

The Teacher and Creating an Island of Excellence

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice” (Hebrews 11:4).

“And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31).

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Define “excellence.” Apply this definition (a) personally and (b) to the Bible school environment.
2. List five biblical areas where one is admonished to “excel.”
3. Distinguish between excellence and success.
4. Identify a Bible character whose life was marked by excellence and relate how.
5. Propose how one can rise above tribalism, racism, and sexism by utilizing a high standard of excellence.
6. State seven steps in creating an island of excellence.
7. Identify ways one can personally raise his/her own standard of excellence.
8. Explain how one can personally increase his/level of excellence in the classroom.
9. Develop a strategy for creating a personal standard of excellence. Prioritize and state the various components of this strategy.
10. Relate the differences between covering a subject and learning it.

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11. Appraise the statement, “He who learns, teaches.” (Do you accept or reject this statement? Why?)

Introduction

Growing up, I had an attraction to islands. Come to think about it, I still do! An island is any piece of land, surrounded by water, separated from other land masses. On my island, I knew I would be isolated and insulated from all of life’s negatives—poverty, a dysfunctional family, abuse, confusion, and inferiority—to name a few. Islands seem so peaceful stuck out in the middle of nowhere disturbed by no one. At the edge of our property was a large river that separates Canada and the United States. In the middle was a tiny island. I imagined I would escape to that little island, become its king, and live happily ever after. Unfortunately, there were flaws in my thinking. I would become a lonely king to a community of one. And no matter where one goes he still manages to take his problems with him. I’m still fascinated by islands, and get energized when I catch a glimpse of one along the coastline. However, instead of moving to an island, I’ve decided to create one of my own. I call it my *island of excellence*. You can craft one too. This lesson explains how.

Not an Island unto Yourself

John Donne wrote the often quoted statement, “No man is an island unto himself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” This captures the nugget of truth that we are all connected; part of the brotherhood of all mankind. All men are created equal. There are no lone rangers (around here we call it the Mister-I-Walk-Alone attitude) in the Body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). We are a building fitly framed together (Ephesians 2:21). A person who cuts himself off from everyone else will soon be wandering lost. It isn’t good to be alone (Genesis 2:18; Proverbs 18:1; Psalms 133:1). One *can* be an island, just not *unto* himself, encompassed by selfish thinking and massing benefits only for ourselves. We are all interconnected, and have individual responsibilities and functions. In speaking of an *island of excellence* I am referring to doing your work—and conducting your life—according to a high standard of distinction, despite or regardless what others do.

An Island unto Others

The sense of community permeates African life, and is one of our enduring, crowning achievements. It can also be seen in other areas of the world. Here, we foster *communalism*, not to be confused with *communism*. We advocate the worth and importance of the community. The group is the focus of its individual members. As we create an island of personal excellence we receive a double blessing—one for ourselves, and one for the community at large. Kwame Gyekye said, “The people hold that the

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welfare of each individual is dependent of the welfare of all.” Communalism and individualism are both encouraged. He provides the following proverbs. See if you can discern those that speak of a sense of community, individuality, or both.

“The clan is like a cluster of trees which, when seen from afar, appear huddled together, but which would be seen to stand individually when closely approached.”

“Life is mutual aid.”

“Walking alone is a pitiable condition.”

“One finger alone cannot lift a thing.”

“The left arm washes the right arm and the right arm washes the left arm.”

“Life is as you yourself make it.”

Gyekye also states, “The individual is responsible for the life he or she fashions for himself or herself.” We can’t lazily sit back and expect others to do everything for us. That’s a good quotation, but there is one word I especially like, “responsible.” Each is responsible for creating an island of excellence. Stephen Covey plays on that English word when he speaks of being “response-able.” Each individual is response-able of making a positive impact in the community? We are more than willing to receive—prosperity, blessings, gifts—but what are we willing to give? John F. Kennedy, in his presidential inaugural speech said, “Ask not what your country can do for you—rather ask, what you can do for your country.”

We are encouraged to excel in everything we do.

“Just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in earnestness, and in your love—see that you also excel in this grace of giving...it tests the sincerity of your love” (2 Corinthians 8:7, *TLB*).

Notice the word “sincerity” in that Bible verse. In ancient times Roman sculptors would cover flaws in their work in order to deceive the viewer. Potters covered mistakes in pottery with wax. The happy buyer would take it home, pour in hot water, the wax would melt, and the pot would leak. So, honest potters would hang a sign *Sincerus* being interpreted “without wax.” That act of deception would never happen today, right? Wrong! What about the tomato seller who places the best product on top of the basket, and the nearly rotten ones on the bottom, hoping the shopper will never realize; at least until she gets home. Or consider furniture makers who cover defects or use cheap materials. You may live in the midst of corruption and where dishonesty is the daily special. Doing your best is a personal decision.

