EQUIPPING FOR LEADERSHIP

A 12 lesson course designed to encourage, equip, and involve Christian men and women for increased effectiveness in leadership.

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Jesus gave one final command to his disciples, to “make disciples”. The Institute for Training in Ministry (iTIM) will help your church to “equip the saints” and so help build up the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:12).

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TIM incorporates a Head, Heart, and Hands approach to learning. Head represents the content to be learned in every iTIM course. Heart represents the application of this content to the learner’s personal life. And Hands represents using this content to minister to others.

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The weekly group meeting features a discussion of the lesson, with integrative and application type questions asked in the leader’s guide.

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Learners need to commit to one hour of preparation in advance of each group session. Group leaders must commit to an additional hour weekly to prepare to lead the group session.

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Chapter 1

LEADERSHIP: ITS CHARACTERISTICS

Leadership is the most powerful force entrusted to human beings. Someone has said, “We will either use leadership, or be used by it.” Leadership is fundamental to an understanding of our world. It affects each of our lives everyday. Developing our leadership gift can enable us to truly make a difference in this one life we have to live.

Reflect for a moment on what leadership has done. With the force of leadership, a pious country gentlemen took the hungry and ragtag Army of Northern Virginia during the Civil War and caused the world to stop and marvel as he won victory after victory against impossible odds.

With leadership power, a humble lawyer from India, without firing one shot, and without holding a political office or military position, broke the strength and will of the greatest empire in the world (the British Empire) and gave birth to a new nation (India).

With this phenomenon of leadership, an obscure soldier from Corsica took a bankrupt and war-devastated France, defeated the most powerful nations on earth, and dominated Europe.

With the gift of leadership, a humble Carpenter from the most despised town in one of the most humiliated nations on earth, took a dozen of the least likely candidates for leadership—fisherman, malcontents, tax collectors, and simple people—and with them, unleashed the most powerful moral force this world has ever seen. This improbable band of ordinary men and women impacted their world for their Leader to the degree that the very word “history” has come to mean “His-story.”

Two of this Carpenter’s followers, Paul and Silas, after suffering numerous stonings, beatings, persecutions, and without armaments or bands of followers, caused the highest officials of the most powerful empire on earth (the Roman Empire) to cringe with fear when they entered the city. These same officials recognized that the
influence of leadership through Paul and Silas was “turning the whole world upside down!”

**The Need For Leadership**

There is tremendous need for leadership in our day. Reflect on the following quotes:

*These are the hard times in which a genius would wish to live. Great necessities call forth great leaders.*
—Abigail Adams, 1790 in a letter to Thomas Jefferson.

*Everybody agrees there is less of it than there used to be.*
—Warren Bennis in *Leaders—The Strategies for Taking Charge*.

*“Leadership” is a topic high on many agendas today, whether in politics, business, or the church. In part, this is because of a perceived leadership vacuum.*

*Leadership is the pivotal force behind successful organizations and to create vital and viable organizations, leadership is necessary to help organizations develop a new vision of what they can be, then mobilize the organizational change toward the new vision.* —Burt Nanus in: *Leaders-The Strategies for Taking Charge*.

Reflect again on these quotes. Then list important reasons why we need more and better leadership today.

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**Assumptions About Leadership In This Course**

It is assumed that leadership can be taught and learned. Leadership is a God-given call (Psalm 75:6-7) but also a learning process through one’s giftedness (Romans 12:6-8). Spiritual gifts are a primary factor: namely, the gifts of leadership, shepherding, administration, and faith. In Lesson 5 we will study the spiritual gifts of leadership and administration. It is our assumption however, that everyone can learn more about leadership—especially from people who have the gift of leadership and have begun to develop it. This is one of the beauties of the Body of Christ, that those who have
Chapter 2

LEADERSHIP: ITS STRATEGIES

A man once walked along where several laborers were working on the same project. “What are you doing?” he asked one man. “I’m digging a ditch,” came the drab reply. Not satisfied with this answer, he asked another worker the same question. The man straightened and replied, “I’m building a wall.” But a third man, with bright eyes and an inspired tone, said, “I’m building a cathedral!”

