism gives you a well-rounded ministry. In other words, if evangelism is not part of your ministry, your ministry is warped and incomplete. So, if you're a pastor, be an evangelistic pastor. If you're a teacher, be an *evangelistic* teacher. *Everything* we do in ministry should contribute in some clear way to fulfilling the Great Commission.

**That all should
honor the Son
John 5:23**





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As a Christian leader, you are also called to be an *encourager*. We are now living in the time prophesied when “*men’s hearts [are] failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth*” (Luke 21:26). Yet in the midst of “*distress of nations, with perplexity*” (Luke 21:25), we should be purveyors of great hope. Because of Jesus, we have “*strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast*” (Hebrews 6:18-19). No matter what we may endure as believers, we are to emit the triumph and beauty of Jesus. “*Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place*” (2 Corinthians 2:14). The Father’s promises and the Spirit’s power cause our hearts to literally overflow with hope! “*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*” (Romans 15:13).

One of your primary assignments as a Christian leader is to be an *equipper*. When Christ ascended into heaven, He gave gifted leaders to the church “*for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:11). We are not to be arrogant as Christian leaders, neither are we allowed to exploit in any way the people God puts in our care. It is not the responsibility of the church to release its pastoral leaders into ministry; rather, it is the responsibility of pastoral leaders to release the entire church into ministry!

Related to your role as an equipper is your responsibility as a mentor. Christianity is always just one generation away from extinction. It is imperative that we impart what we possess to the coming generation. Of course, our first responsibility is to mentor our own physical children “*in the training and admonition of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4). God did not call you to win the world and lose your own family. Your first ministry responsibility is to ensure that your wife and children are happy, fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Pastors are called upon to equip and mobilize their entire congregation, but we must also be mentoring a select few, pouring our lives into them. Paul mentored Timothy. While Jesus ministered to the multitudes, he trained twelve disciples. And even among the twelve, he gave even greater attention to three. Always be looking for young people whom God is calling out for ministry. Be a special encourager and mentor to them. In fact, we can measure our true effectiveness in what we are doing to influence the next generation for Jesus Christ.

I encourage you to give your attention to these things:

- *Pursue God daily.* Personal time with God in prayer, worship, and His Word is foundational.
- *Guard your integrity.* If people lose their trust in you, your ministry effectiveness is over. Establish true accountability. Andrew Murray wrote, “Humility is the mother virtue and the perpetual safeguard of the soul.”
- *Stay true to Scripture.* Believe God and His Word. “Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89).



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- *Make the main thing the main thing.* Exalt Christ crucified and risen. Keep evangelism and discipleship central.
- *Steward quality relationships.* Give high priority to cultivating relationships with God, your spouse, your family, and a few trusted friends.
- *Grow from opposition.* Learn from your critics. Examine your motives. Respond courteously. Obey God. Never fear people (see Philippians 1:28).
- *Protect your base.* A wise older minister counseled, “Always attack from a safe base. Your base is your marriage and family. Never endanger your base.”
- *Trust your gifts.* Discover and develop your dominant spiritual gifts.
- *Let disappointments work for you.* Steer clear of bitterness.
- *Dare greatly and expect miracles.* Exercise faith. William Carey was in his twenties when he challenged Christians to “attempt great things for God; expect great things from God.”
- *Pour your life into others.* Mentor others. Elijah poured his life into Elisha. Paul poured his life into Timothy. Jesus poured His life into His disciples. Who is your “Timothy”?
- *Do what it takes.* Count the cost, forget the cost, pay the cost.
- *Keep short accounts with God and live filled with His Spirit.* Live in such a way “that all will honor the Son” (see John 5:23). Inspire your generation to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission.

A truly successful life is measured not by its duration but by its direction; not by its parties but by its purpose, not by what was amassed but by what was dispersed, not by the embracing of things but by embracing the One Thing – to love Jesus supremely and to make Him loved by people everywhere.

As this *LifeBook* series concludes, we want to confront you with the same challenges – the same calls – that are issued in the final session of Frontline Shepherds Conferences around the world. You have been called of God to help win and disciple your nation for Christ. You have been placed by God in your role at this serious hour of church history and world history. Now it is time to act.

There is a job God wants done – in your church, in your city, in your nation, in the world – that only you can do. There may be a book in you that only you can write, a song only you can compose, a church only you can build. Open up your heart and mind! God has big plans for you!

“Now may the God of peace who brought up out Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21.)





LIFE BOOK

FURTHER TRAINING FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

Global Advance believes in cooperation and partnerships. We work with many ministries to provide resources to better equip church and business leaders for fruitful service for Jesus Christ. We have partnering relationships with these ministries and institutions. We encourage you to visit their websites for training opportunities offered by each ministry and school. We also hope you will frequently visit Global Advance's multi-language training site, www.2tim2.org.

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