

Study Guide

Leader Strong Churches

by Truman Scott



“Respect those who work hard among you”
– I Thessalonians 5:12

SUNSET
International Bible Institute



LEADER STRONG CHURCHES

**A Study of the Common
Characteristics of
Well Led Churches**

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COURSE INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Student:

You are beginning an exciting study of churches that produce strong leaders. The format is the presentation of twelve truths that growing churches understand. To the extent that each of these twelve truths are understood and practiced the churches will grow and develop viable and productive leaders. Many of the problems faced in local churches come out of a failure, in whole or part, to believe and practice these truths. So, each class session begins with the statement, "Leader Strong Churches understand.....one of the fundamental truths.

Course Format

1. The course is being used through three study programs at Sunset: A/ either it stands alone as a twelve lesson course for credit in the *Leadership Certification* program and for other interests or B/ it may come packaged as Part I with a Part II course on Church Growth, "*Accents on Church Growth*" by Gerald Paden, in the *Bible Study and Ministry* certification program or C/ in the *Bachelor of Biblical Studies (BBS)* degree program. **All degree students must have made a specific application to the Sunset Administration for the BBS degree and paid the stated fees to get credit for this course.**
2. The individual student or group must purchase the course DVD's containing twelve lectures of about thirty minutes duration, recorded in the Sunset studio.
3. A printed Study Guide is included with each DVD/Audio set. They can also be purchased separately for each student in a group.
4. The assignments to be completed depend on what a student wants to achieve:
 - a. A student taking the course at the Certification level (either for Leadership or Bible Study and Ministry certification) must complete the Reflection Questions at the end of each of the twelve sessions. If studying with a group, they will be discussed in the group. If studying as an individual, discuss them with someone in the congregation. Preferably one of the leaders of the church. **Choose one in each lesson to write a response on and send it in with the appropriate test.**
 - b. A student taking the course for Degree Credit in the Bachelor of Bible Studies program, whether individually or in a group, must complete the Certification Reflection questions. All assignments must be electronically generated and presented in the best grammatical and writing style. When sent, accurate information as to sender, course, topic and date must be included.
 - c. Additionally, a teacher in a group setting may require varied testing periods or give additional assignments than required in these course instructions. But, a student studying individually or studying for a BBS degree must complete the three Sectional Exams after each block of courses are completed (Lessons 1-4, 5-8 and 9-12).
5. The lecture materials of the course are available in printed, book form. The book will contain four additional chapters of leadership essays.

COURSE PROCEDURE

1. Listen to each lecture, audio or video, and then read and reread the lecture in the Course Book Then make thorough notes on the contents of each lecture. Be so acquainted with the contents that you could teach the lesson in an appropriate setting, making any adaptations that would be helpful.
2. According to the levels noted above (Group or Individual), complete the written assignments to be submitted to your local mentor or sent to Sunset as an individual student. Assignments for each session must be completed before proceeding to the next session.
3. Group leaders (e.g. Satellite Schools), according to their own discretion, will use the Reflection Questions for group discussions or add other assignments.
4. At the end of each of the first eleven sessions there is a preview of the next lesson. Reading the preview and praying for God's guidance in the upcoming study are "must" activities of each student.

COURSE PURPOSE

Growing strong leaders is vital to the future of any church. Letting the world develop our leaders in educational, industrial, military or social areas, while having its value, cannot adequately grow spiritual leaders that will shepherd the flock of God. There must be a healthy and biblically founded environment for growing viable, spiritual shepherds. For churches to provide that environment and excel in growing strong, effective leaders they must understand the dynamics and conditions for accomplishing their mission. This course aims at providing twelve areas of understanding that are essential dynamics in growing godly Shepherds.

INTRODUCTION

Many are writing these days about the characteristics of a growing church. Others are writing and speaking about the obstacles to church growth and the plans and programs that can make a difference in the growth experiences of churches.

A book on church growth would describe a growing church as follows:

- Its worship is celebrative
- Its members are biblically educated.
- Its leaders are biblically mature.
- Its purpose and goals are well defined and clearly communicated.
- Its members have discovered, developed and are employing their rich, ministry gifts.
- Its purpose groups are dedicated in fulfilling the congregational goals.
- Its members and programs are people concerned.
- Its members and leaders are whole in Christian virtue and piety.

In this series of lessons, we will be studying church growth, but, with a focus on the characteristics of Leader Strong churches and their development of quality leaders. Throughout the studies, our attention will be given to what makes a church a leader strong church and how a leader strong church is God's chosen place for developing leaders after His own heart. Each one of the separate studies will feature a characteristic of a leader strong church. This emphasis is hoped to encourage the students to purpose to be such a church and determine that a rich and steady stream of good leaders will emerge from the congregation.

It has been said that the best test to determine if a congregation is a *parasite church*, (i.e. getting its strength from the health of others), or a *producing church* (i.e. growing its own leaders) is in the health and continuity of its leadership. They never get to the place that they are one heart beat away from not having sufficient leaders, especially in having able elders. Leader strong churches are producing churches. They always have an amble supply of prepared men ready for leader assignments. Such churches even send out a steady stream of able and well trained preachers to help other churches grow and be productive.

What you will study in this course has been experienced in local churches. Most readers will identify with what will be in discussion, either from their knowledge of Scriptures or in personal experiences. Each reader is asked to improve on the comments found here either from Scripture or from useful experiences and pass on the improved information to others. Let's aim on raising up multiplied, leader strong churches throughout the land.

—Truman Scott

OTHER COURSES AVAILABLE

1. Acts –Abe Lincoln
2. Apologetics I (Historical Christian Evidences) – Dr. Ed Wharton
3. Apologetics II (Certainties of Christian Faith) –Ted Stewart *
4. Bible History I – Dr. Richard Rogers
5. Bible History II – Dr. Richard Rogers
6. Biblical Interpretation – Charles Speer
7. Christian Counseling, Basics of – Dr. Ken Wilson
8. Christian Counseling, Introduction to – Dr. Truman Scott
9. Christian Home, The – Dr. Ken Wilson
10. Colossians, Philemon – Bob Martin
11. First Corinthians – Abe Lincoln
12. Second Corinthians – Abe Lincoln
13. Daniel – Ted Stewart
14. Distinctive Nature of the Church – Dr. Ed Wharton
15. Ephesians – Gerald Paden
16. Excellence in Leadership – Dr. Richard Rogers
17. Galatians – Dr. Ed Wharton
18. Greek I – Dr. Leon Crouch
19. Hebrews – Gerald Paden
20. History of the Church in Acts – Richard Rogers
21. Homiletics I – Dr. Ed Wharton
22. Homiletics II – Dr. Truman Scott
23. Isaiah – Dr. Richard Rogers
24. James – Ron Bontrager
25. Jeremiah – Dayton Keesee
26. John, I, II, III – Gerald Paden
27. John, Gospel of – Doyle Gilliam
28. Life of Christ – Dr. Richard Rogers
29. Minor Prophets – Dr. Richard Rogers
30. Peter, Epistles of – Ted Stewart
31. Philippians – Doyle Gilliam
32. Psalms – Charles Speer
33. Revelation – Dr. Richard Rogers
34. Romans – Dr. Richard Rogers
35. Sacrificial System – Gerald Paden
36. Scheme of Redemption – Dr. Ed Wharton
37. Spiritual Living for Ministers – Dr. Truman Scott
38. Theology of Missions – Dr. Richard Rogers
39. Thessalonians, I & II – Doyle Gilliam
40. Timothy & Titus – Tex Williams

LESSON ONE

The Urgency of Good Leaders

INTRODUCTION:



leader strong church understands the urgency of developing and maintaining a stable and continuing flow of good leaders. This sense of urgency is derived from multiple considerations.

LESSON AIM: To get an overall view of the urgency of training and building strong and whole leaders in the church.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. See that the lack of trained adequate leadership in the church is a reflection of the lack of good leaders all around us.
 2. Examine the leadership quantity and quality as it exists in the churches in our time.
 3. Learn that the lack of qualified men to be leaders and elders today demands affirmative action in the area of training programs planed and financed by churches.
-

THE URGENCY OF LEADERSHIP SEEN IN THE WORLD AROUND US.

A. The Need for World Leaders

1. Trustworthy leaders needed.
2. The problems often seem larger than the abilities of the elected leaders.
3. There is a never-ending longing on the part of the public for principled and wise leaders who are capable in confronting the task before the citizens.

B. Conflicts and Wars Underline the Urgency of Competent Leaders

1. History records serious, costly, leadership mistakes in the many battles fought among the nations.
2. The Civil War between the States was likely prolonged for lack of competent leadership.

C. Financial Upheavals, Resulting in Deep Recessions or Staggering Inflations Can Often Be Traced to Incompetent or Unprincipled Leadership

SEEN IN THE ABUNDANT OPPORTUNITIES AROUND US

A. Quickly Passing Opportunities Demand Decisive Leadership

Opportunities do not wait long before evaporating, never to return. The indictment of James 4:17, “*Therefore to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him*

it is sin." underlines the urgency of having good leaders who know how to be decisive in seizing every opportunity.

B. The Greater the Need, the Greater Is the Need for Well Chosen Leaders

1. The church has been assigned the role of meeting the greatest human needs.
2. The church needs the most knowledgeable, faithful, ethical, competent and whole leaders of any body on earth.

SEEN IN WHAT CHURCHES ARE ACCOMPLISHING

Churches of Christ have put considerable emphasis on urging each local congregation to develop and appoint its own leaders leading to a certain emphasis as regards Elders?

A. The Number of Elders is important

1. Nationwide in the 13,000 churches there are an estimated, 20,000 elders.
 - a. The number represents a tremendous quality of teaching, decision, and faithfulness.
 - b. Studies indicate that one of three were not raised in the church. Two of three attribute their salvation and growth to the eldership to a woman: wife, mother, etc.
 - c. The number of active elders should be doubled. Many more should be in training to take their places.

B. Fifty Percent of Our Churches Have a Biblically Constituted Leadership

1. One-half of the churches, yet, have not developed or selected elders.
2. Reasons for this:
 - a. Some congregations are in remote areas.
 - b. Some have lost their leadership because of transfers, or lack of training programs, or division.
 - c. A few are recently established churches.
3. In all cases the number and quality or absence of leaders is a comment on the local church.
4. The local church projects or reflects itself in the number and quality of its leaders.

SEEN IN THE PRESSING NEEDS IN LOCAL CHURCHES

A. The Pressing Needs Outnumber the Able Leaders Ready to Confront Them

1. Many congregations are precariously positioned, having only two elders.
2. With only two elders there is a wall of urgency surrounding the church, threatening its efficiency, even its unity, perhaps its survival.

B. In Churches with Elders, the Ratio Is Often One Elder to 105 Members

1. Two to three times less than the ideal **RATIO**. One man can relate well to no more than 35 people.
2. Most of our elders are able to extend their circle of intimacy to upwards of 70 people.
3. In many churches, especially in the larger churches, the ratio is **one elder to 140 members**—four times more than the ideal.
 - a. In these cases it is difficult for elders to identify and respond to member

needs.

- b. An improved elder-to-member ratio could dramatically reduce the dropout number of members in most congregations.

SEEN IN THE DEMAND FOR MORE WHOLE, SKILLED LEADERS

Indicators in considering future elders, wholeness in life and relationships and skills in leadership must not be passed over lightly.

A. The Character of Wholeness

- 1. Studies have indicated that 65% of members are greatly handicapped in several important areas of their spiritual life.
 - a. These growth areas include the ability to forgive, to care, to manage anxiety, to discipline oneself, etc.
 - b. Leaders in these same churches, by reason of commitment and experience, have matured more in their spiritual lives.
- 2. The same studies indicate that 40%-50% of elders are greatly handicapped in several of the same growth areas as the members.
 - a. A wounded army, led by some wounded men, cannot fight long or well.
 - b. Many of our lost battles and loss of Christian soldiers must be attributed to many leaders and members being wounded even before they entered a battle against sin.
 - c. Healing must precede fighting and winning. Healing must precede leading.
- 3. As long as wholeness is given a lower priority in our preaching, leadership development and selection we will continue to pay exorbitant prices of victory.

B. Character Skills

- 1. Selecting good and faithful men who are skilled to lead more nearly responds to God's leadership requirements.
- 2. In many churches there is a widening gap between the number and complexity of needs and the competency of Christian leaders.
 - a. Doctrinal problems, interpretational questions, ethical issues and family disruptions, all have intensified in our post-modern society.
 - b. They require an increasingly high level of knowledge and competency than similar problems of our largely, rural past.
 - c. Leaders are under pronounced demands to raise their level of competency in the Word and in human relations.

SEEN IN THE PRESSING NEED FOR PRIORITY TRAINING.

A. Past Churches and Leadership

- 1. The churches of the 1950–1970 era were exploding in evangelism and numerical growth.
- 2. Parallel to their growth was a priority being placed on training leaders.
 - a. Most churches were conducting men's training classes, personal work classes, teachers' workshops and youth meetings emphasizing leadership skills.
 - b. Much fewer churches today have ongoing training classes, leadership seminars or even money specifically budgeted for leadership training.
 - c. Fewer leaders are traveling to participate in leadership growth events.

B. This Lost Emphasis over the Last Thirty Years Explains Many Current Problems – if continued, the neglect forecasts troubled years ahead.

SEEN IN HOW WE WILL RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGES.

How will we respond to the following observations, mentioned above?

A. Increase the Number of Elders

1. How will we increase the number of elders (estimated 20,000) among us?
 - a. Churches being led by too few men.
 - b. Current elders are diminishing.
 - c. Younger men are less ready to even maintain the inadequate number of elders spread throughout the churches.
2. Something determined and purposeful, some promising process with renewed emphasis and a bolder and more emphatic challenge must be presented to our churches.

B. Emphasize Leadership Development

1. Encourage every church not having a biblically constituted leadership to more greatly emphasize leadership development.
2. There are many valid reasons why some churches are not ready to “*appoint elders in every church.*”
3. There is no valid reason why any church should be indifferent or even resistant to training men to be biblical leaders.
 - a. Some churches are far from having biblically appointed leaders.
 - b. But, they have to start somewhere and sometime to ever reach the blessed day when they are scripturally organized.

C. Plan and Prepare For the Eventuality of No Elders

1. Encourage brethren to plan and prepare an effective withdrawal back from the precarious edge of being a congregation without elders because one of the two can no longer serve?
2. Every congregation needs to be developing a number of leaders that will be adequate for the challenges facing the congregation.

D. Too Few Men and Too Much Work

1. Impress on brethren that a few men can only do so much and the work left undone can have eternal consequences in the health of the congregation and of individual members?
2. Too few elders will either be forced to leave member needs unmet or burn out in trying to do more than they do or do well.

E. Focus Attention On the Need to Have Whole Men in Leadership

1. Focus both on developing young leaders and in helping current elders to overcome some personality flaws that hinder their leadership?
2. Properly motivated, men, even older leaders, can grow to be more whole.
3. Through ministry renewal efforts tremendous growth can occur within one year, changing dramatically the fruitfulness in the life of a leader.

F. Bridging the Gap Between Skills of Leaders and Skills Needed

1. The problem: the widening gap between the skill demands erupting in churches, especially those in mid-to-large cities, and the competency level of many elders?
2. If the church is going to keep and challenge our youth and reach out to the lost in a post-modern world our leaders will have to increase their leadership skill-sets.

G. Encouraging Church Leaders to Invest in Leadership Training

1. Making leadership training one of the higher priorities in planning and financing training programs.
2. Some men, from their own initiative, will grow without intentional planning by existing leaders. But, never many and not so well as when the leaders make leadership training a leading characteristic of the congregation.

CONCLUSION

Our responses to these challenges must include making every local church a center for leadership development. We will not have stronger leaders than the churches that produce them. We will not have many strong leaders without intentional efforts in the churches. The **urgency of having biblical leaders**, well trained, highly motivated and devoted to the Lord and His Word, will have to pervade the churches across the lands.

EXAM FOR LESSON ONE

1. There are seven bold statements made concerning the urgency of good leaders. List these below:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
2. According to your teacher, what percentage of churches have a biblically constituted leadership? _____
3. The local church projects or reflects itself in what way? _____
4. According to your teacher, in churches with elders, what is the ratio between elders and members? _____

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

The group instructors may want to use these questions in group discussions. The Reflection questions should be asked and answered soon after the lecture.

1. Reflect on all of the teaching activities and personal commitments required to produce 20,000 elders.
2. Reflect on the number of churches in your area (or county or state) that do not have elders. Is it as much as one-half of the churches with elders?
3. Reflect on the churches in your area who have elders but have only two.
4. Reflect on the ratio of elder-to-members in each of the churches in your area which have elders.
5. Reflect on any pressing problems (social, religious, moral, doctrinal) in your area that are not being addressed because of the lack of trained leaders in the church.
6. Reflect on the specific provisions being made by area churches to train leaders, such as budgets, training programs, seminars, etc.

LESSON TWO PREVIEW

Leader Strong Churches Understand the Biblical Precedence for Congregational Leaders

Leader Strong churches are convinced that Christ directed His church to develop specific leaders in the first century and for all time. They are convinced that God's people today have a clear mandate and a continuing model for the development of their leaders. They are convinced that the biblical precedence neither leaves the church of today undirected or free to originate its own forms of leadership.

In Lesson Two, we will document and test the validity of those conclusions. It will be an interesting and pivotal study on church leadership. It will impact our decisions on leadership development. It will give us a strong and clear sense of direction. It will undergird our leadership development efforts with purpose and conviction.

LESSON TWO

The Biblical Precedence for Congregational Leaders

INTRODUCTION:

ost religious groups have not found a biblical precedence to guide them in developing a leadership structure or function. Each group is guided by its own traditional approach that was formed in post-biblical centuries. Their varied approaches to leadership are products of particular, historical or cultural circumstances. Whatever may be their interpretation of biblical data they see no authoritative pattern concerning leadership and, therefore, they feel no obligation to reproduce any practice of New Testament times.

If there is no reoccurring practice among Apostolic founded and led churches of the New Testament times, each group would be at liberty to develop a leadership model that best achieves its purposes in its cultural situation. In that case, the issue is not so much about the authority of Scriptures as it is the lack of a binding precedence. Thus, both the urgency in developing a particular kind of leader and the leadership model operative in a religious body would be influenced by what one finds in Scripture.

However, a discovery in biblical data of God-given directions concerning the place, the selection and the work of designated leaders would call the Bible believer to responsibility and accountability. The believer in such cases would not be at liberty to produce another form of leadership. Biblical authority would become an issue if God had spoken and if the leadership found in New Testament times was to be considered a precedence for succeeding generations, throughout all time and location.

LESSON AIM: To impress on the student the amount of biblical data of God-given directions concerning the work, responsibility and accountability of His designated leaders.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Observe the great priority the apostle Paul placed on establishing leaders in the churches which he planted.
 2. Discover the leadership pattern in the churches in the first century by a close examination of the letters to those early churched.
 3. See that the appointment of elders in every church was a high priority on the New Testament agenda. It was emphasized along with preaching the Gospel and planting churches.
-

THE PATTERN OF LEADERSHIP IN THE FIRST CHURCHES

A. The First Church – Jerusalem

1. In the early 30's A.D., the church was begun by trained, apostolic leaders.
2. In the early months, under the direction of the Apostles, congregational ministry leaders in benevolence and evangelism emerged.
3. In this same growth period and while all of the Apostles were present some brethren were named *elders* and given leadership responsibilities.
 - a. In Acts 11:30 the elders were the recognized custodians of funds contributed for the Judean saints in need.
 - b. In Acts 14:1ff, about fifteen years later, the Jerusalem elders associated with the Apostles in crucial decision making that the church was expected to follow.
 - c. In Acts 23:17-19, about twenty-five years later, the elders at Jerusalem were still the focal point of leadership.
4. Elders became and remained the primary, congregational leaders. Apostles were present in Jerusalem at the beginning of the formative stage of the church but some began traveling abroad.