This story is a reminder of the following poignant statement found on the wall of a church in Sussex, England (circa 1730):

- A vision without a task is but a dream.
- A task without a vision is drudgery.
- A vision and a task is the hope of the world.

Researchers studying leadership have long sought the essence of leadership behavior. While there is no general consensus, for the sake of our focus and discussion, eight major strategies of leadership will be presented in this lesson, based on the life of the great Old Testament leader, Nehemiah. Some have called these strategies, others have called them themes, and others have called them areas of competency. Whatever their label, these eight strategies are found in all effective leaders.

Strategy I: Leadership Begins With a Passion to Solve a Problem

Every true leader is impassioned to respond to a problem. Leaders are always motivated to change, improve, or re-create the present environment into a new and more appealing future.

Such was the case for Nehemiah. God’s people had been in exile under the Babylonian captivity. The land of Israel was in shambles; Jerusalem had been destroyed. Now the exiles were hoping to rebuild some semblance of a city on the Jerusalem site. Thousands of Jews had returned to their homeland only to be overpowered and plundered by the surrounding enemies. The walls of the city were
non-existent. The people were vulnerable and the situation was chaotic. Nehemiah 1:3 says, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the Province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” Nehemiah’s response to this was, “I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and prayed before the Lord God of heaven.”


*By the time Lincoln took office, seven states had seceded from the Union to form the Confederate States of America. Barely ten days before he took the oath of office on March 4, 1861, Jefferson Davis was sworn in as President of the Confederacy, in Montgomery, Alabama. President Buchanan had given up hope of holding the country together and was simply waiting for his term to expire. Moreover, Buchanan left Washington proclaiming that he was “the last President of the United States.”*

Rumors persisted that Lincoln’s inauguration was to be disrupted, the President killed, and the city taken by the Confederates. The Nation’s Capitol was placed under armed alert. When Lincoln delivered his first inaugural address, the nation was in a crisis more severe and ominous than at any other time in American history. The country was divided, hatred was the most prevalent emotion, and there was no effective leadership anywhere in the government.

Such was the situation for a man who had never before held an executive leadership position; who had been only a one-term national Congressman; who had had no military experience to speak of, and had never been in a battle. Abraham Lincoln appeared unable to lead the Nation out of its dark dilemma. Few people at the time could have known, however, that he possessed all the leadership qualities and abilities necessary to save the Union. And, virtually no one would have been able to predict the unparalleled strength of his leadership—that he would seize upon the very circumstances at hand, created by the crises of confusion, urgency, and desperation, to exercise the full power of his office, and to create new limits of authority and leadership for the presidency.

Lincoln, like Nehemiah, rose to the occasion by responding with a deep burden and an impassioned drive to respond to the crisis at
Chapter 3

LEADERSHIP:
ITS BIBLICAL MODELS

LET’S GET RID OF MANAGEMENT:

People don’t want to be managed. They want to be led. Whoever heard of a world manager? World leader, yes. Educational leader. Political leader. Religious leader. Scout leader. Community leader. Labor leader. Business leader. They lead. They don’t manage. The carrot always wins over the stick. Ask your horse. You can lead your horse to water, but you can’t manage him to drink. If you want to manage somebody, manage yourself. Do that well and you’ll be ready to stop managing and start leading.

What does this quote mean to you?

___________________________________________________________
________________________________________

“To lead others, one must be master of oneself.” This statement by J. Oswald Sanders is recognized in both secular and Christian circles. To lead others, one must be able to master one’s own life. Failure to lead a life of discipline and priorities means failure to lead others. By the same token, one cannot influence and lead others beyond where we ourselves have gone. William Hazlitt said, “Those who can command themselves, command others.”

What we are saying is that the character of the leader determines much of his leadership impact. What do we mean by “character of the leader”? A leader must have the kind of personal qualities that would-be followers respect. The Biblical view of leadership focuses far more on the quality of being than on the quality of doing. The famous organizational “guru”, Peter Drucker, observes that “quality

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of character” doesn't make a leader, but the lack of it flaws the entire process. Without certain character qualities, a Christian leader becomes useless to God.

Leadership, then, starts with the character of the leader. We need to ask, what kind of a person am I? And what effect does it have on my work? The being part of us needs to be taken care of so that we can be better at the doing part.

God is thus more concerned about the process than He is about the goal. That is, He wants to conform each of us to the image of Christ—that’s the bottom line. As leaders we constantly need to be aware of the sub-plots. What is God teaching me in this situation?

As you evaluate the following two character models from the Old Testament, allow yourself to reflect on the kind of person you are, and the effect this has on your work.

**Moses as a Leadership Model**

Much can be gleaned from Moses about leadership. He is recognized by many as the greatest of the Jewish leaders.

Hebrews 11:24-29 spells out numerous leadership characteristics that Moses possessed, including:

**FAITH.** How do you see this characteristic shown in Moses’ life (v. 24)?

Why is faith important for leaders?

**INTEGRITY.** How do you see this characteristic shown in Moses’ life (v. 25)?

Why is it needed in leadership?

**VISION.** How do you see this characteristic shown in Moses’ life (v. 26)?

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Chapter 4

LEADERSHIP:
ITS BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

The world needs leaders . . . who cannot be bought; whose word is their bond; who put character above wealth; who possess opinions and a will; who are larger than their vocations; who do not hesitate to take chances; who will not lose their individuality in a crowd; who will be as honest in small things as in great things; who will make no compromise with wrong; whose ambitions are not confined to their own selfish desires, who will not say they do it “because everybody else does it”; who are true to their friends through good report and evil report, in adversity as well as in prosperity; who do not believe that shrewdness and hardheadedness are the best qualities for winning success; who are not ashamed or afraid to stand for the truth when it is unpopular, who can say “no” (although all the rest of the world says “yes”).

Nicholas Murray Butler, a former president of Columbia University, said, “There are three kinds of people in the world—those who don’t know what’s happening, those who watch what’s happening, and those who make things happen.” The Christian leader is someone who is used by God to make things happen. What are the principles of leadership that are modeled by great leaders? Though we could look at many different leaders in Scripture, we’ve chosen in this study to examine the principles of leadership from Acts chapter 27.

Turn to this passage now and observe the following:

• Paul is being sent to Rome after two years of imprisonment in Caesarea.

• He was taken prisoner there after his return from establishing many churches on his third missionary journey into the Gentile world.

• In an effort to heal the Jew/Gentile split, he brought with him an offering from the Gentiles to the church in Jerusalem. He also

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2Adapted with minor changes from The Making of A Christian Leader by Ted W. Engstrom (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan).
brought with him some Gentiles.

• While guilty of nothing, Paul created such a clamor in Jerusalem that he was arrested and taken to Caesarea for safekeeping.

• After two years of waiting, Paul exercised his right as a Roman citizen to appeal his case to Caesar, so Rome is transporting him from Caesarea to Rome by ship.

It should be observed that when the journey starts, the last person in rank on the ship is Paul, the prisoner. But by the time the voyage is over he is running the whole operation! Why? *Because a leader, like cream, will rise to the top.*

From this enlightening passage we observe eleven principles of a leader.

**A Leader Must be Deserving of Trust**

Paul was a prisoner but was afforded special treatment by Julius, the centurion, and was allowed to go into Sidon to see his friends, vs. 1-3. Knowing he would pay with his life should Paul escape, why do you think Julius allowed Paul off the ship to see his friends (cf. Acts 16:27-28)?

Trust is when I have confidence that you have my best interests at heart. Julius believed that Paul wouldn’t do anything that would harm him. You will be surprised and amazed at what people will do for you when they trust you.

This leads to the servant’s attitude of Matthew 20:25-28, which convinces others that you have their best interests at heart. Conversely, when people see that you primarily have your own interests at heart, they will cease to trust you. They feel used by you to accomplish your own ends. Your motives are questioned. A leader must be trusted; that is, he must have a servant’s heart, seeking the best interest of others.

**A Leader Takes Initiative**

Paul disregarded his lowly position and seized the initiative by
LEADERSHIP:
ITS SPIRITUAL GIFTS

No Christian leader can be effective apart from understanding the nature of the Body of Christ, and how spiritual gifts relate to that Body. Christian leaders generally agree that the study of spiritual gifts was a lost art in the Church until the last few decades. The resulting ignorance crippled and handicapped ministry of local churches. We thank God that this long-buried truth has been brought back into the light. The implications of spiritual gifts to leadership in the church are:

THE CHURCH IS BUILT BY JESUS CHRIST AND NOT BY PEOPLE. That is, the ministry is His ministry, not human plans and effort. In your own words, how did Jesus state this promise in Matthew 16:18?