B. The Early Church in Southern Asia

1. Paul initiated a three-point, missionary agenda that he pursued across two continents. The first illustration of his mission agenda is observed in Acts, chapters 13-14, as he traveled through the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.
 - a. He preached the Gospel, calling sinners to Christ.
 - b. He formed churches in every place.
 - c. He organized churches with their own elders.
2. Having completed the first two objectives in each of the four cities he returned to complete the third agenda item: "*appoint elders in every church.*"
3. The importance of appointing elders is impressive by Paul's getting it done in the brief one to two years period that the whole mission in the four cities lasted.
4. To Paul, the organization of the churches did not seem to be secondary, optional or a matter of indifference. It seemed intentional, imperative and specific.

C. The Church in Philippi With Bishops and Deacons

1. What Paul had done in Southern Asia he repeated in Europe.

From the account in Acts 16 and from the Epistle to the Philippians (1:1), written just a few years later, we can note that Paul continued to follow his three-point, mission agenda. When he addressed the church at Philippi (1:1), "...with the *bishops and deacons,*" leadership development and appointment were already accomplished facts.

2. To state the presence of bishops in the epistle requires Paul's specific instruction on leadership, and, perhaps, even the appointment of leaders in his earlier work among them. Paul, again demonstrated the high priority he placed on leadership development and selection.

D. The Pattern of Leadership Seen in the Church in Thessalonica

1. Paul preached the Gospel and planted a church in the city (Acts 17).
2. From the first epistle to the Thessalonians we know that there were elders in the church. Paul wrote, "*Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.*" (I Thessalonians 5:12-13).

NOTE: The short time between the planting of the church and the reception of the first letter in which an established leadership is evident requires the conclusion that Paul, from the beginning of the work in Thessalonica, **gave great emphasis to leadership development and selection.**

E. Elders in the Church in Ephesus

1. Paul did in Ephesus what he had done in other places (Acts 19-20).
 - a. After preaching in Ephesus for three years and establishing the church, he made a brief trip to Macedonia and Greece.
 - b. He returned and met with elders from Ephesus at Miletus before sailing on to Jerusalem. (Acts 20:13-38). The time sequence suggests that the elders were trained and developed during Paul's recent years in Ephesus.
2. Several years later, Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus and spoke again about the elders (*pastors*) of the church (Ephesians 4:11).

F. The Church on the Island of Crete

1. Paul and Titus, evidently, evangelized the Island of Crete and planted churches. But, they had not completed their usual agenda before Paul left the island.
2. The missing feature of his usual, mission agenda was the organization of the churches with their own elders.
3. Titus was instructed to finish their missionary agenda: "*The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you*" (Titus 1:5).
4. Paul reminded him of the kind of men to be appointed as elders in the churches (Titus 1:5-10).

NOTE: From this review of Paul's leadership practices one must conclude that he established a precedence of preaching, church planting and church organization in each new field of labor. He seemed driven by the commitment: **preach the gospel to every person, form a church in every place and appoint elders in every church.**

G. Evangelism in Asia Planted Many Churches

1. The brotherhood emphasis on leadership development and selection is emphasized by Peter in 1 Peter 5:1-4 as he wrote to many churches throughout the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.
 - a. In the time frame of not more than thirty-five years since the beginning of the church in Jerusalem, Elders were in prime roles of leadership throughout the five Asian provinces.
 - b. It is probable that the earliest Christians in those provinces came out of the first converts in Acts 2.
 - c. Some of these converts may have been the results of Paul's work in Ephesus and surrounding regions, even students in the School of Tyrannus.
2. The leadership development seen in Peter's epistle is consistent with what we know of Paul's leadership emphasis.

H. Jewish Churches in the Roman Empire

1. James, writing in the mid-sixties, speaks of the presence, influence and work of elders in the churches (James 5:14).
2. His matter-of-fact reference to elders visiting the sick indicates the broad understanding and wide acceptance of the pastoral role of elders in the local churches.

I. Jewish Believers in Judea

1. We learn from the writer of Hebrews about the place and importance of church leaders.
2. The primary reference is to "*those who have the rule over you...who watch for your souls*" (Hebrews 12:17). Placed alongside the other statements about elders (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28), the statements in Hebrews clearly point to elders as the focal leaders in the churches.
3. Whoever wrote the Hebrew epistle accurately reflected the consistent pattern found everywhere among the churches.

SUMMARY

From this historical-geographical survey we can draw some important conclusions about leadership practices among the New Testament churches:

1. The appointment of elders in every church was a high priority on the New Testament agenda. It was emphasized along with preaching the Gospel and planting churches.
2. The practice was widespread, across nations and continents.
3. Appointment of elders in each church was a common practice by all of the major leaders: Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Timothy, Silas, Titus, James, etc.
4. Of necessity, the organization of a church, with its plurality of elders, was a vital teaching that the apostles were to observe and pass on in obedience to Christ's final commission (Matthew 28:20).

5. A precedence has been set for all churches, anywhere, and for all time, concerning the development and selection of congregational leaders.

NOTE: The congregation that understands the biblical precedence for leadership development sets a high priority on having leaders that have the same qualities to do the same work required of 1st century leaders. Leadership development and selection are not optional in the growth cycle of a healthy church.

TESTING OUR CONCLUSIONS

There are two questions to be settled:

1. Was there a settled practice among the churches of the 1st century to have congregationally appointed elders (pastors/bishops) in every local church?
2. If so, did that widespread practice set a binding precedent for all succeeding churches in other cultures, other centuries and in other circumstances?

A. The First Question Is Largely a Historical Discussion

1. Based on what is believed to have been practiced in the Apostolic period of the early church.
 - a. Most religious groups have rejected the view that the New Testament contains a pattern for church organization or leadership development.
 - b. Most see a fluid, differing forms of leadership practices.
 - c. Even among those who see a uniformly practiced form of leadership, do not believe it was setting a precedent or a standard of leadership.
2. We have a religious world that differs greatly in multiple forms of church organization.
3. Some leaders in churches of Christ are beginning to join this view and introduce diverse roles and authority figures in local churches.

B. The Second Question Presupposes That a Standard, Widespread Leadership Practice Is Clearly Found in the New Testament Documents.

1. It affirms that the Apostles were charged with setting the perimeters and principles that were to give birth to the church (Matthew 28:20).
 - a. The Apostles either succeeded or they failed.
 - b. They either obeyed or they disobeyed.
 - c. The New Testament is either an inspired record of their faithful teaching efforts or it is not.
 - d. If they obeyed their Lord, if the New Testament is an inspired record, then we have a faithful, enduring record of Christ-taught truths and practices until Christ comes again.
2. Any interpretive approach to Scripture that sets aside Apostolic transmitted truths and Apostolic prescribed practices is a threat to the whole fabric of revelation.
3. Such a view often devalues what is found beyond the four gospels.
 - a. This view reduces the other twenty-three books of the New Testament to being casual letters containing personal views relative to the local needs

- and, therefore, not binding to any other circumstance or time.
- b. Such views emphasizing the “*theology of the Headship of Christ*” may aim at balancing past views that placed undue emphasis on the Body.
 - c. But, in so heavily emphasizing the “*theology of the headship of Christ*” they mutilate the “*the theology of the Body of Christ*,” the church.
4. Each generation must validate the interpretative approaches and tools given to it.
- a. However, any hermeneutic, called new or old, that destroys what we have in Scripture and gives us nothing better in return needs to be rigorously rejected.
 - b. We must never give up a balanced view of law and grace, faith and obedience, theology of the Head and theology of the Body, core truths and Apostolic practices, clearly stated commands and clearly reasoned conclusions.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO

1. Paul initiated a three-point agenda that he pursued where ever he preached the gospel. Give this three-point agenda below.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____

2. What would reflect the fact that Paul continued his agenda in Philippi?

3. How can we know from Scripture that there were elders/bishops in Thessalonica?

4. What might the words “left unfinished” imply about Paul and Titus in Titus 1:5?

5. What is the attitude of most religious groups concerning a pattern for church organization and leadership development?

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect on the reasons why so many, different forms of leadership structures exist among the “Christian communities.”
 - a. How do they regard the New Testament as a guide in leadership development?
 - b. Do they identify any pattern or procedure in the Scriptures for developing a leadership structure?
2. Reflect on the affirmation in this lecture. Restate the conclusion and evaluate its validity. Does the historical development of a leadership format establish a pattern to be universally repeated?
3. Reflect on the value of believing that biblical precedence was established by the Apostles of Christ relative to the leadership organization in the local churches.

PREVIEW OF THE THIRD LESSON

Leader Strong Churches Understand The Value of Biblically Constituted Leaders

In this third study we will consider the value of leaders as expressed in descriptive nouns like *elder, overseer, ruler, shepherd*. And, also, we, will see the value of leaders in observing the verbs that describe the work of elders. This study should encourage us to devote our best energies to leadership development because of the great value of well-qualified leaders.

LESSON THREE

The Value of Biblically Constituted Leaders

INTRODUCTION:

Leader strong churches place great emphasis on leadership development because they understand the value of biblical leaders. They have seen what happens to churches which fail in developing strong leaders or, even through no fault of their own, have lost their leadership. It has been observed that a congregation can survive for awhile with either a faulty eldership or a faulty preacher. But, a congregation cannot survive well lacking both. The one constant in a thriving church is a strong, biblical eldership which keeps the value of biblical leaders in constant view.

The value of biblical leaders can be determined in several ways:

1. By defining the leadership *nouns* in their biblical contexts.
2. By studying the *verbs* of the Scriptures as they relate to approved leadership activities.
3. By reflecting on leadership functions in today's churches that depend decisively on the work of biblical leaders.

Wherever God's people know and remember what is valuable to God they place value on what they do. Leadership development is high on God's list of values. We will look at the leadership *nouns*, *verbs* and current *leadership needs* to emphasize the value of leaders in the church.

LESSON AIM: To convince the student that the one constant in a thriving church is a strong, biblical eldership which keeps the value of biblical leaders in constant view.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn several nouns which describe the purpose of biblical leaders and their relationship to a vibrant, growing church and the meaning of each.
 2. Learn that the value of biblical leaders is seen in the actions they are assigned to do and how this relates to a growing church.
-

NOUNS WHICH DESCRIBE CHURCH LEADERSHIP

The leadership nouns in the New Testament best describe the purpose of biblical leaders. The value of leaders can be seen in the purposes they fulfill in God's designs for the church.

A. ELDER (*presbuteros*)¹

1. Of the 67 New Testament occurrences of the word, translated “elder,” 16 specific references are made to church leaders.
 - a. The word is prominent in a Greek word family that includes words translated “ambassador,” “legate,” etc.
 - b. More than age is involved in the word.
2. The thrust of the word deals with how well a person has used his years in becoming a mature, wise person.
3. Age is required to produce knowledgeable, competent, whole and committed leaders.
3. An older man who demonstrates the qualities of godly wisdom fulfills the intent of the word, elder. James describes godly wisdom as “*first pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive (easy to be entreated), full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*” (James 3:17)
4. The best, modern English word that conveys the meaning of the Greek term is probably *counselor*.
 - a. The elders are wise with the experiences and training of age.
 - b. Their long, faithful and fruitful life experiences in the church have prepared them to guide the members wisely in all facets of life.

B. OVERSEER (*episcopos*)²

1. Older versions of the Scriptures translate the Greek word with “bishop.”
2. *Overseer* is used in newer versions. It, too, is less than adequate in capturing the meaning of the Greek work.
 - a. *Episcopos* is a compound word. The root, *scopos*, describes “one who watches, observes, even one who protects, knows and cares for another.”
 - b. The prefix “*epi*” suggests, “on, upon, at the side of, nearby, at the elbow of another.”
 - c. The word describes the nearness, watchfulness, protectiveness and readiness to know and to care for the needs of the members.
 - d. It perfectly describes the personal involvement of a spiritual leader in the lives of the members.
 - e. The best, modern English word that translates the Greek term is *mentor*.

C. RULER (*proistamai*)³

1. Older versions of the Bible render the Greek word by *ruler*. Newer versions change the word to “*leader*.”
2. The usual definition is “*rule over*,” “*manage*,” “*to take the lead*.” It is a compound word.
 - a. The root, *istamai*, means “*to stand*.” The prefix means “*before*.”

¹Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2-16; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Timothy 5:19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1; 1 Timothy 4:4.

² Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7; I Peter 2:25. cf. 1 Timothy 3:1; Acts 1:21; 1 Peter 5:2; Hebrews 12:15.

³ 1 Thessalonians 5:12; I Timothy 5:17; I Timothy 3:4-5; Romans 12:8. cf. Roman 16:2ff.

- b. Together, the literal rendering of the compound noun would be “*one who stands before.*”
- 3. The emphasis of the word is the up-front visibility and exemplary modeling synonymous to leadership.
- 4. Modern words that best express the meanings of the original word would be *models, examples, even protectors and shields.*

D. LEADERS (*hagoumenos*)⁴

- 1. The core meaning is *leading, guiding, providing.* The Greeks used this word to describe their governors, rulers and chief men.
 - a. The emphasis is on going ahead, leading the way.
 - b. In its biblical context it is not leading by autocratic rule (1 Peter 5:2-3) but with a servant spirit.
- 2. The better, modern English word would be *facilitator* or *initiator*, or even a *coordinator.*

E. PASTOR (*poimen*)⁵

- 1. The common rendering of this Greek word is *pastor* and more recently, *shepherd.*
 - a. The meaning is “*to feed, to sustain, to tend to the total needs of the sheep.*”
 - b. It pictures the shepherd as one who does whatever has to be done to sustain the lives and well-being of the sheep: feeding, leading to pasture, tending the ill, resolving conflicts. protecting against every threat, etc.
- 2. Shepherding is the over-arching concept of spiritual leadership.

Summary

Built on the model of biblical shepherds, shepherds today are chosen men who, by reason of years profitably spent growing in and serving in the flock, have gained spiritual maturity and deep insights to the spiritual needs of the sheep.

LEADERSHIP ACTIONS

The value of leaders can be seen in what they do.

A. EZEKIEL 34:1-10: A good background study of the value of Christian leaders can be seen in God’s expectations of His Old Covenant shepherds.

- 1. Shepherds are to:
 - a. Feed the flock
 - b. Strengthen the weak
 - c. Bring healing to the sick
 - d. Bind up the wounded
 - e. Bring back the strays, and

⁴ Hebrews 13:7; 12:24.

⁵ Matthew 9:36; John 10:2-16; Hebrews 13:20; I Peter 2:25; I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:18-21; Ephesians 4:11- 12.

- f. Search for the lost.
 - 2. Failure in these six areas of shepherding is a failure in being a faithful shepherd.
 - 3. Nothing grieved God more than the selfish shepherds of Israel who neglected His sheep.
 - 4. What God required of the Old Covenant shepherds seems to be His continuing agenda for New Covenant shepherds.
- B. ACTS 20:17-38:** Paul urged the newly appointed shepherds of Ephesus:
1. **To keep a close watch over themselves.** They, like the shepherds of Israel, could become selfish and blind to surrounding dangers (v.28).
 2. **To keep close watch over *all the sheep in the flock.*** Like Ezekiel 34, some would be weak, others would be sick and wounded and others would stray away and become lost (v. 28).
 3. **To feed and sustain each sheep according to individual needs** (v. 28).
 4. **To be vigilant to every conceivable threat to the sheep from without or within** (vs. 29-31).
 5. To pursue greater strength and hope in a relationship with God in a study of His Word (v.32)
 6. To find the blessing of unselfishly helping those who have nothing to give in return (v.35).
- C. FIRST THESSALONIANS 5:12-13:** Leaders are described as:
1. **“Them which labor...”** Spiritual leadership is not a position – it is a work, a selfless, humble ministry.
 2. **Those that stand before the church** (to rule, to model, to teach, etc.)...
 3. **Those who “admonish the members.”**
 4. New Testament leaders are busy among the members as models, teachers and encouragers.
- D. HEBREWS 13:7, 17:** Leaders are described as:
1. Having “spoken the Word of God...” As noted elsewhere a prime labor of a Shepherd/Elder is to be an effective instructor in the Word.
 2. “Who give account” for the conduct of the members. Accountability would require keeping close, being involved in the lives of the members and knowing their needs and being adequately aware how they responding to the grace of God and the opportunities He provides.
 3. A shepherd, in this passage, has two responsibilities:
 - a. Giving sound instruction to members to guide them to serve well.
 - b. Be accountable to God when members fail to be obedient members.
- E. FIRST PETER 5:1-4:** Peter, who served as a Christ-appointed Apostle and as an elder of the church, probably in Jerusalem, urged the Asian elders to:
1. **“Shepherd” (to feed, to sustain) the flock of God.**
 2. **“Take the oversight of the church** (the responsibility of mentoring, staying close to each member in his/her spiritual growth, to protect each member in the

- spiritual conflict).
3. Serve “willingly...honestly...eagerly,” speak of the well motivated decision to serve with all of one’s heart and mind and with integrity and value.
- F. FIRST TIMOTHY 3 AND TITUS 1:** a study of the prescribed qualities in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 would show the superb value of Christian leaders. Consider an overview:
1. The value of a faithful husband and a father who is well regarded by his children.
 2. The value of a man who is mature and exemplary in his relational and ethical life.
 3. The value of a mature teacher in the church.
 4. The value of an exemplary leader who is respected in all of his community relations.
- G. EPHESIANS 4:11:** the growth and well being of a local church is closely tied to the mature leadership of shepherds and evangelists.
1. They are in a partner ministry to equip the saints for serving and growing to the spiritual heights of Jesus.
 2. Without their joint mission being accomplished effectively, the local church would never reach its purposes, its potential or would be in danger of dying or going astray.
- H. FIRST TIMOTHY 5:17:** the work of a shepherd/elder, especially in preaching and teaching, was so great that the Apostle Paul urges Timothy to teach the brethren to support them financially.

CONCLUSION: LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS TODAY

- A. The Value of Leaders Is Seen in All of the Good Work Being Done by Current Leaders**
1. The leadership functions in today’s church are no less valuable and necessary than at the beginning.
 2. The original leadership purposes (nouns) and actions (verbs) still speak to pressing needs today.
- B. Every Local Church Thrives with Leaders Who Are Active**
1. There is a continuing need for shepherds who are elder-counselors, bishop-mentors, ruler-models and leader-facilitators.
 2. When these kinds of leaders are lacking in quality or number, a local church suffers with needs going unmet.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE

1. List five (5) noun words the teacher discusses which describe leadership qualities and give a brief meaning of each word.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

2. List four charges Paul gave to the elders in Ephesus in Acts 20:17-38.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

3. Give three statements which picture the leaders in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-12.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

4. With what three things did Peter charge the elders in 1 Peter 5:1-4?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

5. In what scripture would you find the command to support elders in their work.?

6. From Ezekiel34:1-10 list six (6) things God expected from Old Covenant leaders.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____

PREVIEW OF SESSION FOUR

Leader Strong Churches Understand the Biblical Guidelines for the Development of Leaders

Strong leaders come from churches who know what kind of men are needed to do the work of assigned spiritual leaders. Our study will focus on 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 where we will see the exemplary life of a leader as a model in family, relational morals and church leadership and as a respected community citizen.

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect on and discuss the significance of the leadership ***nouns***. What does each say about leader-to-member relationships:

<u>Noun</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
a. Elder _____	
b. Overseer (bishop) _____	
c. Leader (ruler) _____	
d. Leader _____	

2. Reflect on the significance of the leadership ***verbs***. Particularly reflect on the leadership agendas in Ezekiel 34 and Acts 20.

LESSON FOUR

The Biblical Guidelines for Developing Leaders

INTRODUCTION:

 modern churches with strong leaders have understood from their Biblical studies the quality of men God wants to lead His church. They have seen in Scripture the clear developmental outline that enables congregations to select their leaders with confidence. Because they are biblically knowledgeable of the leadership requirements they will wisely choose men who will be equipped to serve long and well. But, a lesser instructed church will fall short in its development and selection of leaders. They will be influenced more by models of the world than by the standards of the New Testament. To the extent a church fails in the development and selection of leaders so the length and depth of the work of the chosen leaders will be compromised and the fruits of leadership will be diminished. Leadership development is likened to building a foundation for a building. The purpose and longevity of the building and the health of those within depend on the strength and durability of the foundation.

This study outlines the biblical requirements for leadership development that was taught and practiced in the early church under the direction of the Spirit-guided Apostles. The transmission of these principles from Christ to the churches by the Spirit-led Apostles gives us confidence in their validity as we apply them today in leadership development. In our second study of this series, we observed that whenever and wherever churches were planted in the first Century, it is clear that early Christians organized churches with elders and chose their leaders with a common standard in mind.

LESSON AIM: To emphasize the biblical requirements for leadership development which was taught and practiced in the early church under the direction of the Spirit-guided Apostles.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn several key words that underscore the importance of preparing for leadership.
 2. See the character and nature of the mature man as it relates to his marriage and family relationships.
 3. Get a God-given picture of what a godly husband should be.
 4. Carefully review and examine the qualifications of God's leaders as given by Paul and Peter.
-

In the following descriptions of church leaders in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3, we can well know how churches were instructed concerning leadership development and selection. Then, the balance of statements in the New Testament on leadership is consistent with the picture that Paul drew for Titus and Timothy to practice in Crete and Antioch.

INITIAL VIEWS OF LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

A. Several, Key-words That Underscore the Importance of Preparing for Leadership (I Timothy 3:1).

1. A prospective leader must be one who "desires" the work.
 - a. He has set a priority in his life to being all he must be to be fruitful.
 - b. He knows he must be biblically knowledgeable, ethically sound in all of his relations and practices, pure in thoughts and motives and whole in all of his personal qualities and skilled in ministry according to his giftedness.
 - c. He has made Christ the king of his life and the object of his service.
2. A prospective leader must be one who "desires" (different Greek word), or stretches his every resource to excel in being all the leader that God wants him to be.
 - a. For a long time, he has been willing to spend time, money and energy in Bible study, in learning servant and leadership skills.
 - b. He will associate with godly people doing godly things.
 - c. He will be a man of discipline – "beating his body and making it his slave" (self discipline) so as to be qualified when the appropriate time comes for him to be considered for leadership service.
3. The use of the word "bishop" or "overseer" is significant in this context. The Greek word (*episkopos*) is a compound word.
 - a. The prepositional prefix, *epi*, is best translated as "upon on, nearby."
 - b. The core word, *skopos*, means to observe, watch, defend, even to mentor.
 - c. The word is describing one who is nearby (at the very elbow of) to watch, to guard, to teach, to mentor.

NOTE: These words clearly teach that church leadership is reserved only for those who deeply yearn to be close to God's people and are willing to make extensive investments to be prepared.

4. A strong motivation to set a high priority on leadership preparation and strain every resource to reach one's leadership aspiration is that being close to God's people in service is a "good work."
5. Paul sets a high, leadership standard by stating that a prospective leader must be "blameless." The term literally means "not arrestable."
 - a. If the police were arresting men with poor conduct they would not arrest a spiritual leader because his conduct would be above being charged.
 - b. Spiritual leaders are to be advanced in their maturity such that they not only would not be charged but would be exemplary in their actions and attitudes.
 - c. Basically, the term *blameless* would best be followed by a semicolon (:) to suggest that a spiritual leader would be exemplary in the traits listed in the following text.

6. It needs to be noted that the word “must” is repeated four times in the context of leadership traits. Each time it is in the singular, suggesting the expected standard for each leader.

B. The Portrait of a Mature Man (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1)

1. This portrait provides a model:
 - a. To guide parents in developing their sons to manhood.
 - b. To guide Youth Ministers in understanding some worthy goals in their ministry of helping youth grow to be like Christ.
 - c. For a church in developing and in choosing the kind of men to serve as elders in the congregation.
 - d. For young women in choosing their life companions in seeing the kind of men the young men are becoming.
2. On a daily basis, this portrait inspires all men to desire and commit themselves to become mature and exemplary in all of the fundamental traits and relationship of life and service.
3. The leadership portrait emphasizes the leader’s exemplary life in four important areas of life and service:
 - a. Home relations
 - b. Moral maturity
 - c. Church relations
 - d. Relations in the community.

THE LEADER AND HOME RELATIONS

A. The Leader and His Marriage

How a man builds a strong, honorable and loving relationship with his wife is an important measure of his being able to serve well in modeling and mentoring a God-honoring marriage.

1. The statement, “he must be the husband of one wife” sets a high standard for prospective leaders.
 - a. It speaks of integrity, sensitivity, understanding, kindness, thoughtfulness, unselfishness and commitment.
 - b. Too long the statement has been limited too much to a leader’s *legal status*. Discussions have focused too narrowly on what he should not be: not a celibate, not a polygamist, not a divorcee, not a widower.
 - c. More emphasis is needed on inner qualities of the marital relationship.
 - d. The literal meaning of the statement: “he must be a one-women kind of man.”
2. To understand what a “one-woman kind of man” looks like would require a pointed study of other biblical passages throughout the Bible.

B. Being a Model Husband

1. GENESIS 1-2: From the beginning God has defined the qualities of a strong marriage, underlining the responsibilities of the marriage partners.
2. He establishes the boundaries and sets the goals that each marriage needs to accept and be devoted to accomplish. They are:

- a. Recognize that God is the owner of marriage.
 - 1) He has the sovereign right of legislation (1:27).
 - 2) He knows the best choices of mates, the best times to begin marriages and the best values to guide relationships.
 - 3) There are predictable and dire consequences in attempting to build a marriage without regarding or against what God has clearly and benevolently revealed to humanity.
- b. Recognize how purposely different God has created each of the acceptable members of marriage: male and female (1:27).
 - 1) Physical attraction is the most obvious and a greatly, compelling diversity.
 - 2) It is not the only or necessarily the most crucial difference in building a compatible and lasting marriage.
 - 3) Recognizing the different created needs, responses, and roles of one another's marriage partner is vital to discovering and understanding one another.
 - 4) Other diversities resulting from a marital partner's childhood development.

NOTE: When one or both of the marital relationship ignore the inbuilt diversities the result almost inevitably becomes a distortion of diversity into adversity. Further, a diverse, heterosexual relationship has the greatest potential for meeting all of the partner needs and honoring God's creative purpose for marriage. In such a relationship there is an obvious correlation of needs, physically, emotionally, sexually and spiritually. God was so pronounced in wanting the best for His creation that he has stamped homosexuality as a deviate behavior with some of the strongest language found in the Bible (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; 1Corinthians 6:9 and Romans 1:24-32).

- c. Recognize that marriage was designed to be a relationship of mutual service wherein both mates reach their potential in serving one another and in meeting one another's needs (2:18).
 - 1) When mates are left unfulfilled they become more vulnerable to the offers of others to fill their emptiness.
 - 2) A joyful and fulfilling experience in marriage occurs when each mate seeks to serve the other.
 - 3) Marriages thrive only when each mate finds joy in serving his or her mate and sees the other mate making consistent and unselfish efforts to mutually respond.
- d. Recognize a compelling purpose to overcome all obstacles in building a strong marriage (2:24).
- e. Recognize that the only reason for marriage is to achieve a unity that would honor God and reflect His divine trait of Oneness.
 - 1) A couple becomes one in purpose, one in values, one in achievements, one in the difficulties of life, one in procreation and one in their continuing quest of oneness with God and His people.

- 2) Even the re-dimensioning of one's precious, family relationships must be taken to insure one's focused commitment to becoming one with one's mate (2:24).
- e. Each couple needs to be singularly committed to a lifelong, unbroken relationship (2:24).
- f. Congregational development of good leaders must place a priority on guiding young husbands in becoming exemplary husbands.

C. God Gives Us the Best Description of What a Husband Is to Be (Hosea 2:19-20).

God cites seven qualities of a God-like husband:

- 1. Intentionally committed for life:
 - a. A God-like husband gives his bride every assurance that he will do everything that he can do to ensure that the marriage will be built on a "forever" promise.
 - b. The wife knows her children will have a committed father, a spiritual partner and a continual friend all the days of his life.
- 2. Committed to do what is right:
 - a. A God-like husband will determine to do what God has revealed to be right in all actions and decisions.
 - b. His wife sees him putting what is right at the top of his priorities and in his teaching and mentoring of their children.
- 3. Committed to do what is fair:
 - a. A God-like husband knows that fairness completes doing what is right.
 - b. Doing what is right and applying what is right to the specific circumstance and need of the wife will reaffirm the wife every day that the husband cares specifically for her.
- 4. Committed to do all things with loving kindness:
 - a. A God-like husband knows that righteousness and justice can become stern and cold without the warming expressions of kindness.
 - b. Doing kind things out of a well intentioned heart is the substance of loving kindness and surrounds the wife with a lifelong display of genuine affection.
- 5. Committed to do all things with compassion:
 - a. Doing what is right, doing what is fair and doing what is kind out of a committed heart is complete when clothed with deep feelings for the wife.
 - b. Compassion sees and understands the need of a wife, knows how a husband's care can make a difference in helping the wife reach her created potential and brings out the best in her life.
- 6. Committed to be faithful in the relationship:
 - a. A woman who is secure in the love of her husband, never fearing the loss of his singular affection, is not only serene and affirmed but is free to be all that God designed her to be.
 - b. A husband who guards his mind and will and devotes every fiber of his body and every urge of his passion to moral fidelity encourages his wife to blossom in her femininity.
- 7. Committed to being transparent and intimate:
 - a. The husband will be transparent with his thoughts, his needs and his appreciation for his wife.

- b. His transparency will be strengthened by thinking purely, purposely and positively – only things that he could gladly and profitably share with his wife.

D. The Christian Standard for the Mature Husband (Ephesians 5:21-23).

The husband is given the model of the relationship of Jesus to the Church.

- 1. If a man is to have a right relationship with Jesus he must pattern his marriage after the love Christ has for his Church.
- 2. To enjoy an obedient, submissive relationship with the Lord the husband is to commit himself to love his wife as Christ loved his Bride, the Church.
 - a. He is to love his wife without reservation, holding nothing back, making her more important than any other, knowing and fulfilling her needs and being sensitive to her desires and preferences.
 - b. He is to love his wife unselfishly, giving her the precedence, making her needs and desires the priorities of his planning and life and never seeing his needs met at the expense of his wife and her needs.

E. Peter's Marital Admonition to Husbands (I Peter 3:7)

- 1. A mature husband lives with his wife intelligently ("according to knowledge" – KJV; "in an understanding way" – ASV).
 - a. He searches for the knowledge that will enrich his marriage.
 - b. He will learn that his masculine passions, unguided by knowledge and a submitted will, will not build the kind of marriage that meets the needs of his wife (i.e. being a man is not all there is to being a husband).
- 2. A mature husband is considerate of his wife's femininity ("weaker vessel or as a woman").
 - a. God designed her to be amazingly different (cf. Genesis 1:27).
 - b. She is more fragile, more sensitive, and needs special considerations.
 - c. He learns that there are distinct seasons of femininity and there are specific needs more prominent in each period that he must know.
 - 1) When she is 20-30 years old, she most needs assurances of affection from him, affirming her value and a husband's need for her.
 - 2) When she is 30-40 old, she most needs assurances of security that the needs of children will be sufficiently met and livelihood will be sustained.
 - 3) When she is 40-50 years old, her viability must be confirmed as she becomes the mother of the third generation and will need to feel the solidarity of her husband in her pre-menopausal stage.
 - 4) When she is 50-60, she most needs to be affectionately reaffirmed in her femininity as an explosion of changes begin taking place in her body and the end of reproductively crushes upon her.
 - 5) When she is 60-70, she most needs to feel the acknowledgment of the multiple good she has done and the value of a life well-lived.
 - 6) When she is 70 +, she most needs to have the serenity in which she can savor the precious memories built over a loving marriage, in a fruitful life and surrounded by generations of dear ones. Her health issues will drain her but wise preparation of a loving husband will make her closing

- years secure, feeling loved and still valued.
3. A mature husband honors his wife as a spiritual equal (“*heirs together*”, “*fellow-heirs of the grace of life*”).
 - a. He learns that his wife has valuable insights into people, circumstances and family needs.
 - b. He will find joy in knowing that she stands as tall, loved and applauded in the presence of God and will just as surely receive the greatly desired welcome into the everlasting kingdom.
 4. A mature husband knows that the on-going fruitfulness of his spiritual life is predicated on building the right relationship with his wife.

THE CHARACTER AND NATURE OF A ONE-WOMAN-MAN

A. Being a Model Father

1. Good leaders are good fathers.
 - a. There are two major, biblical statements that help us in understanding what needs to go into the development of the parenthood of good men.
 - b. Timothy was in the large, modern city of Ephesus with a culture that was likely more disciplined, ordered, affluent and educated than that on the Island of Crete.
 - c. Crete was the cesspool of the Mediterranean.
2. The diverse needs in each place required different emphasis.
 - a. In the instruction to Titus the best measure of a father was how well he had disciplined his children in a morally bankrupt society.
 - b. In Timothy the best measure of a man’s parenthood was how the children regarded him.
 - c. The emphasis is not on the children as much as it is on the parenting of the father.

B. I Timothy 3

1. The statement in 1 Timothy 3:4, “*manages (rules) his household well*” literally means to “*stand before his family as a model, a teacher*.”
2. The word “manage” comes from the same word as “ruler” or literally, one who stands before protectively of others.
3. In all matters the children of a prospective leader should regularly observe model behavior in him that gives them a context of security, purpose and affirmation.
4. The emphasis of the text is on the impact his conduct has had on his children.
 - a. Orderly children who hold their father in high esteem reflect how a man has “managed his household well.”
 - b. Children who are resentful, belligerent, detached or indifferent to their father may call closer attention to qualities in the father that would be detrimental to his becoming an esteemed, affectionately regarded leader in the spiritual family.
5. The emphasis will be on the skillful discipline of the father that engenders regard and right-mindedness on the part of children.

C. Titus 1

1. The statement, “must be believing children” is one of the most insightful passages in the study regarding the parenthood of prospective leaders.
2. It, also, has often been the major, disqualifying consideration in the leadership selection process.
3. The meaning of the words, “believing children” or “faithful children,” most often, has been limited to *obedience in baptism*.
4. Some have questioned if baptism, especially of young, adolescent children, is conclusive enough to test the leadership qualities of the father.
 - a. The word “believing” or “faithful” can be translated “persuadable,” “convincible,” or “teachable.”
 - b. The emphasis would be on the mind-set or attitude of the children.
 - c. What is the child’s attitude toward listening, learning, being corrected?
 - d. Is the child reasonable, fair minded and open to learning – thus, easily entreated and easily informed?
 - e. A child’s open-mindedness and teachability are most closely related to morality than to doctrine or to religious activity.
5. This explanation of Titus 1:6 becomes even more convincing when studied against the backdrop of Proverbs.
 - a. The father in the book of wisdom urges the son to be eager to listen to instruction and to prize knowledge and wisdom above all treasures.
 - b. The writer repeatedly emphasizes that heed to instruction saves one from untold moral failures.
6. Titus 1:6 is a one-sentence commentary on the Book of Proverbs.
7. Ephesians 6:1 urges children to “*obey your parents* (lit. “*listen humbly*”) ...*honor your father and mother* (lit. “*give value to what they teach*”)...*that it may go well with you and you will live long on the earth.*” (Deuteronomy 5:16).
8. The messages that should remain with us are:
 - a. A leader must be developing a marital relationship in which his wife is secure in the mature love of her husband and,
 - b. A leader must have children who enjoy a secure relation with their father, expressing high regard for him, having learned from him self-discipline in decision making and morality.

MORAL MATURITY

A. In 1 Timothy 3 There Are Nine Relational Traits

B. In Titus 1 and 1 Timothy combined there Are Ten Relational Traits

Paul’s listings of ethical/relational traits when writing to Timothy and Titus are:

1. ***Temperate*** – describes a person who is calm, wise, cautious, vigilant
2. ***Sober*** describes one who is serious and under control. Such a person can enjoy the moment with humor and laughter but knows when to be serious.
3. ***Of Good Behavior*** – speaks of one who is organized, orderly and well disciplined. He is predictable.
4. ***Hospitable*** – pictures one who enjoys helping the needy, who understands the plight of traveling strangers, who is unselfish and generous in helping resolve the

difficulties others.

5. **Not Given to Wine** – (literally: “not sitting long at his cup”) extols the virtue of personal, self-control and resisting enslavement.
 - a. Possibly, the New Testament prohibition of addiction to wine in a wine drinking society, could authorize us to speak against addiction in any area of life: money, power, work, play, passions, even religion.
 - b. Biblical elders are not slaves to anything or anyone in such ways that they lose the freedom and balance to set kingdom priorities in their lives.
6. **No Striker** – marks a man who is contentious, quarrelsome and hurtful in his treatment of others. Neither by speech, manipulation or intimidation would a man of God force an action or decision on others
7. **Gentle** – applauds one who is fair, reasonable, not unduly rigorous or demanding.
8. **Not a Brawler** marks one who, while not hurtful of others as the striker, is always finding a provocation to quarrel. He is easily offended, takes things out of context, takes everything personally and is quick to be defensive and even lashes out at the perceived attacker.
9. **Not Covetous** – (literally; not fond of, having a liking of silver) commends one who is free from greed and free to work for the good of others, not motivated by the sinful desire of the *goods* of others.
 - a. A covetous man, once in the leadership of the church, would “guard” the church budget and bank account and would lead the church away from many good works.
 - b. Paul further precludes a covetous man from being in the leadership of the Church in saying to Titus that an elder must be one who “loves what is good.”
10. **Holy** (Titus 1) – is a profound and comprehensive description of a complete man.
 - a. It speaks of one who has been intentionally set apart for a specific purpose.
 - b. When applied to God, the term speaks of being incomparably above, superlatively distinct, uniquely different, complete in all of His traits.
 - c. A prospective elder is one who is devoted to being complete or mature in all of the traits that enhance his commitment to be set apart for the high calling to leadership.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

- A. Apt to Teach** – requires one to have discovered and developed his potential as a teacher.
1. The word “elder” emphasizes that wisdom is to be used in counseling which is instruction at its most personal (cf. *presbuteros*).
 2. The word “overseer” emphasizes mentoring or individualized instruction (cf. *episkopos*).
 3. The word “ruler” emphasizes modeling, a powerful form of instruction, and standing before others to lead, to protect, to teach (*proistami*).
 4. The word “shepherd” emphasizes feeding, sustaining, guiding, protecting (cf. *poimen*).
 5. In the Ephesian letter, Paul characterized the elders as “shepherd-teachers” (4:11), charged with the assignment to “equip the saints for ministry.”

- a. Inept teaching and training members in ministry at the eldership level betrays superficial biblical knowledge and the lack of value being placed on instruction.
 - b. The pastoral, leadership system wherein congregational instruction is focused in one man, has been shown to be in error.
- B. Not a novice** (lit. not a recently planted tree.)
1. The emphasis here is not simply on young or old in years, but, on maturity.
 2. Time is required for men to become giants in the forest of trees.
 3. Paul cautions us not to thrust men into prime leadership too early. That is, to make sure the prospective leader has demonstrated a deep rooted faith and fruitfulness of mature growth.

RELATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

- A. The Church Is the “Salt of the Earth...The Light of the World.”**
1. It and its message are intended to be seen, heard and examined in the world and by the world.
 2. Its leaders are required to be attractive and convincing in their relations in the community.
- B. Church Leaders are the Reflectors of the Soul of the Church**
1. By looking at the elders of a local church the citizens in the community can find hope for becoming moral, hope for building strong marriages and families and hope for becoming respected by one's peers.
 2. How a man is regarded in the community (e.g. at the grocery store, pharmacy, gas station, participating in community causes, transacting business, etc.) will determine how effectively he can lead a church to penetrate that community with the gospel.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR

1. The leadership portrait in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 emphasizes the leader's exemplary life in what four important areas?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
2. The description of what a husband is to be in Hosea 2:19-20 consist of what seven things?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

5) _____
6) _____
7) _____

3. The two-fold standard for the mature husband in Eph. 5:21-23 is:

1) _____
2) _____

4. Peter's admonition to husbands in 1 Peter 3:7 involves what three things?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

5. Paul's listings of ethical/relational traits when writing to Timothy and Titus are:

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____
10) _____

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect on what is “good” in the work of a congregational overseer (I Timothy 3:1).
2. Reflect on the well-rounded leadership qualities including the home, ethics, congregational leadership and community.
3. Reflect on the common difficulties of mutually understanding the domestic qualities of marriage (“husband of one wife”) and parenthood (“believing children”).
4. Reflect on the necessity of emphasizing in Titus and in I Timothy 3 that an elder be a capable teacher.