__________________________________________________________________________

JESUS BUILDS HIS CHURCH THROUGH SPIRIT-EMPowered PEOPLE. Look at Acts 1:4, 8. What did Jesus say would be the effect of the coming Holy Spirit?

__________________________________________________________________________

PEOPLE ARE GIVEN DIFFERENT SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN ORDER TO DO THE WORK OF MINISTRY. Examine I Corinthians 12:4-7. For what purpose is each one given the “manifestation of the Spirit”?

__________________________________________________________________________

What do you understand this to mean? (Compare vs. 8-13.)

__________________________________________________________________________
Jesus Christ is in the world today only through His people. It is these people, functioning according to their gifts, who are making Christ real in our world. Check out I Corinthians chapter. 12, then focus on v. 27. How will this truth affect the way you live?

It is imperative that church leadership see all members as “ministers.” Every person who has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him has part of the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world. He or she is a minister! This is both an awesome privilege and a great responsibility.

One vital ministry we are all to participate in is emphasized in II Corinthians 5:17-21. What expressions in this passage most clearly convey this responsibility to you?

The Spiritual Gifts of Administration and Leadership

Among the spiritual gifts mentioned in Scripture are those of leadership and administration. The gift of leadership is mentioned in Romans 12:8, and the gift of administration in 1 Corinthians 12:28. Church leaders express different opinions as to whether leadership includes administration, or whether these should be seen as separate gifts. I believe the two are distinct but related gifts, to help equip God’s people for ministry. In other words, they each have distinct emphases and roles, but need to work with each other. At times certainly, they overlap.

The Gift of Administration

The words “administration,” “management,” and “government” are used in much the same way. Thus business and industry have managers, while schools and hospitals have administrators. Law firms have managers and managing partners. The City Manager of a community may very well have a master’s degree in “Public Administration”. We will treat these terms as synonymous.

The Greek word for administration is “kubernesis”, meaning
Chapter 6

LEADERSHIP:
ITS MAJOR TASKS

We've talked a lot about leadership; its characteristics, its strategies, the Biblical models, and how spiritual gifts are used in leadership. Sometimes though, the things we know about leadership can get in the way of the major tasks that we as leaders should focus on. When it gets down to the daily “to do” list, what should a leader be doing? Basically, there are four major areas we need to focus on. You could call these “the big four”! These are: planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Let’s look at each of these in turn.

Planning

People are future-oriented beings. We plan on the basis of what we have perceived in the past, but we try to project this understanding into the future. Planning is basically an attempt to move from “now” to “then”; to change things from “the way things are” to “the way things ought to be.”

Some people say, “Since no one can be sure of the future, why plan?” Basically it’s to improve the probability that what we believe should happen will happen! The point of the planning arrow figuratively touches the goal. The steps that need to be accomplished stretch back along the arrow into the present to create a “plan.”

An outstanding story of World War II that discloses the importance of planning is the British offensive against the German Army in North Africa. Under General Rommel, the Germans had pushed nearly the whole way to Cairo, Egypt. In desperation, the British High Command assigned the task of turning the situation around to
Field Marshall Montgomery.

Immediately Montgomery let it be known that he was going to take the initiative. He planned carefully and with great detail. Throughout the whole chain of command, down to the privates, each person was told specifically what his job was to be. A perfectly coordinated team was formed. Each man knew precisely the Commander’s objectives and how they were to be achieved. When the British offensive began with this precision of planning, the mighty German Army was routed. It became one of the early turning points of the Second World War.

Montgomery was successful because, through solid planning, he was able to excite, motivate, and challenge all of his troops. It was this challenge to perform which made the difference! Planning has been defined as:

*Work done today to cause to happen tomorrow what we specifically want to happen.*

Planning is spelling out goals and defining them. Planning involves setting goals and objectives for the organization and developing “work maps.” Work maps show how goals and objectives are to be accomplished. Without goal setting, the hoped for achievement becomes a rudderless operation.