IT IS TIME FOR STUDENTS TO TAKE THE FIRST SECTIONAL EXAM ON LESSONS 1-4.

PREVIEW OF THE NEXT SESSION

In the next session we will study a fifth characteristic that is common among churches that are strong in leadership.

Leader Strong Churches Understand **Leaders must Grow a Church**

Leaders often get caught up in the excitement of building facilities, developing huge budgets, assembling a large ministry staff or staging attractive and entertaining programs and forget that growing members in the likeness of the Savior to do the work of the God is their major focus. This coming study will bring the focus back on helping the members grow to the stature of the Christ.

LESSON FIVE

Leaders must Grow a Church

INTRODUCTION:

We can joyfully acknowledge that only God working with His Holy Spirit through the power of the Word actually gives growth to every endeavor in the name of Christ. Then, after acknowledging the primary source of church growth, we can say that leaders are appointed and confirmed by God to grow churches.

LESSON AIM: After acknowledging the primary source of Church growth, Christians will understand that leaders are appointed and confirmed by God to grow churches.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Read and examine several passages of Scripture in the book of Ephesians to discover the place of Shepherds and Evangelists in growing churches.
 2. Study the spiritual gifts given in the New Testament and discover how they can be discovered and developed and affect the growth of the church.
 3. Come to realize the critical need for all members to have a good knowledge of the Bible and the danger of encroaching biblical illiteracy among Christians.
 4. Leader strong churches will have strong marriages and will travel toward heaven on their knees, following the example of their leaders.
-

THE PLACE OF SHEPHERDS AND EVANGELISTS IN GOD'S SCHEME FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH.

A. EPHESIANS 4:11-13⁶ – Elder Assignments:

1. Shepherds are assigned the specific work of equipping the saints in view of results in five, important church growth areas.
2. With each assignment being introduced by the Greek word eis – *into, in view of, in the direction of*, it is suggested that it is an ongoing work as new members are coming into the fellowship.
 - a. *The works of service* (v. 12).
 - 1) It is the assignment of the shepherds to help each member discover, develop and employ the specific, ministry gifts God has given.
 - 2) The works of service would include the ministry of the Word to the lost, community outreach in doing good to all men and responding to

⁶The Ephesians 4:11-14 paragraph above is taken from the book by Truman Scott, "Shepherds Among the Sheep

- the needs of the saints.
- b. *Building up of the body of Christ (v. 12).*
 - 1) Every church has to assure that every member is functioning adequately in the basic, Christian traits: coping with stress, winning over anxiety, freely serving others, being open and transparent, sensitive, unselfish, confident in the Lord, forgiving and self-disciplined.
 - 2) A “wounded” church cannot fight long or well or be fully devoted to its assignments.
 - 3) Shepherds must be concerned about the health and strength of the church to achieve its mandate in the world.
 - c. *Growing toward unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God (v. 13).*
 - 1) Unity in the faith is an unfailing partner with the knowledge of the Son of God.
 - 2) Shepherds must keep educational initiatives in motion that are steadily deepening the relationship with God and sharpening obedience to His teachings (Matthew 28:19-20).
 - d. *Becoming mature (v. 13.)*
 - 1) Shepherds are guided by the expectancy that all of their work will result in the members becoming fully grown and fruitful.
 - 2) The members are to produce after their own kind. They are to produce other Christians who become mature and fruitful in kind (cf. II Timothy 2:2).
 - e. *Attaining of the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (v. 13).*
 - 1) All Christians are guided by the shepherds to reach to the highest levels of spirituality as life and opportunity allows.
 - 2) What one becomes when the Spirit has formed Christ-like character within him makes him unrecognizable from his former self.
 - 3) He is a “new creature,” having experienced reversal and renewal and waiting for resurrection and glorification (II Peter 1:4).

B. Church Growth Areas

Whatever the method, there are some basic qualities that are essential to spur growth as individuals and as groups.

1. Membership Wholeness

- a. Wounded men, despite their commitment, cannot fight long, or well or up to their potential in better times.
- b. One half of church leaders and two thirds of its members are wounded in at least two out of nine growth areas in their spiritual life.
- c. Paul made membership wholeness a major aim in his ministry. He said, “*I make it my aim to present every man complete (mature) in Christ Jesus.*” (Colossians 1:28).
- d. Equally important is to help the members become whole in their life traits.
- e. Among our churches we must do a more efficient work 1/ in helping members identify needed growth areas, 2/ teach them how to become free of the obstacles to growth and free to become all God designed them to be

- and 3/ motivate them to pursue wholeness in their lives.
2. Ways to promote and attain wholeness.
 - a. Capable teachers trained in wholeness needs can be invited to hold seminars or several qualified persons can be engaged to speak in area lectureships.
 - b. There is a growing library of books, video and study programs to help both leaders and members to grow in maturity.
 - c. Christian colleges are developing Internet programs that include courses on Christian Counseling and spiritual living.
 - d. Most preachers are very capable to teach the Christian virtues that cause people to be whole.

Churches grow only and if members are growing in spiritual maturity, becoming whole in Christ.

C. Membership Potential

1. In the typical congregation 15% of the “active” members make things happen and give 90% of the financial resources while the other 85% are largely spectators.
2. Beyond reasons of age, sickness or other constraints beyond their control, why do many member contribute so little energy to the ministry fruitfulness of the congregation? What can a church and its leaders do?
 - a. **Rethink the whole scene:** These are precious souls for whom Christ died even as he died for those who are more active and productive.
 - b. **Rethink the structure:** Churches have largely relied almost fully on Bible classes, sermons and occasional seminars to inform and motivate members in being active servants of the Lord. Have we “thought outside the box” to see if there are other biblical and effective ways by which members might be brought into the mainstream of a growing church?
3. **One Answer: A Great Resource Has Long Been Neglected:**
What would you think if the following, new results occurred in a congregation?
 - a. Greater number of members would be starting new ministries.
 - b. Greater distinction would be seen between right and wrong.
 - c. There would be a quintupling of people taught and converted.
 - d. More people would be nurturing others.
 - e. More helpers would be ready for every good work.
 - f. More skilled, practical teachers would instruct the members.
 - g. There would be greater depth in Bible studies.
 - h. There would be an increased number of benefactors.
 - i. Ministries would be more efficiently organized and administered.
 - j. Greater number of trained people would be reaching out to the needy.
 - k. There would be more people available to lead in the global conquest.

NOTE: Some would say that this would be something just short of a miracle in these times. How can this “miracle” be performed? The neglected resources are the *ministry gifts* that God gives in His own time.

4. God Gives Kingdom Assignments To Members (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-12).

D. The Naming of Spiritual Gifts:

A composite listing of the ministry gifts in Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11-12, guides us in knowing the gifts that God has given to His church:

1. The gift of *evangelism* in which one has a passion to let everyone know about the unique blessings in Christ.
2. The gift of *rebuke* in which one has the courage and candor to confront those in error in the spirit of a prophet who confronted on God's behalf.
3. The gift of *scholarly instruction* in which one is drawn to extensively research a subject and share the findings.
4. The gift of *practical instruction* and *encouragement* in which one organizes a body of knowledge and shares it with others, encouraging them to make it real in their lives.
5. The gift of *shepherding* in which one cares for the needs of others through instruction, counsel, guidance and protection.
6. The gift of *mercy* in which one is able to feel and understand the deeper needs of others and help bring relief and healing of the crippling concerns.
7. The gift of *service* in which one is alert to the material needs of others and sacrificially bows in humble service to do for others what they can hardly do for themselves.
8. The gift of *giving* in which one is insightful in seeing unmet challenges and needs and sacrificially and unselfishly finds amazing ways to provide resources.
9. The gift of *administration* in which one is visionary in seeing a challenge, is insightful in skillfully organizing a solution and gathers the people, material and financial resources to accomplish the task.

(I Peter 4:10 adds a tenth gift, the gift of hospitality in which one is a lover of people and thrills at meeting needs, bringing people together and making a good use of God's material resources.)

E. Discovery of Ministry Gifts:

1. Much can be known about what gifts are given to which members by observing ministries in which they clearly excel.
2. There have been questionnaires that have been developed in the last few decades that accelerate and improve the accuracy in identifying one's ministry giftedness.
3. The one that best avoids any excesses and is more biblical has been produced by *Team Ministry*.⁷

⁷One can purchase group packets to administer the questionnaire manually or individually go online and complete 108 questions and get a free printout of the resultant profile and explanation. For either need, one can access the website at: www.teamministry.com. On this profile there are

F. Development of Ministry Gifts:

1. Most people will have three primary, three secondary and three tertiary gifts.
2. These three gifts are God's leading assignments in ministry for each person.

G. Employment of Ministry Gifts:

1. Being given a ministry gift, and not employing it in the growth of body for which it was given would be irresponsible stewardship.
2. The statement of Jesus, "*Unto whom much is given, much will be required*" (Luke 12:48) rings down through the centuries and would clearly include ministry gifts that lie dormant and unused for the right purposes.
3. Leaders need to plan church efforts on the basis of knowing the giftedness of each member and encourage each gifted member to use his/her gifts in the growth of the church.

H. A Fellowship of Peace

1. One of the richest and most pressing needs for growth is in conflict management and reconciliation.
2. Learning to be *peacemakers* is one of the greatest works of leadership in any church (Matthew 5:9): "*Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.*"
3. Seven things should be understood by every member:
 - a. **Not every offense is worth attention** – and certainly most are not worth a disruption of friendship or fellowship.
 - b. **To be prepared to quickly confess a wrong** – even before a conflict threatens, control anger and begin the process of reconciliation through forgiveness.
 - c. **To detect the wrong responses to conflict and hastily reject them** – replacing them with healthy, efficient responses.
 - d. **Settling losses of material means or of reputation** – needs to take place only after reconciliation has been mutually affirmed.
 - e. **Prolonged, unresolved conflicts may require members to humbly invite other skilled persons to intervene.**
 - f. **The refusal to be reconciled is a sin** – subject to church discipline and disapproval of God.
 - g. **Developing a culture of peace** – is imperative in the church being all that God desired for His people.

I. A Healed Fellowship

1. A healed fellowship would be a church that is whole in all of its traits.
2. The healing to which is referred to here is specifically that of recovering from unhealed hurts.
3. Church growth becomes compromised and, in some cases, precluded when members are full of unresolved and harbored hurts.

Following is an eight step program of forgiveness:

- a. **A choice to be honest:** to acknowledge hurt and anger.
- b. **A choice to make a healthy response:** rather than repress or explode, give direction and control to hurt emotions.
- c. **A choice to confront the hurt:** to verify if it is real or perceived, if it is important, if it is current or in the past.
- d. **A choice to understand the offender:** to put in context the significant hurts that have been verified, to ask “why” questions.
- e. **A choice to desire the best for the offender:** to practice the Calvary choice on behalf of the offender, to practice love.
- f. **A choice to forgive the offense:** to stand at the side of the offender as a defense attorney and plea the case for clemency.
- g. **A choice to confirm the forgiveness in word and in deed:** to decide to be a servant and assume some responsibility in the rehabilitation of the offender.
- h. **A choice to maintain vigilance and discipline in anger management from future hurts:** to practice the preceding principles each time that new hurts occur. (cf. Spiritual Living for Ministers by Truman Scott for a fuller treatment of these steps)

A BIBLE KNOWING CHURCH

A. The Critical Need of Bible Knowledge

1. The ancient declaration in Hosea 4:6, “*My people perish for lack of knowledge*” is as modern as video conferencing or iPod communication.
2. Jesus pronounced the truth as a key to freedom (John 8:32).
3. Paul emphasized the singular need of knowledge when writing to the Colossians: “*We ...do not cease to pray for you and ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*” (Colossians 1:9)
4. Paul saw biblical knowledge as imperative for focal leaders of the church (Acts 20:32). “*....I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*”

B. The Danger of Encroaching Bible illiteracy

Don Huddleston’s approach to Bible study: The program of study aims at learning the content of the 260 chapters of the New Testament.

C. Getting Ready:

1. Buy 300, 3”X5” index cards, 27 index tabs (or divider cards) and a box (e.g. recipe box.).
2. Write the name of each of the 27 New Testament books on the index tabs.
3. Place the index cards in the box after each of the 27 index tabs according to the number of each chapter (e.g. Matthew, 28 cards, Mark, 16 cards, etc.) Write the chapter number at the upper right or left corner of each card.

4. Choose a reading New Testament that has comfortably large print and has each chapter divided into sub-topics. Now, you are ready to start a marvelous acquisition of life serving Bible knowledge.

D. Start Learning:

1. Read ten chapters each day for seven days, Monday-Sunday, beginning in Matthew.
2. Monday: Read to enjoy the content flow of the ten chapters.
3. Tuesday: Read the ten chapters again and begin, writing the chapter sub-topics listed in your Bible on each of the ten cards (e.g. Matthew One—Genealogy of Jesus Christ, Announcement and Birth of Jesus).
4. Wednesday–Thursday–Friday: Read the ten chapters each day and memorize the sub-topics in each chapter.
5. Saturday: Read the ten chapters and, with closed Bible, test yourself in recalling the contents of each chapter.
6. Sunday: Read the ten chapters and praise God for the new found beauty of Scripture.

NOTE: Repeat the first week's schedule, ten chapters at a time, for twenty-five more weeks. You will acquire a marvelous knowledge of 260 chapters in the New Testament. Kept fresh by review and practical use one will have instant recall of the Apostolic Word. One can repeat this program every few years. (See the remainder of this plan of study in Truman Scott's book entitled "***Leader Strong Churches.***")

F. A Leader Strong Church Emphasized Marriage Excellence

1. Churches with many strained or fragmented marriages are hurting churches, and distracted by the marital pain from fulfilling God's purposes.
2. Their energy is consumed, and their time is siphoned off from ministry and growth purposes.
3. Leadership qualities defined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 require focal leaders to model healthy marital relationships and to instruct couples in marital development.
4. The mature sisters of Titus 2 (certainly including elders' wives), are to teach young wives to love their husbands. (cf. Chapter Four, Home Relations – Being a Model Husband).
5. Christian oriented, library of books, audio and video programs, seminars, family conferences and congregational teaching series to assist couples and leaders in their work of developing marriages.
6. Well trained and trustworthy, Christian counselors can provide pre-marital and marital counseling.
7. Leaders need to help marital partners to excel in the following, basic areas:
 - a. Learning about marriage from God's perspective: the foundation principles in Genesis 1-2, God's view of a husband's priorities in Hosea 2:19-20 and learning the apostolic teaching on marriage in Ephesians 5, Colossians 3 and 1 Peter 3.
 - b. Being skilled in communication, parenting, sexual intimacy, money and

time management and in conflict resolution.

- c. Identifying the inviting challenges to make a home a place wherein God is honored, children are focused and submitted in life-long service to God.

G. A Leader Strong Church Is a Praying Church

Its leaders are men of fervent prayer. Its people are learning to view the whole panorama of prayer. They understand:

1. **Prayer and faithfulness** – knowing what prayer is from God's view, what it is designed to do and how it related to God's power.
2. **Prayer and forethought** – knowing the importance of preparation in the Word and in life before entering God's temple of prayer.
3. **Prayer and frequency** – knowing the value of regular, periodic prayer that often leads one into God's presence.
4. **Prayer and fervency** – knowing that passion and conviction go together.
5. **Prayer and fasting** – knowing that all great persons of prayer understood the self-discipline and the profit of fasting accompanying their prayers.
6. **Prayer and fullness** – knowing that a full, prayer life involves eight pathways:
 - a. *adoration* of God's essential nature,
 - b. *praise* for His marvelous works,
 - c. *thanksgiving* for His gracious gifts,
 - d. *confession* of our need for Him and for his forgiveness,
 - e. *commitment* of ourselves to His will and purposes,
 - f. *petition* for the great needs of the kingdom,
 - g. *intercession* for others and
 - h. *communion* with God through meditation and reading of Scripture.
7. **Prayer and fraternity** – knowing that fellowship in prayer with other believers is a vital part of God's rich legacy enjoyed in prayer.
8. **Prayer and futurity** – knowing that a believer prays believing and expecting that in the future God will answer his prayers as best serves His purposes.
9. **Prayer and fruitfulness** – knowing that good will come from prayer, not that there is power in man's prayer but that there is power in the One who hears men pray and powerfully responds.
10. **Prayer and festivity** – knowing there is a time of celebration when prayers have been answered to the glory of God and for the blessings to men.

NOTE: Every leader should have the evidence of prayer in his own life, from the callouses on his knees to a gleam of heaven in his eye; from a life of sweetness and serenity to a life of militancy and confirmed conviction and courage. Being a person of prayer, he can inflame others with the desire to be taught to pray. A leader needs to push most things down a notch on his priority list to reserve a treasured place for prayer.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE

1. What are the five assignments given to the elders in Ephesians 4:11-13?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

2. A composite listing of the ministry gifts in Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11-12 add up to nine. List these gifts below.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____

3. In relation to a healed fellowship and forgiveness, complete the following sentences.

1) A choice to: _____
2) A choice to: _____
3) A choice to: _____
4) A choice to: _____
5) A choice to: _____
6) A choice to: _____
7) A choice to: _____
8) A choice to: _____

4. A Leader Strong church is a praying church. What are the ten (10) characteristics of prayer listed?

1) Prayer and – _____
2) Prayer and – _____
3) Prayer and – _____
4) Prayer and – _____
5) Prayer and – _____
6) Prayer and – _____
7) Prayer and – _____
8) **A choice to:** _____
9) Prayer and – _____
10) Prayer and – _____

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect on Ephesians 4:11-13 and comment on the five-point growth areas.
2. Reflect on the eight church growth areas and comment on one of your choice.
3. Reflect and comment on the one, most needed area of growth in the church where you worship.

PREVIEW OF LESSON SIX

Members Must Make Mature Responses To Leaders

When there are problems in a congregation frequently the elders are criticized. But, even more frequently, it must be said that the source of many problems result from members acting immaturely in respect to elders. But, God holds both members and leaders responsible and accountable for the lack of growth in a church. This coming study will focus on what members need to learn to become mature in their responses to congregational leaders.

LESSON SIX

Members must Make Mature Responses to Leaders

INTRODUCTION:

A study on the responsibilities of spiritual leaders is incomplete without pointed attention being given to the responsibilities of the members to be mature in their relationship with the appointed leaders. We all desire to see efficient and fruitful leaders in every local church. The lack of growth in a congregation is sometimes more a question of membership maturity than leadership function. This is evident for several reasons:

LESSON AIM: To impress on our hearts the responsibilities of the congregational members to be mature in their relationship with the leaders who they, along with the Holy Spirit, have appointed.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that a congregation determines the substance, number and quality of its present leaders and its future leaders.
 2. Realize that a healthy, congregational environment for leadership development and fruitful co-labor is best promoted by a knowledge of and submission to God's will.
-

THE CONGREGATION'S RELATION TO LEADERS

A. A Congregation Determines the Substance of Leadership

1. To a great extent leaders are what they have been trained to be.
 - a. They look like the church that produced them.
 - b. They mirror much of the church that has taught them.
2. Any leader, in most congregations, represents a substantial membership investment. They reflect the best the congregation possesses.
3. Where there is a definite and positive program to train leaders, starting very early, there will be a continuing number of good leaders coming to the front.

B. A Congregation Determines the Number and Quality of Future Leaders by its Spirit and Attitude

1. Children, recent converts and young adults are greatly encouraged to pursue ministry activities and leadership maturity in a congregation where leaders are esteemed and treated well.

2. Fewer young men will aspire to serve as leaders in a church that is critical, resistant, doubtful and punitive of its leaders.
3. Fewer young women will be as quick to encourage their young husbands to prepare for leadership if they see how much negative stress many members of the congregation place on the leaders and their families.