**Goal setting must be specific.** Vague, general goals may have a place, but eventually we must have specifics. To illustrate, a football team has a long-range goal of winning the game by scoring the most points. Its intermediate goal is to carry the ball into the opponent’s end zone. But it must also be committed to immediate goals of how to make first downs in order to arrive there, yard by yard. These are the specific planned-out plays. In a similar way, organizational goal setting sets specific goals so all players know the next “play.”

**Goals must be attainable and measurable.** For example, it would be foolish to set objectives to double the number of baptisms and membership for the next year, without increasing the church’s emphasis on evangelism, its program staff, its evangelistic programs and opportunities, and its budget.

**Goals should be reachable within a certain time frame.** If the completion is too distant, the players lose hope and perspective.
Chapter 7

LEADERSHIP:
MOTIVATING OTHERS

Management is discovering that employees do not work better or maintain high levels of loyalty simply because they have bigger salaries or more fringe benefits. There are deeper factors involved. Probably no area of management research has been given more attention than motivation theory. One of the most significant findings that has come out of this extensive research is the apparent priority of non-monetary factors on the job.

Principles Of Motivation

In Kenneth Gangel’s *Competent To Lead*, Dr. Mungo Miller displays six gems that psychologists have extracted from their research on motivation:

**MOTIVATION IS PSYCHOLOGICAL, NOT LOGICAL.** The behavior we see in ourselves and others may appear to be illogical, but somehow, inside the individual, what he is doing makes sense to him.

**MOTIVATION IS FUNDAMENTALLY AN UNCONSCIOUS PROCESS.** While the reasons why they become motivated may be unclear, the experience exerts a powerful influence on their life.

**MOTIVATION IS AN INDIVIDUAL MATTER.** The key to a person’s behavior lies within himself.

**MOTIVATING NEEDS DIFFER FROM PERSON TO PERSON** and in any individual they vary from time to time.

**MOTIVATION IS INEVITABLY A SOCIAL PROCESS.** We must depend on others for satisfaction of many of our needs.

**WE ARE GUARDED BY HABITS ESTABLISHED BY MOTIVATION PROCESSES THAT WERE ACTIVE MANY YEARS EARLIER,** in the vast majority of our daily actions.

In what way is Proverbs 4:23 in agreement with these principles?
Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11. What can you see in Solomon’s life values or life-style that produced this struggle with motivation?

The most important part of our person is what comes from within. Our inner nature and thought processes are essential to everything we do. Motivation is the internal view that every person has of himself and how he sees himself in relation to others.

**Motivation And Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs**

According to psychologist Abraham Maslow, humans are perpetually wanting organisms. Their wants stem from five basic human needs. In this hierarchy concept, it is the unsatisfied needs that dominate a person and organize his/her behavior. Once a need has been satisfied, it is no longer a “need.” This hierarchy of basic human needs, arranged from lower to higher, is:

- **Physiological needs**—to feel that we have adequate food, clothing, shelter, etc.
- **Safety needs**—to live in conditions where we feel safe from harm.
- **Belongingness needs**—to feel accepted and appreciated in a given group.
- **Esteem needs**—to feel that we are of value and have importance.
- **Self-actualization needs**—to feel that we can or are doing something worthwhile and fulfilling.

In light of these motivating needs, mull over the following questions:

Why is it important to discover where individual group members are in relation to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs?

How can you as a group leader help discover these needs?
Chapter 8

LEADERSHIP:
LEARNING FROM CONFLICT

“One of the greatest trials of full-time Christian ministry is criticism”, warns Kenneth Prior in his book, *Perils of Leadership* (InterVarsity Press, 1990). J. Oswald Sanders, the famous missionary statesman and author, stresses this point, saying:

*No one need aspire to leadership in the work of God who is not prepared to pay a price greater than his contemporaries and colleagues are willing to pay. True leadership always exacts a heavy toll on the whole man, and the more effective the leadership is, the higher the price to be paid.*
—J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*

Criticism is a price paid by leaders, and if one cannot handle criticism, it means that basically he/she is emotionally and spiritually immature. This defect will eventually show up and will impede a leader’s progress and the group’s common goal/vision. Every leader has to expect some criticism, but criticism can work for good if the leader is able to accept it and learn from it.

Trouble and criticism should be received constructively. This is what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he said, “We glory in tribulations also.” This same emphasis appears in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus declared that we are blessed whenever we are subject to persecution. This is a point of view the non-Christian cannot understand. However it is consistently taught in Scripture. For example “Whoever wants to save his life will lose it,” Jesus said, “but whoever loses his life for me and the gospel will save it” (Mark 8:35). Puzzled non-Christians think such an assertion absurd, but the Biblical reasons are profound and important.

A key passage to keep in mind is Matthew 5:11-12, “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad now because great is your reward in Heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the Prophets before you.”
There are different kinds of conflict. Each must be faced and responded to appropriately in order to become an effective leader.

**Conflict With God**

Nothing should be more sobering to a leader than realizing he is in direct conflict with God! What a sobering thought! In Romans 8:31 the Apostle Paul writes, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” The greatest blessing of life is to have God on our side! The greatest curse is to have God on the other side! In Ezekiel 34:10, God says, “I am against the Shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock.”

Though written many centuries ago, the words of the Prophet Ezekiel contain powerful and relevant messages for all who are today’s servant leaders. Summarize God’s complaint against the Shepherds in Ezekiel 34: 2-4.

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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What was the result of this kind of treatment, v. 5?

________________________________________________________________________

What does God warn He will do as a consequence, v. 10?

________________________________________________________________________

This lesson from Ezekiel 34 is both graphic and powerful. In verse 31 of this chapter God makes it clear that he is not talking about sheep, but about __________________. Consequently He is primarily speaking about His people’s *spiritual* state and needs.

In what ways do leaders today sometimes exploit people to gain personal benefit?

________________________________________________________________________

What should be done with people under our care who are either “weak”, “sick”, or “injured”? 
Chapter 9

LEADERSHIP: TREATING GROUP ILLNESSES

A person can be healthy but still not be physically perfect. But, it’s impossible for a person to live, grow and function normally without health in the major body systems. For example, a functioning immune system is essential to life. Without it we are victimized by many diseases. Acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is such an alarming disease because it attacks the very system that protects human life from the constant attack by enemy germs.

People can have physical problems and still grow and function fairly normally. However, it is impossible for one of the vital signs of the human body to fail and the body to still remain healthy and grow. In the same way, a church can have areas of “disease” or “weakness” and still be relatively healthy and continue to grow. However, a church cannot lose one of its vital signs and still grow well and healthy.

What are vital signs of health in a church or group? What are signs of illness or disease in a group or church? First, let’s talk briefly about the vital signs of health. Secondly, let’s talk about the illnesses often affecting groups and churches.

Vital Signs of Health

WORSHIP: The Westminster Shorter Catechism says, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Ultimately, the purpose of our human life and of every spiritual group is to bring glory to God and to represent Him in an honorable way.

The New Testament word for glorify is “doxa” which refers to a person’s reputation. When we are glorifying God, we are enhancing the reputation of God.

In worship, God’s people come into contact with the living God and reflect His character and reputation in their own lives and in the world in which they live. Healthy churches and healthy individuals
are people who are in a right relationship with God and therefore are able to be in a right relationship with themselves and with others. At the root of all human problems is a dysfunction in our relationship with God. I John 2:4-11 makes it very clear that our relational problems with others are a direct reflection of our relational problem with God.

So, a vital sign for any healthy group is an active, vibrant and honest worship of the living God.

Are you, personally, a worshipper of God? Do you read His Word, give praise to Him, and honor Him with your time, talent, and treasure?

Does the group you are a part of have a healthy, dynamic, regular worship of God?

What suggestions would you have for your group to enhance its worship?

FELLOWSHIP: A right relationship with God is reflected in a healthy and right relationship with others. Fellowship is defined as “a deep and complete sharing in common with others through Jesus Christ.” It includes the building of deep and loving relationships. Fellowship provides the community and the socialization that God has designed into our human nature.