C. A Congregation Determines the Effectiveness of Appointed Leaders

1. Leaders are lesser able to do what they want to do, and can do, without mature congregational support.
2. Encouraged by highly motivated leaders a congregation can change.
 - a. If the church does not improve and persists in recurring patterns of resisting leadership the leaders most frequently fall in despair and defeat.
 - b. Many well intentioned and reasonably competent leaders, whether elders, evangelists, Bible school teachers, youth workers, etc., have given up because of lack of support and harsh criticism from resistant members.
3. Leader strong churches know how incredibly important the membership response to leaders is. They understand how lifted up and strengthened the leaders are when they serve with men and women who know God's will for them in their relationship with the church leaders

A HEALTHY, CONGREGATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

God has spoken to spiritual leaders about their responsibilities and their accountabilities. God has also spoken to members and holds them fully accountable. Some of the major statements of God to members:

A. I Thessalonians 5:12 –

1. Paul identifies the specific persons that were to be singled out for their attention:
 - a. "those that labor among you."
 - b. "those...who are over you in the Lord."
 - c. "those...who admonish you."

All three descriptions are tied grammatically in the context to refer to the same group who *work unselfishly, who direct the affairs of the church, and who teach and encourage the members.*
2. Paul, then instructs the members how to be mature in responding to their leaders:
 1. "*know them....*" The word *know* suggests intimate knowledge gained only in a close relationship.
 2. "*esteem them very highly in love* (lit. "most exceedingly)." Paul leaves no doubt that members are to look for the best in their leaders and shower their highest and most profuse affection on them.
 3. Whereas the "*intimate concern*" (*know them*) is tied to the person, the "*loving esteem*" is related to their leadership work.
 4. Paul concludes this section with the exhortation "*and be at peace among yourselves.*"

5. Paul's following statement in v. 14, "*warn them that are unruly*" could refer, in part, to members who superficially know their leaders and who unlovingly discredit their leadership efforts.

B. I Timothy 5:17-18 –

Paul teaches two levels of membership response to elder / leaders who serve well:

1. **Honor** – The word "honor" refers to a recognition of value.
2. **Double Honor** – Paul goes beyond moral valuing of leaders and verbal affirmation of their work to recognizing the value of their work by monetary support.
 - a. In any field of labor the acknowledgment of the value of one's efforts is regularly stated by material compensation.
 - b. An employer that asks more and more of a worker but gives little attention to providing material recognition devalues the work and person of the worker.
 - c. A congregation gives honor upon honor, or doubly affirms the value of an elder, in providing material support of his labors.
 - d. The monetary support of elders, especially those engaged in preaching and teaching, is placed on the same, solid basis as the support of an evangelist (1 Corinthians 9:14).

C. I Timothy 5:19-20 –

1. Dealing with leadership failure may be the greatest test of membership maturity.
2. Paul is specific in his instruction.
 - a. Do not listen, do not give audience to unsupported accusations against an elder.
 - b. Every accusation is to be supported by multiple witnesses.
3. The continuing statements in 1 Timothy 5:20-22 add a note of urgency and sternness in dealing with **premature** or **unfounded** accusations.
4. Such treatment should be true in regard to every brother, but, there are additional reasons why even greater care should be taken to one who leads the church.

D. Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24 –

Members are instructed to have the following attitude toward them:

1. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the authority of the ones who have the rule over the church.
2. **REMEMBER** (lit. "*look to them with feeling*") calls on members to be sensitive and understanding of leaders.
3. **CONSIDER**. Members are urged to carefully examine, not the item by item events of a leader's past and continuing life, but, the *outcomes* of his life-long practices and decision making.
4. **IMITATE**. Members are to give their best energies to repeating and imitating godly principles in the lives of their leaders.
5. **OBEY** (lit. *persuade oneself to believe*). Members are charged here to

discipline themselves to believe, to trust, to honor the control that the congregation gave to the appointed leaders.

6. **SUBMIT** (lit. *lay no obstacles*). Members are urged to lay no unnecessary burdens on the leaders that make a difficult work even more difficult.

NOTE: The writer of Hebrews gives some reasons why members are to build a relationship in which they can *remember, consider, imitate, obey and submit* to their leaders:

1. **THEY ARE SERVING THE MEMBERS** in as much as “...*they watch for your souls.*” (v. 17).
 - a. Leaders are busy on behalf of the members. Literally, the expression “watch” says “they are missing their sleep” on behalf of the members.
 - b. Out of appreciation, members should build right relations with their elders.
2. **THEY ARE BEING ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE MEMBERS** as indicated in the statement “....*as they must give account*” (v. 17).
 - a. Members are encouraged to so live that shepherds can feel the joy of making a positive report concerning their life and ministry.
 - b. When most members end their day, the shepherds stand before the Chief Shepherd to report on the sheep.
 - c. When members fail God is not honored, leaders are burdened. The members who persists in sin loses their relationships with God.
 - d. The book of Hebrews closes urging the members to salute – greet – and wish the leaders well (v. 24).

SUMMARY: God has declared that the work of leaders is a *good work* (I Timothy 3:1). Members make the work of the leaders a good, joyful and continually a desirable work. Those churches which have an adequate number of competent leaders, who continue their fruitfulness over years of leadership understand and practice the principles reviewed in this session. A major key to the strength, number and continuity in a congregational leadership is the growing maturity of the members.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX

1. Two truths that reflect what the character of leaders will be are:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
2. In 1 Thessalonians 5:12 Paul gives three identifying qualities of their leaders. What are these three identifying marks?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

3. What are the two responses that were to be given by the church?
- 1) _____
 2) _____
4. What two levels of membership response to elders are given by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:17-18
 1) _____
 2) _____
5. What are six (6) attitudes members are to have toward their leaders in Hebrews?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect and comment on the crucial impact a congregation has on the development, selection and effectiveness of leaders.
2. Reflect on each of the four Scriptures that describe a healthy environment for developing leaders: 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 1 Timothy 5:17-18, 1 Timothy 5:19-20 and Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24. Comment on one.
3. Reflect and comment on the accountability of a member or a congregation that disregards these biblical responsibilities in reference to leaders.
4. While being objective, careful and fraternal, reflect on the leadership losses in your experiences because of immature treatment of leaders.

PREVIEW OF SESSION SEVEN

Leader Strong Churches Understand that a Church Must Build Unity in Mutually Held Beliefs

Congregational unity provides a healthy environment of leadership development and continuity. Biblical beliefs that are clearly and frequently stated and mutually subscribed to by the members provide a strong, cohesive context to grow many faithful elders and robust and fruitful members.

LESSON SEVEN

A Church must Build Unity in Mutually Held Beliefs

INTRODUCTION:

rowing churches that develop strong leaders know that they must be united and focused on what they believe is right and important. They see the need of a strong teaching program that keeps the members biblically instructed. They are aware how soon a church can become vulnerable to destructive beliefs if it is not freshly and regularly reminded of fundamental truths.

They understand that unity is more and better ensured by deeply shared beliefs than by exciting, ministry programs

There are three considerations concerning unifying beliefs that will introduce us to our main discussion in this study:

The place of beliefs: Ideas take root in beliefs or in belief systems. **The definition of beliefs:** Beliefs that have the potential of beginning and continuing an effort are much more than casually held truths. Such beliefs are clearly defined propositions that its adherents are uncompromisingly convinced are fundamentally true, singularly important and absolutely relevant and life changing. **The Relation of Beliefs to Leadership Development:** Churches that have convicted and mutually held beliefs produce convicted leaders. They produce leaders who consistently lead out of the center of those beliefs. These churches develop leaders who know who they are, whose they are and what they are assigned to do. These leaders will excel in leadership roles to the extent their beliefs are held to be absolutely true, unquestionably important and urgently necessary. The greatest threat to local churches is being content with blurred beliefs.

LESSON AIM: To get and overall view of the great necessity of churches establishing and communicating unifying beliefs.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the value and necessity for unity of beliefs.
 2. Know the approach to define unifying beliefs suggested in this lesson:
Essential beliefs, Evidential beliefs, Applicational beliefs and Circumstantial beliefs.
 3. Reflect on the agenda for unity listed in Ephesians 4:4-6.
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DEFINING UNIFYING BELIEFS

A. Understanding the Apostolic-instructed Beliefs of the New Testament Churches

1. The definition of unifying beliefs has already been done by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, when he was sent to the Apostles to teach them “....*all things, and bring all things to their remembrance*” that Christ had said to them (John 14:26).
2. The definition of unifying beliefs is assured through a careful and reasoned search of the beliefs of the Apostolic-instructed churches.
3. There is much in the Bible (cf. Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes) to be gleaned about the attitude one should have in the study and interpretation of Scriptures.
4. Deriving a sense of biblical authority by determining what is *a direct command, an apostolic example or necessary inference*, in part, has served well.
5. This method has often either left unanswered questions or served to disrupt unity. Especially, in the third element of “necessary inference.”
6. There is no inspired, systematic, hermeneutical approach to the study of Scriptures that is binding or efficient in all circumstances.

B. Suggestions That Can Offer Help in Understanding the Beliefs That must Unite us

1. **Truth must be placed in perspective—a hierarchy of truth.**
 - a. All biblical truths are important and true, but, not all biblical truths are equally important.
 - b. Jesus spoke of the “*weightier matters of the law*” (Matthew 23:23) and the two greater commandments on which the whole law subsisted (Matthew 22:36-40) and the commandments that lead to life (Matthew 19:16-22).
 - c. Paul spoke of the paramount truths of faith, hope and love, exalting love as the greatest (I Corinthians 13:13).
2. **There are some truths that are more essential than others.** These truths are stated in “*life and death settings*.” They are stated as transformational truths on which the salvation of one’s soul depends. For example:
 - a. God is accountable and holds man accountable (Hebrews 11:6)
 - b. Christ is the divine Son and the promised Messiah (John 8:24).
 - c. Sinful man must renounce his sinful life (Luke 13:3).
 - d. The repentant believer must be baptized and raised even as his Savior was buried and resurrected to life (Mark 16:16; Romans 6:1-6).
 - e. The believer must live an obedient life of confessed trust (Matthew 10:32-33, 24:16).
3. **There are some truths that can be called evidential truths.** They authenticate the essential truths with unassailable evidence. For example:
 - a. God’s existence and sovereignty is confirmed by creation and the biblical history of redemption.

- b. The Deity and Lordship of Christ is confirmed by fulfilled prophecy, his life, teachings, miracles and his death, burial and resurrection and his coronation at God's right hand.
 - c. Man's need to renounce his sin is confirmed by God's holiness, man's long history of sin, with God's call to holiness and His command to repent.
 - d. That man must be transformed into Christ's likeness is confirmed by God's call to sanctifying conversion and man's failed efforts to save himself.
 - e. That man must live an obedient and confessed life of trust is confirmed by the recorded lives of the faithful and the danger of unfaithfulness.
4. **There are some truths that can be called application truths.** The Bible instructs us how to bring our essential truths and evidential truths into real life, translating them from theory to meaningful action.:
- a. Belief in God flourishes in studying and understanding the essential nature of God in Scripture, which encourages us to become more like Christ.
 - b. Belief in Christ becomes more practical as we thrive on His teachings in the Gospels, in the Apostolic presentations in the Epistles and making Him known and loved by others.
 - c. Belief in penitent living grows in learning the rich virtues of righteousness as seen in sections like the love section of 1 Corinthians 13, fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, etc.
 - d. Belief in a spiritual transformation is strengthened by understanding the nature and place of baptism and the indwelling of the Spirit in one's saved relationship with God.
 - e. Belief in a believer's life of loyalty and trust is made more clear by studies in prayer, Christian worship, service and mature virtues.
5. **There are some truths that can be called circumstantial truths.**
- a. The Bible records many activities that grew out of expected, cultural responses and personal or circumstantial choices.
 - b. Such activities were not essential to obeying an Apostolic command nor did they form an Apostolic pattern of behavior (e.g. foot washing, wearing a veil, greeting with a kiss, wearing "coat and cloak," circumcision among Christians, making a vow, mission methods, etc.).
 - c. While we could learn from them and even apply some of these ideas they would not be high priority or absolute and certainly not a demanded basis for unity and fellowship.

ACHIEVING UNITY IN THE CHURCH

- A. **Church Leaders must Determine to Make Unity a High Priority of All of its Efforts and Guard it with Conviction and Urgency**
1. **Leaders need to put in practice the suggested approach above.** Without some principles in approaching the study of the Bible a believer will always feel an uncertainty. Each member would be encouraged in using the following principles:

- a. Draw together all the “life and death” statements made by Christ for His church to understand the *essential and transformational truths*.
 - b. Examine all the *evidence or supportive truths* preached by the early church relative to the essential beliefs (e.g. the belief in the resurrection supports the essential belief in the deity of Christ).
 - c. Discern the age-long and apostolically established beliefs that are fundamental and necessary in bringing the essential beliefs into one’s life (e.g. baptism, the Lord’s supper, etc.).
 - d. Enjoy the study of cultural and circumstantial choices of your early brethren. Some of the choices might be appropriate choices for today in similar circumstances.
2. **Leaders need to plan and implement a systematic program of study that reaches every member on an on-going basis.** A well informed church, a deeply believing church, a church whose beliefs and performances are consistent is a united church. The leaders it produces will be men of conviction, men of balanced emphasis and men of continued faithfulness. A working knowledge of the Bible includes:
- a. **Structural knowledge:** knowing the message of each Biblical book, its sections, its author, its readers and its purpose, is the foundation on which any believer must build his Bible study life.
 - b. **Content knowledge:** complete familiarity of the contents of the Bible, gained through daily, systematic Bible reading, continued over a lifetime, is fundamental to the spiritual growth of a believer.
 - c. Textual knowledge: understanding truth in its historical context, section by section, provides one of the richest soils for knowing the Scriptures.
 - d. **Topical knowledge:** knowing accurately all of the great Bible doctrines (e.g. God, prophecy, salvation, Christ, church, second coming, etc.) is the best defense against error.
 - e. **Biographical knowledge:** knowing all of the patriarchs, judges, kings, prophets, apostles, leading characters, men and women, etc. provides the models for powerful applications.
 - f. **Geographical knowledge:** A thorough knowledge of the nations, lands, seas, mountains, rivers, cities, etc., related to the periods of Biblical history, helps immensely in understanding and appreciating the Bible message.
3. **Leaders must teach Bible study principles to all the membership.** Every Christian would do well to learn that the gaining and use of Biblical knowledge should follow guidelines:
- a. One should understand and take seriously the Bible student’s obligation to understand the purpose of the author, the message to the original reader, what he was expected to do with the message in his historical context and the application of the inspired message in one’s modern setting.
 - b. One should gain the background knowledge to better accomplish the student’s obligation.
 - c. One should acquire and use updated, research tools to be most effective (Select Bible Versions, Bible Dictionaries, Bible Handbooks, Bible

- Customs, Bible Atlas, Bible Commentaries, Word Study tools, Topical Bibles, Bible Handbooks, PC Study Bibles, etc.).
- d. One should develop a system to retain the knowledge in order to keep building on past studies.
 - e. After personal application, one should organize the material to teach others and use every opportunity to share the knowledge (e.g. classes, sermons, seminars, etc.).
 - f. One should broaden the search for more knowledge among proven Bible instructors---becoming a life-long Berean or inquiring Ethiopian Treasurer.
 - g. If gifted in writing, one should reproduce oneself many times in composing articles, tracts, courses, books, video studies, correspondence, etc.
 - h. One should make Bible study a life-long commitment, never content with any level of knowledge.
 - i. One should know that the best access to Scripture is through the original languages of Hebrew and Greek. Mastery of the Biblical languages is strongly recommended for all those who are serious in unlocking the full knowledge of the Biblical text.

A UNITED CHURCH IS A BALANCED CHURCH

A. It Is Important to Put in Perspective All Four Levels of Truth

1. The churches that focus their study and unity too much on cultural or circumstantial truths most frequently are *factious* and make everything a test of fellowship
2. Churches that focus too much on applications or supportive truths most frequently are *legalistic*, emptying the Gospel of its warmth and winsomeness.
3. Churches that focus too much on evidential or confirming truths most frequently are *academically cold*.
4. Churches that focus or limit their studies on essential or transformation truths most frequently take on the arrogant spirit of the *agnostics*.

NOTE: A balanced church brings all four levels of truths under careful study. The results are predictable: unity, not division; freedom, not legalism; conviction, not theory; humility, not pride.

B. Seven Essential Beliefs in Ephesians 4:4-6

1. The perimeters of unity – seven essential beliefs: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God.
2. A central body of beliefs that bind a people together.
 - a. There is a God.
 - b. He communicates in inerrant scripture.
 - c. Man is lost.
 - d. God has a plan to save man.
 - e. Jesus Christ is God's Son.
 - f. Jesus Christ became man's Savior and Lord.

- g. Man has hope.
 - h. Man enters God's family through Christ.
 - i. Man has eternal life.
 - j. The world is not man's home.
3. One must study each of the truths and, from the whole of Scriptures, buttress each one with:
- a. The evidential truths that confirm these essential truths.
 - b. Add the application or supportive truths to bring these essential truths into daily life.
 - c. Compare the cultural truths that flavored the circumstantial choices of early Christians to the modern scene.

CONCLUSION

Such productive Bible study will promote the growth of deeply and mutually held beliefs in a congregation. Such a church will have a firm grip on what they believe (essential beliefs), why they believe it (evidential beliefs), how to make the beliefs be life changing (application beliefs) and how to enhance their unity with rich choices (circumstantial or culture choices). Such a church, united in biblical beliefs, will soon be increasingly mature to produce the number and quality of leaders it will need on a continuing basis.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. What is meant by the phrase “a hierarchy of truth”?

2. List four terms that reflect the hierarchy of truty.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
3. A working knowledge of the Bible includes what six things:
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
4. The teacher speaks of ten (10) essential beliefs that bind a people together. List these below.
1) _____
2) _____

- 3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____
10) _____

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect and comment on the value and necessity for unity of beliefs
2. Reflect on and discuss the approach to define unifying beliefs suggested in this lesson: Essential beliefs, Evidential beliefs, Applicational beliefs and Circumstantial beliefs.
3. Reflect on the agenda for unity listed in Ephesians 4:4-6.

PREVIEW OF SESSION EIGHT

Leader Strong Churches Must Understand There Is Value in a United Purpose

Leader strong churches under the Lordship of Christ have a unifying purpose. They know why they exist, what results they must achieve and what resources they have to reach their objectives. Purpose-oriented churches produce strong leaders. Less committed and less decisive churches produce less fruitful leaders. This should be a chapter that will lift some fresh, ministry horizons and give rise to a renewed hope for growth in every church.

LESSON EIGHT

The Value of a Unifying Purpose

INTRODUCTION:

 God had a far-reaching purpose in creation and redemption. Noah had an urgent purpose in building the ark. Moses had a challenging purpose in leading Israel out of Egypt. Christ had a saving purpose in coming among men. Paul stated his purpose in working among brethren (Colossians 1:28). The early Christians had a commissioned purpose in penetrating the Roman Empire. Churches today must have stated purposes to maximize their potential. Leader strong churches have a well-defined, well communicated and mutually shared purpose. After building a worthy purpose into the fabric of the church, they will likely either renew or choose a new, challenging purpose every three-to-five years.

LESSON AIM: To introduce the student to the value of unifying statements of purpose and ways and means of putting the purpose statements into action.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn four minimum areas of congregational planning: policies, programs, personnel and place. Comment on their importance.
 2. Examine five things a church must know to craft a unifying purpose, seeing the importance of each one.
 3. Study examples of purpose statements of neighboring churches and reflect on a purpose statement for the church where you are.
-

PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCHES ARE WELL MANAGED

A. Four Areas Where Good Planning and Management Can Be Seen

1. Policies: Every church should write their policy decisions in the form of statements and review them periodically
2. Programs: Every program of a church should be reviewed occasionally to determine if it is efficient, still relative to changing needs and a justifiable priority.
3. Personnel: Every church must have willing and efficient people in its many ministry roles – employed or volunteer. Key people as elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers, etc. need to be kept productive.
4. Place: If a church invests a significant amount of its resources in a building, it must be used much and maintained well for the best and longest use.
A leader strong church must be a good steward in all of these areas.

PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCHES ARE VISIONARY

A. The *Purposes* and *Goals* of a Church May Change Periodically

1. To confront the changing times in society.
 - a. A church that intends to be constantly moving forward must have an overall, compelling vision of its place in the Kingdom Enterprise.
 - b. A vision is its “northern star” by which it never loses its direction or way in a stormy and often dark world.
2. A congregational vision declares the ultimate concern of the congregation. It is the core of the particular family of faith.
3. Some churches, whether stated or evidenced by their preaching, center their *ultimate concern* (or vision) on particular issues, choice outcomes or persons.
 - a. Jesus stated his ultimate concern was “*to do the will of the Father.*”
 - b. The abiding vision of the church must have something to do with glorifying and honoring a Holy God and bringing many souls into His presence.
 - c. From those considerations must flow the purposes, goals and ministry plans of a growing church.

PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCHES ARE WELL INFORMED

A. They Must Know the Function of a Purpose

1. A statement of purpose is a statement of self-identity. It informs others and reminds the church of its reason for being. It boldly says, “If we don’t do anything else, we must....?”
2. A stated purpose commits a church’s major resources to a predetermined end.
 - a. It announces that there is no other priority as worthy as the church’s stated purpose.
 - b. It promises God to offer up a specific offering that is believed to be pleasing to Him.
3. A stated purpose affirms that the world would be poorer if the purpose remained unaccomplished.
 - a. It speaks convincingly that the church is serious about its intent to glorify God.
 - b. It guides to a desired outcome as a star guides a sailor at sea.

B. They Must Know How a Purpose Relates to the Growth Cycle of a Healthy Church

1. A healthy, growing church has a history of renewing itself every three-to-five years.
2. After a general limit of five years, if a church does not renew itself with a new or reaffirmed purpose it will begin to decline.
 - a. The first indicators are *nostalgic statements* of members recalling better times of the past, comparing them favorably with the present.
 - b. If the purpose is not restated and re-enforced, then questions, laced with doubt, will be asked and varied complaints concerning the church will be increasingly expressed.

- c. If leaders ignore the warning signs, blocks of discontented members will draw themselves together in a common cause of complaints.
- d. This polarization, at last, will result in disruption in varied forms of individual or group slow-down, in withholding in giving of resources, or withdrawal from some activities or in some cases in hurtful division.
- 3. People must have a purpose they can believe in and in which they feel a part.
 - a. Wise leaders never let the growth cycle turn downward.
 - b. As a purpose runs its cycle of three-to-five years they will lead the church, again and again, through a congregational, purpose selection.

C. They must Know the Procedures for Selecting a Purpose

1. **Communicate the value, nature and necessity** of a congregational purpose. Classes and sermons on biblical examples of purpose statements and results, stewardship, fruitfulness and excellence could be planned.
2. **Prepare the members for the selection of a purpose.** Give them instructions on choosing purposes that are biblical, purposes that are consistent to the unifying beliefs of the congregation and purposes that are stated in short, crisp language.
3. **Set aside a service where the members can submit a church purpose statement.** A general request in the bulletin or by an assembly announcement usually will not bring useful results.
4. **Plan a congregational seminar to work on the submitted purpose statements** and others that will come out of the seminar groups.
5. **Compose a short list of purposes submitted by the members and refined in the seminar.** From all the purposes suggested by the members it should not be difficult to select three-to-four that would meet any standard.
6. **Present the select purposes in a convincing way.** Plan a banquet or special service. A memorable event underlines the importance of the request. Choose good speakers, each to present one of the purposes.
7. **Let the congregation make a choice.** Any purpose selected from the short list would be one that the leaders will have already evaluated. They would have already agreed to lead toward the fulfillment of any one of the proposed purposes.
8. **Announce the resultant congregational purpose to the church.** This will become the call to action enlisting every member.
9. **Communicate the purpose often, clearly and creatively.** Good communication ensures the belief and investment by the members. The church without a worthy, well understood purpose or with a forgotten purpose experiences the same result: it loses its momentum toward growth.

D. They Must Know Some Examples of a Congregational Purpose

1. Example # 1: Being A Committed Church – committed to the New Testament Agenda.
 - a. The purpose statement, “To be committed to the New Testament Agenda” was a commitment to evangelism in all directions, apostolic instruction of new converts, ministry gift discovery and development, ministry involvement

- of every member according to one's giftedness, selection of deacons in ministry leadership and selection of Shepherds in the care of the flock.
- b. After several years pursuing such a purpose it would become a permanent part of the fabric of the church. The congregation could be ready in three-to-five years to renew itself with another purpose.
 - 2. Example # 2: Being A Whole Church – a whole church communicating a whole gospel to a whole world to glorify a Holy God. The purpose emphasizing *Whole Church, Whole Gospel, Whole World* became a compelling commitment for the following three years or more:
 - 3. Example # 3: Daring To Be Christ's Church. This purpose of this church was to commit itself to courageously let Christ lead it to be the kind of church he would want.

E. They Must Know What Follows the Selection of a Purpose

A written purpose is vital to a good beginning. However, it must be followed by the practical aspects of church growth. The church must set goals and sub-goals, plan some action steps for achieving the desired outcomes and devote much determined, single minded effort to fulfill the purpose.

- 1. Goal Setting Guidelines. Members must know the best approaches to setting goals:
 - a. Make a creative inventory of desired outcomes that are consistent to the stated purpose and the congregational vision or ultimate concern.
 - b. Prioritize the most desirable outcomes.
 - c. Frame the goals in positive outcome statements.
 - d. Make goals be S.M.A.R.T. goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Tangible.
 - e. Define perimeters of control – describing the verifiable limits and obstacles.
 - f. Preview the outcome – picture what will be accomplished when the goal is reached.
 - g. Develop strategies for each goal considering the available resources, deterrents, the progression, guiding models and environment.
 - h. Initiate action according to the plan.
 - i. Review and evaluate the unfolding outcome – celebrating the harvest at important stages and at the end.
- 2. Examples of choosing goals that are consistent with the selected purpose:
 - a. Example # 1: The church that chose the purpose of “Being a Whole Church....” chose the following goals to carry out the purpose.
 - 1) To become a *whole church* in identifying and promoting personal growth areas as a whole person.
 - 2) To become a *whole church* with every member having discovered, developed and employed his/her ministry potential.
 - 3) To communicate the *whole gospel*, beginning with the membership having studied and understood the message of salvation.

- 4) To look to the *whole world* required the members to understand the lostness of sinners and how to reach them. It would be further enhanced by learning the mission geography of the world and choosing and getting involved in mission opportunities, near and far.
 - 5) To glorify a *Holy God* was to become the ultimate concern of the church.
- b. Example # 2: The church that chose the purpose of “Daring to be Christ’s Church” set up six goals they would work on achieving. This purpose statement presented itself acrostically and biblically in six parts based on D-A-R-I-N-G.
 - 1) D – Developing Leaders
 - 2) A – Acknowledging Life’s Needs
 - 3) R – Reaching the Unchurched
 - 4) I – Involving People and their Gifts
 - 5) N – Nurturing New Members
 - 6) G – Giving Our Best (financially, time and life style)
3. Determine the necessary action steps.
 - a. The church will need to plan how it will reach its goals.
 - b. Setting action steps may include assembling the budget resources, organizing ministry initiatives, training gifted workers and keeping the membership informed and motivated.
 - c. The action steps should be developed for each of the several goal areas to contribute to fulfilling the overall purpose.

CONCLUSION

Churches that are growing see the value of being inspired and guided by a God-glorifying purpose. Such churches guard against valleys of decline and loss of their momentum by a commitment to a worthy purpose. A growing church, challenged by purposeful leaders, is a great environment for producing new and visionary leaders.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. List four (4) areas where good management and planning can be seen.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

2. Give five (5) things a purpose driven church must know.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____

3. Explain what a statement of purpose expresses.

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect on the four minimum areas of congregational planning: policies, programs, personnel and place. Comment on their importance.
2. Reflect on the five things a church must know to craft a unifying purpose. Comment on each of their importance.
3. Reflect on and list examples of purpose statements of neighboring churches.

IT IS TIME FOR DEGREE AND NON GROUP STUDENTS TO TAKE THE SECOND, SECTIONAL EXAM—LESSONS 5-8.

PREVIEW OF THE NINTH STUDY

Leader Strong Churches Understand the Church
Must Exalt God in its Worship

There are no more important periods in the history of a congregation than its weekly worship assemblies. The major experiences crucial for developing leaders happen in the temple presence of God. Churches which develop strong leaders have worship assemblies that are life changing as Isaiah's visit to the temple of Isaiah 6.

LESSON NINE

The Church must Exalt God in its Worship

INTRODUCTION:

 Men and women were made to worship God, both for His longing and joy for relationship with His creation and for our created need to worship and to express our deepest feelings and needs. Filling the vacuum within us with any other object of worship would be to our own detriment, even eternal loss. Man needs to look outside of himself for ultimate security and order. His definition of purpose and his motivation to excel can be no higher than the object of his trust, worship and service. Worship is singularly important for Christians. Therefore, leader strong churches give quality attention to the Lord's Day assemblies.

LESSON AIM: To instill in the student the importance of the assembly in developing and growing effective church leaders.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover why the church assembly is important in developing church leaders.
 2. Investigate several biblical passages which will help you understand the awesomeness of God and ways to honor and worship Him.
 3. Learn eight aspects of worship to be featured in the church assembly.
-

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH ASSEMBLY

A. The Specific Reasons for Placing Priority on the Assembly

1. There is no other occasion on the church calendar to touch the lives of more members at one time during a week.
2. A vibrant assembly creates a growth context for most of the congregational activities and gives a sense of stability and direction.
3. An assembly that is scripturally designed to please God results in all the spiritual blessings of obedience.

B. Leadership Development in the Assembly

The most important, the most basic and the most dynamic changes required to develop leaders can occur in the assembly.

1. Worship assemblies place the major focus on the majesty, holiness and authority of God.
2. Worship assemblies is a major place of one being instructed in the biblical truths that lift horizons of life and service.

3. Worship assemblies open the door to the Spirit of God to impact a worshiper in the formation of character resulting in a harvest of fruit.
4. Worship assemblies provide the opportunity to a family of believers to mutually throw themselves on the mercy and grace of God, committing themselves to honor His Holy Name.
5. Worship assemblies draw people of like mind and motive to bind themselves in mutual regard and fraternal love.
6. Worship assemblies anchor a week to inspire convicted people to reach out to help the needy and entreat the lost.
7. Worship assemblies pour over into small devotional groups, families and individual lives in bringing people into the continuing presence of God.

C. The Bible Is Rich with Instruction in Developing a Worshiping Church

1. The place to begin to understand God, the Object of worship and the attitude of the worshipers is in the Psalms.
2. The mountain peaks in the Prophets like Isaiah 6.
3. A study of the meaning of the names of God: Elohim, Jehovah (Yahweh), Adonai, El Shaddai and numerous derivatives (cf. Herbert Lockyer, *All of the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible*, Zondervan).
4. The fullness of worship grows in direct relationship to one's growing sense of awe in the august presence of God.

KNOWING THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP FROM THE PSALMS

A. The Psalms of David to Gives Us an Understanding of the Majesty and Holiness of God

1. He is seen as the ***Omni-God*** in power, knowledge, presence and competency.
2. Worshipers must begin to know Him in the multifaceted way in which David presents Him in the Psalms.

B. The Picture of God in the Psalms

1. He is presented in the Temple, in storms, in tragedies, in darkness or quietness of nights, in depths of the seas, in times of harvest, in seasons of drought and in the clamor and blood-shed of war.
2. He is called the Rock, Shield, Sword, Fortress, Refuge, Shepherd, Most High, Habitation, High Tower, Savior, Creator, Law Giver, Redeemer, Deliverer, Father, King, Lord of lords, Lord of Hosts, Judge, Hope of Israel, the Almighty One, the One God, the Great God, the Eternal One, from Everlasting to Everlasting, Ancient of Days, to name a few.

KNOWING THE ATTITUDE OF WORSHIP FROM ISAIAH

From the two worship experiences recorded by Isaiah we learn much about the proper attitude of worship.

A. A Picture of Unlawful Worship – Uzziah, the King of Judah

Unlawfully entered the temple to offer incense. He was swiftly struck with leprosy, becoming "unclean" to his nation and family, being separated from society and died as a leprous outcast. He showed all of the worship attitudes that displeases Jehovah.

1. He entered the presence of God **without reverence**.
2. He offered an act of worship to **enhance his own honor**.
3. He offered a **self-designed act of worship**, ignoring God's appointed way.
4. He entered the presence of God **impenitent for his sins** and careless concerning the predictable judgment of God.

B. Isaiah's Vision of Worship

1. He either had a vision of God in His temple or was standing at the threshold of the great doors of the temple.
2. Being of the kingly tribe he no more than Uzziah could have entered the Temple.
 - a. He saw Jehovah, the righteous King, "high, lofty and lifted up" sitting on His throne. Isaiah saw the royal robes flowing down from the throne and carpeting the temple floor.
 - b. He saw celestial beings surrounding the throne in readiness to serve the enthroned King.
 - c. He heard them in a responsive, resounding chorus exalting their King as incomparable, superlatively above, distantly separated from all others and unapproachably superior.
3. Divine holiness was the choral theme as they proclaimed the fullness of their King's glory in all the earth.
4. The foundations of the threshold (i.e. Lit. *door sockets*) shook at the sound of the voice and the temple was filled with smoke.
 - a. Isaiah was **compelled**, deeply moved and enamored by the display of divine grandeur, majesty and holiness.
 - b. He was **convicted** of his sinfulness. He could relate himself to his sinful king Uzziah who, by law, had to cover his diseased mouth and cry out, "unclean, unclean!" The incredible distance between Isaiah and the incomparable nature of God demanded his candid and humble recognition of sin.
 - c. He was **conscience stricken**, grieved and shaken by the recognition of the rampant, wide-spread sinfulness of all those around him. All were guilty of the same sins that brought swift judgment on Uzziah. He and the nation stood precariously in danger of justified judgment.
 - d. He **confessed**, agreed with God, that he was unfit to be in the incomparable presence of God. By this confession Isaiah acknowledged that in his unclean state he was lost, without recourse and had only the judgment of God in prospect.
 - e. He was **cleansed!** On cue, it seems, one of the choral members ran to the sacrificial altar, took a burning stone and cleansed – cauterized – the sinful mouth of Isaiah.
 - f. He **heard a call** from God to go on His behalf (presumably to preach to sinful Judah). His experiences had made him alert to the presence and purposes of God.
 - g. He **committed** himself. Now Isaiah saw a life changing purpose. Because of what had happened to him he felt compelled to share the life-changing experiences with all others. He responded to the divine question of who

would go to the lost people, he unhesitatingly committed himself. He imploringly begged, “Here am I, send me!”

- h. He was **commissioned**. The stark outlines of the commission were clearly drawn.
 - i. He **sought for direction**. Isaiah was faced with reality and felt compelled to know the cost of his faithfulness. “How long do I preach to these people?”
 - j. He was **confirmed**. The divine response was clear and direct: “Preach until I tell you stop.” “Be faithful.” Isaiah was to be faithful to the commission even if the people resisted and deserted him; even when there seemed to be no hope.
5. The attitudes in worship of Uzziah are to be rejected.
 6. The attitudes in worship of Isaiah are to be developed by every developing leader.
 7. These attitudes are basic, even absolute minimums to prepare for leadership.

C. The Worship Assembly and a Leader Strong Church

The assembly is a place where the worshiper regularly experiences the following:

1. Experiences “the Lord, high, lofty and lifted up.”
2. Experiences being compelled by the unique, unapproachable holiness of God.
3. Experiences the weight of the single obstacle of unresolved sin is to a right relationship with God and opens the heart in confession.
4. Experiences the reoccurrence and joy of divine healing from disobedient sin.

KNOWING THE CONTENTS OF WORSHIP FROM THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURES

A Leader Strong church will be dedicated to emphasizing the following elements in its worship services:

A. Adoration – Standing in Awe of Jehovah’s Essential Qualities and Divine Person

1. Adoration is the most uplifting aspect of a mature worship.
 - a. Adoration is to joyously acknowledge the Person of God.
 - b. To adore God in worship requires a study of all of the essential qualities revealed in Scripture and a falling in love with the person of God.
 - c. He is Holy, meaning that He is superlatively above, incomparable to and fully distinguished from all proclaimed deities.
2. There is none like Him. He is *omni* in all of His traits: omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient and omni-competent.

Scripture References: 2 Samuel 22:2-3; 1 Chronicles 29:11-13; Psalms 8:1; 36:5-9; 57:5; Jeremiah 10:6-7; Revelation 15:3-4.

B. Praise – Marveling at His Works That Tower over Man

1. One of the aspects of worship at its fullest is praising God in the exercise of His essential qualities. In reading the pages of creation and of divine revelation and seeing God at work in the lives of people and in the affairs of nations, the human response should be one of marvel, erupting in praise.

2. God is to be praised in His redemption of man and in His preparation for an eternal destiny for the redeemed. Praise is man's way of applauding God for jobs well done!

Scripture References: Psalms 103:1-5; 71:19, 104:1-32; 145:10-20; Isaiah 24:1-5; Revelation 15:3-4.

C. Thanksgiving – Gratefulness for What He Has Done on Our Behalf

Every minute of a believer's day, every turn of the road and every rising and setting of the sun is an occasion for expressing gratitude to an ever-giving God. The gifts of God are copious and fit for our every need. "Thank you God..." should be the constantly, repeating refrain of the worshiper's preacher's life.

Scripture References: 1 Chronicles 29:13; Jonah 2:2-9; Matthew 26:26; Luke 24:30; Acts 27:35.

D. Confession – Acknowledging Our Need for Him

1. Confession means *to agree with*. One who worships fully must be in constant and contrite agreement with God of personal failures and needs.
2. A worshiper who rejoices in his confessor relationship with the Most High finds it easier and more rewarding to "*confess...faults.*" to his brethren (James 5:16).

Scripture References: Genesis 32:11; 2 Chronicles 20:12; 2 Samuel 24:10; Ezra 9:6; Psalms 54:1-4; 40:17,

E. Petition – a Call for His Overruling in the Affairs of Men

1. A statement of a need or a cause bigger than the petitioner and an urgent request for a specific outcome.
2. Not a demand of the strong but an appeal of the lesser to the greater.
3. A call to God to overrule in the affairs of men to achieve a specific and deeply desired outcome.

Scripture References: Genesis 15:2; 1 Kings 3:9; 1 Chronicles 4:10; Nehemiah 1:11; Psalms 31:1-4; Lamentations 5:21-22; Jeremiah 64: 1-2, 9; Daniel 9:15-19.

E. Intercession – a Plea on Behalf of Another

1. Concern for others and wanting the best for others – an intervention on a person's behalf.
 - a. Jesus interceded for Peter (Luke 22:31).
 - b. Paul interceded for brethren in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:15-16), in Philippi (Philippians 1:3-4) and in Colosse (Colossians 1:3).
 - c. He urged brethren to pray for him (1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1).
3. Intercessory prayer in worship is a vital part of a brother-to-brother covenant.

Scripture References: Genesis 18:23-32; 25:21; Deuteronomy 26:27; 2 Kings 13:6; 2 Kings 6:17-20; 1 Chronicles 29:18-19; John 17:1-26; Acts 7:60, Ephesians 1:15-23.

F. Commitment – a Promise of Our Responsible Participation

1. Salvation thrives on an appropriate human response to divine initiatives. Seeking divine favor is completed by gratefulness and responsible commitment on the part of the human recipient.
2. Commitment is an expressed or clear part of the model prayer of Jesus (Matthew 6:9-13):
 - a. V. 9: "*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name*" – a commitment to honor and exalt God the Father.
 - b. V. 10: "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" – a promise to work to make the Lordship of Heaven more real to others.
 - c. V. 11: "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" – a promise to be both an industrious worker and a frugal, grateful steward.
 - d. V. 12: "*And forgive our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.*" – a promise to forgive all others for offences.
 - e. V. 13: "*And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil.*" – a promise to rebuff all temptations and fight against the most cherished personal sins.
 - f. V. 13: "*For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*" – promise to recognize, extol and honor the exalted position of the Father.
3. Commitment in worship is a partnership with God.