Healthy churches and healthy groups practice fellowship. People have often limited fellowship to sharing a cup of coffee or eating together. While it may include food and common meals, fellowship goes much deeper. It has to do with sharing the joys and the deep
Almost everyone agreed in the fall of 1990 that the Oakland Athletics were a powerful baseball team. With players like Ricky Henderson, just chosen the MVP of his baseball league and one of the greatest base fielders in history, Jose Canseco, the powerful slugger, and many other outstanding players—the “A’s” were judged easy victors over the Cincinnati Reds in the 1990 World Series. It was a shock and major upset in the long and storied history of baseball when the Reds swept that World Series. The Oakland A’s relearned in their humiliation, what the famous slugger, Babe Ruth, had said decades earlier: “Yesterday’s home runs won’t win today’s ball game.”

This baseball philosophy has something to say more than just to baseball athletes and fans. It has something to say to everyone who is tempted to coast on past successes. It has much to say to Christians and to the institutional church. You see, most churches have a large rear-view mirror and a small windshield. They are churches that look at the past, the good old days, the days of greatness under such and such a pastor, or when so and so was a key leader. America is full of churches that mostly look in the rear view mirror, longing for the past. Only rarely and briefly do they look through their small windshield at where they are going in the future.

Effective churches do need a rear-view mirror. They need to remember and be grateful for their past. But, they must only allow themselves a small rear-view mirror—because most of the vision should be reserved to look forward through the much larger windshield of the future—the forward journey!

What is the mission of the church? What should you as a leader be focusing on? For the sake of clarity and simplicity, we will focus on seven foundational statements that answer seven key questions.

**Our Purpose—Why We Exist**

Jesus always operated according to the mandate of His life’s
purpose. Several times during His ministry He reminded His disciples and others of that purpose:

For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10b)

I glorified you on earth having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. (John 17:4)

Most businesses have found management by objectives to be an extremely helpful principle. This system forced all the activities of an organization to answer to the ultimate objectives of the whole organization.

The church too must always base its activities and priorities on its purpose for existence. Mission Hills Church in Denver Colorado has the following purpose statement in answer to the question, “Why do we exist?”

Based on the Bible as the standard of truth, the purpose of Mission Hills Church is to honor God by bringing lives into harmony with Him and one another through a balanced emphasis on worship, fellowship, discipleship and evangelism.

Notice that this purpose statement emphasizes both the vertical relationship with God and the horizontal relationship to other people. The intention is to constantly bring before all members of the church our primary responsibility to God, and our secondary responsibility to other people. These responsibilities fulfill the two great commandments: “To love God and to love others.” In addition, this purpose statement puts a focus on the four major areas that maintain balance in the life of the church: worship, fellowship, discipleship, and evangelism.

State your church or organization’s purpose in a sentence.
Chapter 11

LEADERSHIP: IMPLEMENTING THE CHURCH’S VISION

Perhaps the greatest single weakness of the contemporary Christian church is that millions of supposed members are not really involved at all, and, what is worse, do not think it’s strange that they are not. As soon as we recognize Christ’s intention to make His Church a militant company, we understand at once that the conventional arrangement cannot suffice. There is no real chance of victory in a campaign if 90% of the soldiers are untrained and uninvolved, but that is exactly where we stand now. Most alleged Christians do not now understand that loyalty to Christ means sharing personally in His ministry, going or staying as the situation requires.

The call to today’s church leaders is to change this depressing scenario. The church must be a training center for making disciples. Though it must be a loving community caring for the wounded, it also must be a center of training for Christian soldiers. This requires the implementation of the church mission and vision. It must be more than talk. It must daily walk!

Bill Hull addresses this issue of talk vs. walk:

The crisis at the heart of the church is that we give disciple-making lip service, but do not practice it. We have lost the integrity of our mission. The cardio-vascular system of the Body will not get better until we change our ways and prioritize the production of healthy, reproducing men and women who will penetrate their world. The cardio-vascular system of the church is the principles that produce the right product. When it produces and reproduces the right product, like any healthy body, it will be able to carry out its function. When we obey Christ’s commission, two things happen: We create healthy Christians; healthy Christians reproduce, and the Body grows, then multiplies, and the world becomes evangelized.
The Need for Implementation Systems

Without an implementation system, the average Christian does not understand how to progressively advance in Christian growth, in training, and in ministry impact. Millions of Christians simply go through the motions of “church.” Most churches are ill equipped to prepare and guide their members into increasing levels of training and ministry effectiveness. George Barna, well known Christian researcher and writer says:

Rather than take persons who volunteered their services and plug them into the most gaping hole that existed at the moment, user-friendly churches first helped people to determine what God had called them to do. They believe that each person had an area of giftedness, and they strove to use that person’s talents and skills in those areas. The responsibility of the church was to: 1) identify those gifts and talents, 2) refine those gifts; 3) provide opportunities for individuals to utilize those gifts in significant ministry, and 4) support the individual in ministry.