Scripture References: 1 Samuel 1:11; Psalms 39:1; 51:13; 104:33; 145:1-2; Jeremiah 20:12.

G. Communion – a Pouring of Hearts, a Sharing of the Spirit

1. Prayer in worship includes quiet reflection, earnest meditation, humble listening and waiting on the Lord.
2. Prayer in worship is waiting on the Spirit of God to translate into heavenly terms what we feel deeply but cannot express appropriately to the Father (Romans 8:26-27).
3. There is with God a communion of the spirit in deeply felt devotion, affection, trust and longing.

Scripture References: Psalms 42:1-11; 55:1-8; 57:1-2; 102:1-11; 139:23-24; Isaiah 26:9; Lamentation 3:48-55.

Leaders would do well in designing worship services as saints have modeled across the centuries: Adoration, praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession, commitment and communion.

KNOWING THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP FROM THE SAINTS OF OLD

The purposes of worship are illustrated well in the section above on the contents of worship. A few more references add further purposes:

1. **To answer perplexing questions (Psalms 73).** David had painful, confusing questions why the wicked prospered and the righteous suffered “*until I went into the sanctuary of God, then I understood their end...*” (v. 17).
2. **To be stirred up in love and good works...** “*exhorting one another*” (Hebrews 10:24-25).
3. **To confess to one another and pray for one another (1 John 2:15)**
The worship assembly provides that opportunity.
4. Assemblies described in 1 Corinthians 14, 1 Corinthians 16, Acts 20, etc. provide insights into the purposes of saints coming together: worship in exalting God, edifying one another, remembering the needy, etc.

KNOWING THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

Somewhere, over several centuries ago, an order of worship begin taking form and, along the way, gained such a standing to be almost universally practiced and regarded all but law.

A. A Traditional Order of Worship From the First

1. There were three songs (most often out of a small collection of songs), a prayer, maybe a Scripture reading, a sermon of good length, communion, collection, announcements and closing prayer.
2. They were called the five acts of Scriptural worship.
3. There is no one place where such a full and precise agenda of worship is described in the New Testament to authorize a Scriptural order of worship.
 - a. Each item is commonly found in various worship settings but never all together as an agenda of worship.
 - b. It is commonly concluded that the early saints met regularly on the first day of the week, as suggested in Troas and Corinth (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:1).
 - c. The reasoning is, as evidenced in one case at Troas (Acts 20:7), that meeting every week to partake of the Lord’s Supper and to have preaching was the norm for all of the churches.
4. All five experiences of worship have long blessed those who seek the presence of God.
 - a. The act of *preaching* may take many forms.
 - b. *Singing* can be arranged in various ways.
 - c. The *communion* can be made ever the more rich with careful thought.
 - d. *Giving* can be more than a dutiful act when it is enhanced with teaching, meditation and active participation.
 - e. And *prayer* can be fuller in walking all of the eight pathways of prayer already studied.

NOTE: While holding on to the high priority of unity in the body and guarding against restless and empty changes in worship forms we need to be ever on the search for more effective forms of glorifying God in worship at every level that are consistent with the purposes of worship.

B. How Does Instrumental Music Relate to Christian Worship?

(See the book, “**Leader Strong Churches**” by Truman Scott for an in-depth discussion on this subject.) **You will be tested on this material!**

C. The Central Importance of Worship

1. Whatever the sermon, the song, the prayer, the exaltation of God must be the focus.
2. People must leave the assembly having experienced, again and again, the temple-like presence of God, with all of its intended, life changing results.
3. This is the dynamic, out of which strong churches arise and viable leaders grow.

CONCLUSION

In a sentence: leader strong churches make the temple-like presence of God a major, recurring experience for every member. They focus on the enduring Priesthood of Christ, on his sacrifice, on the replacing of the Temple with the local church as the locus of body worship and the “ordinances” of worship at their disposal to exalt a Holy God.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE:

1. Who does the teacher give as an example of unlawful worship? List four attitudes that displeased Jehovah.

Example: _____

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

2. List the ten attitudes / effects the temple scene in Isaiah 6 had on Isaiah.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

3. A Leader Strong church will be dedicated to emphasizing what eight (8) elements in its assembly (worship services)?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect and comment on the need, even urgency, to plan all worship assemblies to meet their divinely designed potential.
2. Reflect and comment on Isaiah 6 being adopted as a guide in developing assemblies of worship.
3. Reflect on and list the eight expressions of worship at its best: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession, commitment and communion.

PREVIEW OF THE TENTH STUDY

Leader Strong Churches Understand

The Church must Be Reaching the Lost

A well led church understands the plight of the lost, the necessity of sharing the good news of Jesus with every lost soul and bringing as many believers to Jesus as is possible. It dedicates its resources that no one stands alone in Judgment, never having heard how the grace of God has been offered to lost humanity.

LESSON TEN

The Church must Be Reaching the Lost

INTRODUCTION:

The motto, even written over its threshold entry, of a healthy, growing church is “Enter to Worship and Learn, Leave to Love and Share.” Loving and sharing means to help the needy in body and to rescue the lost in soul. Together, the two initiatives represent the best work of the hands and the hearts of the redeemed in regard to those trying to survive without Christ. A church that does not reach out consistently to the multitudes of lost in the population is or becomes self-centered. The baptisms of their own children will not often be enough to keep them self-sufficient. A church that has no hands and heart to love and share with the lost will even lose a high percentage of their own children to the world they were supposed to gain in the Gospel. All of this says that Jesus never intended that his people gaze at their own importance and focus on their own needs. The church was specifically conceived as serving with Christ in giving the world a taste of unselfish love and an invitation to find a safe and healthy place where the presence of God would be felt in a fellowship of loving, grateful followers of Christ.

LESSON AIM: To give the student the profile of a soul-winning church and the qualities necessary in becoming a soul-conscience church.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover what a soul-winning church looks like.
 2. Learn the continuing legacy of the great commission as reflected in five (5) areas the church has continued authorization.
 3. Be able to reproduce thirteen (13) activities in which a soul-winning church could be involved.
-

THE PROFILE OF A SOUL WINNING CHURCH

A. What would such a Church look like?

1. The church will be hearing evangelistic messages regularly taught from the local pulpit.
 - a. The preacher, right or wrong, has the eyes and ears of the congregation by virtue of the preaching assignment.
 - b. The church will be as evangelistic as it is challenged to be by the evangelistic preaching.
2. The church will be spending more time in the Word, studying the Scriptures more from the vantage point of evangelism.

- a. The Book of Acts is the classic book on evangelism and church planting.
- b. Jesus was the Evangelist of Galilee and Paul was ever traveling in search of souls.
- 3. A church will become more driven and indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
 - a. As long as the early church yielded to the Spirit and took His sword into battle, the faster it grew.
 - b. The church today must not be as ignorant of the Holy Spirit as were those disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-2.
- 4. The church will be given more teaching on the stewardship of time and money to combat the materialism that has too many Christians in its grip and also to infuse the joy of giving and the excitement of seeing what increased giving can do a body.
- 5. The church will be focusing its attention on the big picture, the most pressing priorities and the most essential matters in life and faith.
- 6. The church will be stretching its sights, enlarging its vision and lifting its horizons to know that it is to be global in its evangelistic outreach.
 - a. It was "*the whole world*" and "*every creature*" to whom Jesus assigned the church to take the Gospel.
 - b. A church must be committed to both a local, evangelistic fervor and a global outreach.
- 7. A church will have leaders who are united in firmly believing in each of the above statements.

B. The Beginning Place In Being A Soul Winning Church – Continuing the Legacy of the Great Commission

- 1. The Great Commission still **authorizes global, all-inclusive evangelism and disciple making**.
 - a. No nation must be bypassed, despite the difficulties of entry, or the time and problems required for sowing and harvesting, or the threats and prohibitions against preaching or the financial costs to complete the Commission.
 - b. No nation is exempt for which the church must pray, for which workmen are prepared, for which a strategic advance is planned or for which the church determines to claim for Christ.
- 2. The Great Commission still **authorizes effective ministry training** and powerful, persuasive, convincing and convicting Gospel proclamation.
 - a. Men must be trained in every place to reach out to people of their own culture.
 - b. Men must be trained in their own language, in their own culture to remain and preach in their own national circumstances.
 - c. Churches of one nation cannot and should not supply all of the preaching for the world when men of every nation and of every ethnic group can be effectively trained to go more quickly, to speak more convincingly and to stay more focused on the responses of the lost.
- 3. The Great Commission still authorizes church planting and church growth in every culture.

- a. Church planting must continue to be at the forefront of the agenda of the church of the twenty-first century.
- b. Churches are the focal point of God's action and the most visible evidence that Jesus is still on the throne.
- 4. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16 still assures faithful believers of the empowering presence of Jesus as they go about the search for lost souls on every continent.

C. Evangelism and Ministry Giftedness

- 1. Like *doing good* to all people, searching for the lost is in the DNA of the church.
 - a. Every member should use his/her Spirit-given gifts to point the lost to Jesus.
 - b. That initiative comes out of one's gratitude for the gracious, salvation gift of God. (See 2 Kings 7:9).
 - c. Knowing what is known of the eternal suffering awaiting the disobedient, like the rich man in Luke 16:19-31, all believers would want all others to become obedient and not be destined to eternal separation from God.
 - d. Though soul winning is the business of the whole church, there are some, about 10% of the typical church, who are specifically gifted in evangelism as one their primary gifts.
- 2. By ministry profiling, leaders need to identify each member with the primary gift of evangelism and begin a specific training program to help each gifted member in soul winning.
 - a. Thoughtfully chosen and well funded evangelistic programs should be launched and carefully coordinated with the gifted and well trained members.
 - b. Other members with other ministry gifts could provide support and encouragement to those leading the evangelistic thrust of the church. (Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11ff, 1 Peter 4:10)

D. Some Activities Of A Soul Winning Church

Leaders with the passion of evangelism will find ways to be soul winners. Some of those opportunities are:

- 1. Establish a systematic plan to urge the whole church to host a Bible study in their homes or refer friends to the evangelistic leaders. Send personal letters to referred prospects.
- 2. Plan a distribution plan to advertise free home studies, correspondence studies, a radio or television program.
- 3. Plan a community school supplies and/or food bank give-away, with invitations to the study of the Bible.
- 4. Plan a prison ministry, juvenile hall outreach effort or near campus school program.
- 5. Expect the preacher to have evangelistic series to inform and charge the church to be evangelistic.
- 6. Have a family night meal program for citizens surrounding the building with the opportunity to teach individuals who show interest.

7. Develop a robust foreign mission program to be lovers of the lost around the world. Invite missionaries in as often as possible to share “what the Lord has done.”
8. Offer counseling in areas of congregational expertise: pre-marital, marital, parenting, financial, conflict and anger management, homemaking, etc.
9. Periodically, plan a city wide evangelistic campaign and a systematic follow-up effort.
10. Keep the evangelistic church before the public with billboards, television, radio and newspaper ads and with every other means possible.
11. Build the passion of evangelism into the vision, purpose and goals of the church and keep the statements before the congregation.
12. Plan on evenings or twenty-four hour prayer campaigns—prayer and fasting vigils—for the lost of the world. The Elders must be praying at every meeting for the souls of prospects and for the efforts of the local church to reach the lost.
13. Comb all past contacts and records to make sure that every prospect has been followed up with multiple efforts. Pursue every soul to the brink of hell!

E. Some Obstacles to Searching for Lost Souls?

1. The enemy without:
 - a. The church competes against all of the allurements in the world, all of the material wants and pleasures, all of the pressures to survive or progress, all of the systematic efforts to discredit the Gospel message and messengers and all of substitutions to meet human needs.
 - b. The church struggles to appeal to a world full of good, religious people who have placed their hope in a false message and religious system. They are saved only in their own minds.
 - c. The fear of death and the toll of guilt tightly grip countless millions, squeezing out any hope of freedom.
 - d. The bosom of wealth and the drunkenness of power leave many with no sense of need until all is lost.
 - e. The wretchedness of poverty, the enslavement of compulsive behaviors and the sense of worthlessness drown many, leaving no strength to reach out for help.
2. The enemy within:
 - a. The church can lose its focus on one of its prime purposes for existing and getting out of balance in its Christ-given mandates. It can begin to focus on its own comforts and feed its own pride and leave the lost without a message or hope.
 - b. The church can get so busy “majoring in minors and minoring in majors” that soul winning is largely neglected except, perhaps, among the children of the members.
 - c. The church can exclude foreign missions by arguing that Judea is first but never go to Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth — even leaving Judea largely untouched.

NOTE: A local church’s budget can be an accurate truth-finder as to the conviction and passion in soul winning. The Great Commission will never be fulfilled neither in

Judea, Samaria or the uttermost parts of the earth if the church focuses more on personal comfort and self-serving activities than it does on soul winning.

F. Fundamental and Basic Motives for a Search of the Lost

1. The fundamental reason to make soul winning a high priority in Christian service and living is because Jesus, our Lord, with the full authority of heaven, told us to speed the good news to every place where people live and to every living person on the earth in every generation until he comes again.
 - a. To do any less is either defiance or indifference to his awesome authority.
 - b. His command was clear: the gospel to every place to every person.
 - 1) **The duration:** until he comes again.
 - 2) **The content:** the good news about salvation in him.
 - 3) **The resources:** Jesus and all of his might would be with those who seek the souls of men. Simply put: he said it, we obey him and that is it!
2. Responsibilities derived from some secondary motives:
 - a. Out of our gratitude for our own salvation we cannot, not share it with others in need of grace.
 - b. We know the incredible blessings that come to those being saved and in following Jesus. We would not be so selfish as to fail to share with others in those blessings.
 - c. The health of a growing church is directly dependent on continual, new births of the saved.
 - d. The most “on fire” members who understand the feelings of the lost are those just rescued from the threatening horrors facing the lost. That means the necessity of an inflow of newly converted souls to reach out to their circles of friends without Jesus.
 - e. God has gifted every new convert and, by that giftedness, has assigned each one to specific ministries within the body. Without them the church is crippled in its ministries.

CONCLUSION

Constrained by the evidence for the deity of Jesus, consumed by the redemptive nature of the cross and overwhelmed by the power of the resurrection every church leader should thrill at the hearing of the global commission. We take great courage at the diligent and passionate fulfillment in the evangelistic history of the church made possible by the dedication of churches, faithful to the challenges of the Commission.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN:

1. List seven characteristics of a soul-winning church.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____
 7) _____
 8) _____

2. The Great Commission still authorizes what four things?

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect on and discuss what an evangelistic church would look like – Add other characteristics you might consider.
2. Reflect on and discuss how leaders can utilize ministry giftedness in the membership and enhance evangelism in the local church.
3. Reflect on and discuss the many ways a church can seek for lost souls.

PREVIEW OF THE NEXT STUDY

The Church Must Be Doing Good to Others

The church is not only a preaching force of a Spirit revealed, objective message of salvation but a helping hand to those in need. Matching the biblical mandate to preach the Word is the judgment prerequisite of clothing the naked, feeding the poor and visiting those in prison. Doing good to the needy constitutes pure and undefiled religion. The next study will speak of how important doing good is for the growth of the local church.

LESSON ELEVEN

The Church must Be Doing' Good to Others

INTRODUCTION:

What a delight going into the temple-like presence of God and being struck by His awesome holiness. With that view of God's royalty and holiness nothing but worship could erupt. His holiness convicts us of our need for salvation and of knowing of His saving grace. What a delight sharing the Good News of the salvation in Christ to the lost of the world. These temple-like experiences thrills us in leading other believers more deeply into the presence of God. These three delights are at the heart of Christian worship, evangelism and edification. Many among us have taught that the mission or even nature of the church is three-fold: evangelism, worship and edification. This study is about finding a similar delight in *doing good* to others and seeing the church as having a four-fold mission — not forgetting that we are, also, to be a holy people.

LESSON AIM: To impress on the student the “doing good” characteristic of church leaders is a part of being holy as God would have us to be.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Understand that the biblical basis of doing good is the example Jesus left us of doing good to others – healing, mending, feeding the needy.
 2. Learn that doing good in our society is as diverse and numerous as our human needs – food, drink, clothing, care in physical ailments, etc.
 3. Determine that there are great values and dangerous pitfalls in fulfilling the command to “do good unto all men.”
 4. Discover that Leader Strong churches will grow and prosper when doing good becomes a daily practice – changing hearts to be like the Lord they worship.
-

THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF DOING GOOD

A. Jesus Described His Earthly Mission as One of Doing Good (Isaiah 61:1-2)

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

1. Jesus, as described by Peter in Acts 10:28, devoted much time in his ministry “. . .going about doing good and healing. . .”

2. Among his parables, doing good to others was a dominant theme (eg. The Good Samaritan, Luke 1:25-37).
3. His healing ministry served to authenticate his Messianic mission but, secondarily, was all about doing good to others (e.g. Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 9: the paralyzed man, raising a dead child, healing a sick woman, healing the blind and mute).
4. Much of his other teachings focused on being the servant to others, meeting their needs through doing good (e.g. Luke 6:27-36).
5. In the judgment scene in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus, the King, shows serious concern on how the hungry were fed, the thirsty were given drink, the strangers/travelers were received, those needing clothing were clothed and how the sick and those in prison were attended. Being accepted in glory would weigh heavily on *doing good* to others.
6. Paul commended the brothers in Galatia on their care for him when he was sick among them (Galatians 4:13-15). He frequently urged the brothers in Galatia to do good to all, whether in the family of God or in the world (Galatians 6:9-10). His list of character qualities in Galatians 5:22 are all to the benefit of those in need.

- B. One of the Servant Traits of an Elder of God’s People Is to Be Hospitable, Which Is Properly Translated, “Lover of Strangers” (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).** Men grow into strong leaders who are raised in a church that is sensitive to the needs of others and give a high priority in the use of their resources to help people in need.

THE CHARACTER OF “DOING GOOD” IN OUR SOCIETY

A. The Character of Jesus’ Disciples Then and Now

1. Jesus spoke of his disciples being the “*salt of the earth*” and the “*light of the world*.”
 - a. It is easy to think of those functions as being particularly related to **morality and preaching the truth**.
 - b. Both descriptions would **include doing good to others** wherever Christians go.
2. “Doing good” in our society is as diverse and numerous as our human needs.
3. Jesus put doing good among the top concerns of his followers. He named a few: Those needing food, drink, clothing, care in physical ailments, being in prison, being oppressed, traveling needs, being sick (Luke 4:18-19; Matthew 25:34-36).

B. Doing Good and Ministry Giftedness

1. Every believer is gifted in ministry (Romans 12:6-8).
 - a. Each gift is a kingdom assignment to help the church grow.
 - b. One of the gifts is being a servant. With this gift a person finds endless joy and opportunity to serve others.
 - c. Doing good for them is deep into their identity and personhood. They excel in doing good to others.

2. Every gift is a gift of ministry, of doing good to others.
 - a. The gift of **evangelism** compels one to do good to others in sharing the saving Word with the lost.
 - b. The gift of **confrontation** compels one to do good to others in alerting them to dangers.
 - c. The gift of **research** compels one to dig deeply for truths to share.
 - d. The gift of **exhortation** compels one to encourage through instruction.
 - e. The gift of **shepherding** compels one to guide and protect people.
 - f. The gift of **mercy** compels one to feel the hurts of people and care for them.
 - g. The gift of **serving** compels one to look for ways to help people.
 - h. The gift of **giving** compels one to be generous and innovative in giving of their resources.
 - i. The gift of **administration** compels one to be visionary in organizing and leading a project.

C. The Dynamics of Doing Good

1. Doing good to others is not natural. From being an entirely a self-centered and self-consuming infant one must grow in the ability to care.
2. Being able to care for all kinds of people requires a maturing ability to be sensitive and sympathetic.
3. In growing toward adulthood we pick up some prejudices (prejudgments) that blunt or numb our sensitivities to some other people. The way to become a caring person includes specific, growing stages:
 - a. One should begin a series of confrontations with past instruction, perceptions and interpretations to confirm whether they are true or false.
 - b. One needs to become an avowed custodian of truth, giving special attention to being correctly informed about the past conclusions that “numbed” one’s sensitivity to some others.
 - c. One needs to put self where the rejected person is and try to capture his/her feelings.
 - d. One needs to try to understand why the person may have become embroiled or included in the rejected kind of people.
 - e. One needs to divide between *disapproving* of sinful or hurtful actions and *acceptance* of the persons in terms of needed help as an individual.
 - f. One needs to look on the person, not on merit which he may not have, but on what he could be in Christ Jesus.
 - g. One needs to remember that such a one was created by God and God loved him and gave His Son for the likes of such people.

NOTE: None of us can be caring and happy in doing good except to a small circle of people that we fully approve of until we know the truth, know the individual, know of our own weaknesses and know of the transforming power of doing good to the glory of God.

D. The Values of Doing Good

1. Doing good must be free of any attitude that would distort or diminish the

working of what is good.

2. How one responds does not validate or diminish the good that is done. We may be saddened that those being helped do not show any gratitude or progress in their lives, but, their response must not condition our zeal in doing good.
3. Some of the saddest words spoken by Jesus was his comment, “Where are the other nine?” Only one had returned to express gratitude. But, Jesus keeps on doing good to others. Doing good has its own values:
 - a. Doing good **glorifies God in the world** – Being salt and light brings healing, flavor and light to our world, but, ultimately and primarily it glories God.
 - b. Doing good **helps Christians identify with Jesus** – We line up our lives and motives with those of Jesus.
 - c. Doing good **helps Christians identify with those in need** – Sharing resources we have received from God as His creation with other creations of God keeps the circle intact.
 - d. Doing good **helps Christians define the nature of the faith** – A faith without either worship, evangelism and edification is a distorted or mutilated faith.
 - e. Doing good **helps Christians value the worth of those in need** – a recognition of the intrinsic value of the individual being helping.
 - f. Doing good **helps Christians express hope, not based on merit, but on potential** – The biggest need of most people being helped is the ability to hope again.
 - g. Doing good **helps Christians infuse responsibility and accountability into the lives of those in need**.
 - h. Doing good **helps Christians build a bridge to those in need of being a new creature**.
 - i. Doing good **helps Christians gain a right view of service** – Being served by others is not the desire or goal of a servant believer.
 - j. Doing good **helps Christians remember and understand their dependence on God**.

E. The Pitfalls of Doing Good

The ministry of doing good is not without threatened losses. It is possible to distort the redemptive values of doing good. Note some pitfalls to guard against:

1. **Pride in giving** – There are many ways that men can organize for blasting of trumpets when they give to the needy so as to lauded by men (Matthew 6:2).
2. **Control of those being helped** – Putting people in our debt, reminding them of how much we have given, putting selfish stipulations on our help.
3. **Compensating for other failures** – Doing good to others does not take the place of failures in other areas of life.
4. **Condescending in doing good** – Doing good is to be done in the spirit of servanthood, not as the rich looking down on the poor or the achiever looking down on the failure or the worthy looking down on the unworthy.
5. **Justification for guilt** – Doing good has no intended, atoning value. Doing good is neither a license to sin or a solution to sinning. It best can be described as hypocrisy from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:1-3).

F. Doing Good on a Daily Basis

Leader Strong churches search for ways to do good in their community and in their world. Doing good is what they are and what they do.

1. They develop their annual budget to have funding available to seize every opportunity to do good.
2. They encourage and involve the members in continual and widespread efforts of doing good.
3. The members who reach out in love and touch the needs of others will find a sense of personal value, a sense of fulfillment and will, in some of the cases, establish relationships that are rich and meaningful.
4. Commonly seen will be:
 - a. A well and freshly stocked pantry of food and a wide variety of clothing.
 - b. A voucher program to help with transportation and food needs.
 - c. A meal-a-week program for the community, with special activities for kids.
 - d. A Christians in Action summer effort to help others in the community.
 - e. A widow-assistance program of visiting and repairing houses, etc.
 - f. A near-campus program to reach out to students on the margins.
 - g. A prison ministry that includes assistance to families of inmates.
 - h. A school supplies give away in the Fall.
 - i. A needy family gift program at Christmas, including sponsoring a hospital pediatric ward.
 - j. Responding to family tragedies: home fires, accidents, deaths, extended sicknesses, etc.
 - k. Sponsoring children's homes and assisted living homes, responding to their stated needs.
 - l. Being partners in efforts responding to natural tragedies: floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.
 - m. Community clean up days, providing help to low income needs in summer and winter and providing "skill days," volunteering as local school mentors, etc.
 - n. Building homes, providing Camp scholarships.
 - o. Creating an assistance program for unemployed members.

NOTE: All of the above and more will open doors to greater evangelism and will glorify God. But, the first purpose is to "do good to others." One in ten of those helped (i.e. like the ten cleansed lepers) will respond positively. But, good was done. The church carried out its purpose. Yes, the church will still evangelize, knowing that all of the good done will not save one person without that one person hearing, believing and obeying the Gospel.

CONCLUSION

A worshiping, preaching and teaching church that is doing good to those around them will be growing as a church and developing strong leaders. By their holy lives and helping hands they will confirm themselves as followers of Christ. They will show that Christ is relative to the needs of the modern world. They will make evangelism and salvation, holy living and worship, growing in Christ and doing good to be exactly why Christians are unique, inviting and happily fulfilled.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN:

1. The value of doing good in a Leader Strong church is seen in what ten (10) things?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____
 7) _____
 8) _____
 9) _____
 10) _____

2. What are five (5) pitfalls / dangers of doing good to watch out for and avoid?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect on and discuss the importance of doing good. Is doing good comparable as a work of the church to evangelism?
2. Reflect on and discuss the varied ways of doing good in your local area.
3. Reflect on and discuss the values of doing good as seen in this lesson.

PREVIEW OF THE TWELFTH STUDY

Leaders Strong Churches Understand
The Church Must Be Eagerly Awaiting
The Coming Savior

There are so many good things to which a Christian can devote himself, both important and not so important. Some will be urgently pressing and others can be done with more time. But, the belief, practice and preaching of the second, major coming of the Lord is high, high on the list of both important and urgent things. This study will focus on the vital place of the coming of Jesus in the Christian theology.

The growth of the church depends greatly on how serious believers are in the reality and purpose of his coming.

LESSON TWELVE

The Church must Be Eagerly Awaiting the Coming Savior

INTRODUCTION:

A church without a passion for the second coming of Christ – a vision of a coming savior – will not be a “going church” – a church going in search of the lost. It may be a moral church for the inherent values of morality. It may be benevolent church because of an identity with those who suffer. More than likely it will be a self-absorbed church, focused on immediate, selfish concerns. Too often a church without the vision of the Coming Savior will be legalistic and focused on the doctrinal errors of others with very little self-scrutiny. An ardent belief in the second coming of Christ gives a sense of urgency and a compelling purpose to all important aspects of a growing church.

Perhaps, there is no biblical question so much in contention as the prophecies in the New Testament concerning the coming of Jesus. The Preterists (partial or full) say that all such prophesies were fulfilled in and around the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Historists teach that all of the prophesies were fulfilled along the course of Roman historical events. The Futurists understand the prophesies as yet to be fulfilled in their entirety, as “end-time” events. There are a host of other views as millennialists of different shades (pre, post, etc), dispensationalists have endless discussions on interpretive rules covering prophecies.

LESSON AIM: To impress on every leader and prospective leader the importance of keeping fresh in the minds of the church of the coming of the Lord.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Investigate the early concepts of the church about Jesus’ coming and some general guidelines for understanding the promise of His coming.
 2. Understand several things that are involved in the dynamics of the coming of Jesus.
 3. See some things that show us the reality of His coming and things that will occur at His coming.
-

CONCEPTS CONCERNING THE COMING OF CHRIST

A. Early Concepts of the Church Surrounding His Coming

1. Because of a delay in time to what some were expecting for the return of Christ, some began to doubt if he was coming at all.

2. Others were beginning to say that he had already come and there would not be a resurrection.
3. If some had difficulty so near to the times in which the promises were made we could hardly hope for complete and unified understanding two millenniums removed.

B. General Guidelines For Understanding the Promise

A growing church would do well in not getting deeply consumed in the inevitable conflicts. Following are some suggestions:

1. Try to stand in the audience of those who first heard the promises of Jesus and ask what they more likely understood.
2. Pay attention to the questions being asked and take careful note as to the answers given to the specific questions.
3. Weigh carefully the nature of the genre of the writing and let that observation give direction to an interpretation (e.g. symbolic, literal, historical, poetic, apocalyptic, etc.).
4. Most of the differing and frequently contradictory views come out of a difficulty to explain one statement and forcing all other passages to yield to the proposed solution of the impasse.
5. Research the key passages that trouble most interpreters and determine what is being said at the time and to what audience (e.g. Most of the divergent views start with a misunderstanding of the context).
6. There is something to be said about conflicting views of recent origin that repute to correct the views tracing back to the earliest centuries.

This lesson will leave many pertinent questions for others to answer who have a different purpose than we do in this study. Those questions would be:

- Is he in fact coming?
- What do we know about the time of his coming?
- What do we know about any surrounding events?
- What is being said by conflicting interpreters?

C. The Moment That Jesus Made a Promise, the Promise Had its Signal to Begin a March Toward Fulfillment According to God's Divine Power and Plan

Thus,

1. He died, was buried and rose from the dead exactly when and as he promised.
2. The Spirit inaugurated the Christian covenant through the Apostolic witness and proclamation on Pentecost in Acts 2.
3. The Jewish, religious leaders rejected the Messiahship of Jesus and forfeited their unique role as God's chosen people.
4. Israel was stripped of its unique relationship with God, confirmed by the destruction of the Temple and the ancient City of God in A.D. 70 by the Roman legions.
5. The Message of Christ was preached in every nation, beginning from Jerusalem, extending God's grace to every lost person.
6. Jesus will return as he ascended into the heavens when God's grace will have been extended to the nations. Time is not the crucial element as is the yearning of God that all will repent.

THE DYNAMICS OF BELIEVING IN THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS

When the Second Coming of Christ is not preached because of the failure to understand its importance or only preached to refute the assumed errors being widely preached around us, there are crucial losses in the spiritual life of the churches. **The End Time coming of Christ is a call to some of the richest values of the Christian faith:**

A. A Call to Understanding God

It is imperative that God be more understood in His essential nature.

1. We cannot have a fuller relationship with Him if we do not understand His nature, His purposes and character.
 - a. As the Creator, He intervenes in human affairs.
 - b. He has a will and a plan for mankind and He takes them seriously.
 - c. Because of His being the author and defender of Truth, judgment on the lovers of error is necessary.
 - d. Because He is the antithesis of sin His judgment is required.
3. Despite the necessity of accountability He tempers judgment with grace and mercy (James 2:13). He wants everyone to be saved and enjoy fullness in His Son (1 Timothy 2:4).

B. A Call to the Distracted and Defiant

1. A reminder that all men will stand before God at the Second Coming of Christ.
2. The reality of the Coming has the power to strike to the depths of one's efforts to ignore God. (cf. Matthew 24:31-46).

C. A Call to Repentance and Obedience

1. When there is no penalty to pay for sinful living or no overwhelming joys to receive, the pleasures of this world take on a beauty far beyond reality.
2. Knowing just something of the fear of falling into the hands of an angry God grips the thoughts of sinful man so that he cries out "what must I do to be saved?"

D. A Call to Hope and Assurance

1. A returning Savior to collect his own gives rise to exuberant hope.
2. Being claimed by a loving Savior gives assurance of eternal life when there is no assurance in anyone else (cf. John 14:6).

E. A Call to Purpose and Service

1. Belief in a coming Savior gives urgency and value to devoting oneself to a purposeful life of loving service to brethren and all those in need (cf. Galatians 6:10).
2. The reality of a time of accountability leads to a discovery of the joys in serving others.

F. A Call to Vision and Clarity

1. Despite the obstacles of life, having a vision of the *end times* keeps one moving forward to meet the Savior at the finish line (Hebrews 12:1-2; Philippians 3:12-14).
2. To make every blow count, to use every resource well and to make the most of

the opportunities each receives one must have an ultimate goal.

3. The meeting with Jesus in the resurrection morn at his coming has served well the saints across the centuries.

G. A Call to Resolve and Action

1. The grand finale foreseen in the coming of Christ and the judgment day provides a stimulus to resolve to be ready and to work untiringly toward the ultimate goal of the soul (2 Peter 3:10-14).
2. Who would dare be slack in his work or indifferent with such a glorious meeting being remembered each day?

H. A Call to Piety and Worship

1. Knowing that the Lord is returning gives a forceful impetus toward denying oneself of the desires of the flesh that war against the soul.
2. Being certain in one's salvation and understanding the grace and mercy of God in redeeming sinners pours out in adoration, praise and thanksgiving in worshiping the Savior (1 Peter 1:13-21).

I. A Call to Vigorous, Global Evangelism

1. Grateful saints long to present themselves in the final day with fruits of righteousness.
2. One of the surest fruits that pleases God is bringing others to Him (2 Peter 3:9).

J. A Call to Comfort and Gladness

1. It motivates to faithfulness even to the point of death?
2. It motivates believers to work long and hard throughout their lives without applaud.
3. It is the belief in the *maranatha* – in the “come Lord Jesus, come quickly” of the Christian faith that motivates Christian living.
4. In the assurance of his coming and the welcome applaud in the throne room does one find comfort in trials and gladness in suffering.

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proven, he will receive a crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

K. A Call to Judgment and Accountability

1. The Final Coming of the Messiah will call all men to account for the way they treated the Lamb of God.
2. Those wearing the robes of righteousness ennobled by the blood of sacrifice will be called to their longed-for embrace of the Savior.
3. Those who have refused the Lamb and his sacrifice and lived without its benefits will stand condemned and rejected by the One who most wanted to save them. (cf. II Timothy 4:8;1Corinthians 16:22). The saved will praise the Judge-Savior forever for saving them from the wrath to come (Revelation 7:9-10).

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy; to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen (Jude 24, 25).

THE REALITY OF THE COMING OF CHRIST

In an overview of the coming (s) of Christ it can be seen that they are multiple.

1. He **comes as the Messiah** in fulfillment of Old Testament promises in the unfolding of the Scheme of Redemption.
2. He **comes in a display of power and presence**.
3. He **comes in judgment**, calling men to repentance or accountability.
4. And he **will come in a final** call of all humanity to stand accountable before God to receive a welcome applaud or to be banished from His presence.

The Messianic coming is accomplished reality. The coming in a display of power was witnessed by thousands of Jews on Pentecost. The Judgment comings of Christ are continuing throughout time as the reigning King dashes the sinful pursuits of men (e.g. The destruction of Jerusalem which rejected the Messiah, the Roman Empire and all others who have stood against the kingdom enterprise.). There remains the Final Judgment return of the King.

A. The Old Testament Writers Pointed to the Redemptive Coming of the Messiah

1. Genesis 3:15 shot the first ray of redemptive hope into the darkness of sin and separation enshrouding humanity.
2. Job 19:25-27 gave a strong prophetic insight of the coming Messiah.
3. Isaiah and Jeremiah lavishly described the birth, lineage, mission and death of the Messiah.
4. Psalms 118:22-24 is one of many references to a day of new beginnings made possible by the accomplished mission of the Messiah.

The promise of the coming of the Messiah provided a star of hope among the suffering Jews through all of the centuries of sinful leadership, captivity and threatened ruin. Their repentance, renewal and faithfulness were tied inseparably to their belief in the coming Messiah.

B. The New Testament Records the Reality of the Coming of the Messiah

1. The reality was confirmed by his physical presence, his miracles, his life, the cross and the resurrection.
2. He spoke of yet another coming in the announcement of the kingdom enterprise among men (Mark 8:38-9:1), witnessed with the convicted preaching of the Spirit-endowed apostles in Acts 2.
3. He spoke of the judgment on Israel for their rejection of the divine gift of grace (Matthew 24 – with a mingling of outpourings of divine judgments).
4. John 14:1-3 is punctuated by a promise of a coming to be associated with an eternal home.
5. Acts 1:11 quotes the angels promising the yet to be experienced, physical coming of Christ out of the skies into which he had gone.
6. Paul was focused on the coming of the Lord, weaving references to it in ten of thirteen known books.

- a. In the two letters to the Thessalonians Paul said something about the Coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ in every chapter (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:15-18; 5:2-3, 23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:1-5, 8).
- 7. Peter described the drama of the coming of the Lord in the dissolving of the elements and ushering an eternal reality (2 Peter 3:1-8).
- 8. John was inspired to draw a picture of God's judgment on imperial Rome on His way to fully defeating Satan, the perpetrator of all evil, culminating in the summing up of all things by the King of kings and Lord of lords. The marvelous book closes, "Yes, I am coming soon. Even so come Lord Jesus."

C. It Will Trigger A Momentous Series of Events

- 1. Christ comes as thief in the night, calling to himself the righteous of the ages in experiencing the power of his resurrection.
- 2. He calls masses together for the day of accountability to "call the roll" of those entered into the *Book of Life*.
- 3. The saints whose works will have gone before them for judgment will receive a long cherished welcome into the City of God.
- 4. Those who have rejected the overtures of grace will be banished from the only thing that counts: the eternal residence in the presence of the Omni-God of the universe.

CONCLUSION

Pulpits across the land are more silent than any time in recent generations concerning the Second Coming of Christ. The costs of such silence are enormous: a staggering failure to grow, to fulfill its mandate to be holy, to evangelize the world, to serve with an eye to the skies, to live in hope of fulfilling its purposes and reaching its eternal destiny.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE:

1. Under the heading, "the Dynamics of Believing in the Second Coming of Jesus" there are eleven (11) calls. List these below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
 - 8) _____
 - 9) _____
 - 10) _____

2. List four comings of Christ as listed in this study guide.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

REFLECTION ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflect on and discuss the dynamics of believing in the second coming of Jesus.
2. Reflect on and discuss the confusing messages being heard on the events of the second coming of Jesus.
3. Reflect on and discuss the reality of the second coming of Jesus as revealed in the New Testament Scriptures (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; Pauline statements in the Thessalonian correspondence; 2 Peter 3:1-8).

IT IS TIME TO COMPLETE THE LAST OF THE SECTIONAL EXAMS – LESSONS 8-12.

CONCLUSION

Dear Student:

By now you should have finished

1. the study of the twelve lectures,
2. completed the assignments at the end of each study and
3. taken the three Sectional Exams (Lessons 1-4 and 5-8).

Congratulations will soon be very much in order as your grades are recorded and you complete the course on your way to completing the Sunset program in which you are enrolled.

As you look back over the twelve lesson course, you will remember the major principles Leader Strong Churches understand:

Session One:	The Urgency of Good Leaders
Session Two:	The Biblical Precedence For a Congregational Leadership
Session Three:	The Value of Biblically Constituted Leaders
Session Four:	The Biblical Guidelines For the Development of Leaders
Session Five:	Leaders Must Grow a Church
Session Six:	Members Must Make Mature Responses to Leaders
Session Seven:	The Church Must Build Unity in Mutually Held Beliefs
Session Eight:	There is Value in a Unifying Purpose
Session Nine:	The Church Must Exalt God in its Worship
Session Ten:	The Church Must be Reaching the Lost
Session Eleven:	The Church Must be Doing Good to Others
Session Twelve:	The Church Must be Eagerly Awaiting The Coming Savior

Study Guide



Truman Scott

Truman Scott comes from a long line of church leaders, counting to at least five generations. His leadership training, at age thirteen, began in a local church leader training program and was mentored by a careful minister and encouraged by godly parents. The training continued in Freed Hardeman University (A.A.), Harding University (B.A. in Bible and Biblical Languages), Harding Graduate School of Bible and Religion (M.A. in Old Testament), and Bethany Theological Seminary (M.A. and Doctorate of Christian Counseling).

His ensuing, full-time ministry commitments have led him in local evangelism (six years), missionary work in Italy (eleven years), church elder (fifteen years), and an administrator and instructor at Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, TX (twenty-five years). His ministry involvement includes being Director of Teen Bible Camps, author, publisher and co-owner of a publishing house, Director of a national Bible correspondence and advertising program, co-founder of a Christian Academy, and the author and editor of ministry themed books. He currently serves as a graduate instructor and administrative consultant for the Sunset International Bible Institute.



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