To do this, of course, every church must set up systems and develop a staff that will equip the church body to become a “spiritual fighting army.” Jesus’ model was to increasingly expose His disciples, involve them, delegate to them, and release them for ministry. Churches today must follow that model. We must not only talk about a mission, but also develop an understandable and progressive ladder for spiritual and ministry development.

We believe every person coming to our church needs to feel four things: “I’m welcomed!” “I’m loved!” “I’m growing!” “I’m making a difference!” We want everyone in our church to feel and even say them! This is how the system works:

Enfolding—“I Am Welcomed!”

Building bridges to people is essential for every church. The problem is that many churches are not perceived as truly friendly. Becoming a “visitor friendly” or “warmly welcoming church” is more difficult than one would think. For example: Do newcomers know where to park at your church? Is there a special space available for them? How do they find the rest room, the nursery, the Sunday School classroom, the youth area, or perhaps the worship center itself?
Chapter 12

LEADERSHIP: CREATING A CLIMATE FOR GROWTH

All living things require a certain climate for growth and health. No tomato plant can withstand freezing temperatures. No frog can withstand a boiling temperature. Human beings must live on a planet like earth that has a climate generally hospitable to human existence.

The church is a living organism, too. The true church is alive spiritually. For spiritual growth, a certain climate is essential. Churches that have an unhealthy climate become weakened, diseased, and even die. But churches that have a healthy climate generally grow, reproduce, and continue with healthy life. Nine categories for healthy churches suggested by Al Broom (of Church Dynamics International) are:

Prayer

God’s spiritual work must be accomplished by God’s spiritual means. In other words, prayer is absolutely essential to the spiritual dynamic of a church. The believer and the church that does not pray, has been cut off from its primary source of spiritual vision and power.

Jesus modeled prayer and dependence on His Heavenly Father. His decision to choose disciples was preceded by a night in prayer. His daily responsibilities were preceded by early morning prayer times. His battle before the cross was resolved through prayer.

As you look at the Epistles of the New Testament, you see the continual emphasis on prayer for winning the spiritual warfare and being effective in outreach (Ephesians 6:18-20; Philippians 1:3-11; 4:6-7; Colossians 1:9-12; 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; 5:17; 5:25; II Thessalonians 3:1-2; etc.)

Prayer is a foundational principle for the visionary and Christ-obeying church. According to George Barna in his book User Friendly Churches:
Prayer is one of the foundation stones of ministry in the user friendly churches examined for this book. The call to prayer was the battle cry of the congregation: it rallied the troops. These people understood the power of prayer. They actively and consistently included prayer in their services, their events, their meetings and their personal ministries.”

In what ways have you found prayer helpful to you personally?

____________________________________________________________________________________

What strategies is your church presently using to fulfill the mandate of prayer?

____________________________________________________________________________________

What new strategies should the church develop to become more effective in prayer?

____________________________________________________________________________________

**Purpose**

Each church should understand its purpose in the world and therefore how its ministries and activities should be focused. In keeping with Matthew 28:19-20, each church should be seeking to bring people into a right relationship with God and a right relationship with each other through obedience to Jesus Christ’s commands. As Barna again notes:

*At each successful church, there was a clear understanding of God’s plans to give the church a hope and a future. It was not perceived to be the vision of the pastor, or a strategic planning committee, or one promoted by the denomination. It was understood as God’s vision for the church. There’s a huge difference between God’s vision for the church and the ideas we dream up on our own.”*

In *The Disciple Making Church* Bill Hull puts “an intentional strategy” as the first of eight New Testament principles of the discipling church.

Obviously, a healthy church must have a deep sense of God’s vision...