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Create an island of excellence regardless of what others do, or whether they even notice your good deeds.

What is Excellence?

What is excellence, anyway? It is doing something in which one excels; an outstanding feature or quality; and speaks of one who exceeds in his actions. John Gardner said, “Excellence is doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.” Excellence is not only a skill; it is an attitude. It is about being; not merely doing. A poster at the Lake Williamson Retreat Center defines excellence as the ability “to surpass others or be superior in some respect or area; do extremely well.” It went on to say, “Excellence can be obtained if you *care* more than others think is wise; *risk* more than others think is safe; *dream* more than others think is practical; *expect* more than others think is possible.”

Creating an island of excellence is not about competition—trying to be better than someone else. Brian Harbour in *Rising Above the Crowd* says, “Success means being the best. Excellence means being your best. Success, to many, means being better than everyone else. Excellence means being better tomorrow than you were yesterday. Success means exceeding the achievements of other people. Excellence means matching your practice with your potential.”

“We're not, understand, putting ourselves in a league with those who boast that they're our superiors. We wouldn't dare do that. But in all this comparing and grading and competing, they quite miss the point” (2 Corinthians 10:12, *MSG*).

J. Hampton Keathley adds, “The pursuit of excellence refers to pursuing and doing the best we can with the gifts and abilities God gives, giving our best to the glory of God.”

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be firm (steadfast), immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord [always being superior, excelling, doing more than enough in the service of the Lord], knowing and being continually aware that your labor in the Lord is not futile [it is never wasted or to no purpose]” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Excellence is considered to be a core value in many organizations and educational institutions. Remember, core values describe what matters most and how we go about our lives and responsibilities.

How does one achieve excellence? Thomas Watson encouraged, “stop doing less-than-excellent work.” That is a great place to begin.

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Don't you detest it when people are racist, sexist, or tribalistic? Oprah Winfrey said she grew up being taught, "Excellence is the best deterrent to racism or sexism." If one achieves high level excellence, another will not care if he is black or white, male or female, or from this place or that. Excellence breaks through barriers!

One of the biggest problems today is people excuse themselves from doing their best because of their circumstances. No one can stop you from creating an island of excellence, doing your best, and reaching your God-given potential except *you*.

Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, Sr. is the Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at the esteemed John Hopkins Hospital. He shared his story in a series of inspiring books which explain his rise from poverty, hopelessness, and a single parent home in the poor section of Detroit to become one of the world's top brain surgeons. Like his other books, *Think Big: Unleashing Your Potential for Excellence* shares Ben's philosophy that it is not where you come from that matters, but where you are going, and how you plan to get there. His mother, Sonya, was an enormous influence in his life. She only had a primary three education, was married at thirteen and had heart problems. She found out that her husband, a minister, already had a wife and five children. But, she determined that her two boys would excel and worked untiringly toward her goal. She stressed that education was the only way they would ever escape poverty. She insisted that if Ben achieved excellence, it would overcome and surpass any concern anyone would have with the color of his skin or his ethnic background. Ben is living proof that we are more than products of our surroundings; that we can build an island of excellence.

Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery. It was certainly not an ideal situation. However, Joseph did his best and God was with him. He still used all of his talents and abilities for God's glory. Eventually, he was thrown into prison. Even there, Joseph did his best, and applied himself. Ultimately, Joseph rose to the second most powerful in all the land, next to Pharaoh himself. The pit couldn't stop him. Slavery couldn't stop him. Prison couldn't stop him. He created an island of excellence in each pitiful situation he found himself.

"The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did" (Genesis 39:23, NIV).

An Island unto God

Excellence in the ministry is all about serving others in the same way that Christ served us. We serve Jesus Christ. He is our real Master.

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“In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work as if you were doing it for the Lord, not for people” (Colossians 3:23, *NCV*).

The pursuit of excellence is an appropriate response to the first and second great commandment. “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:38-39).

According to J. Hampton Keathley in his lesson “The Pursuit of Excellence” these verses show that God wants us to excel in both what we *are* (our inward character) and what we *do* (our behavior). Pursuing excellence is a goal and mark of spiritual maturity. It must be motivated by the right values, priorities, and motives. Otherwise, the pursuit of excellence can become a mark of spiritual immaturity as man is possessed with his own significance.

How to Create an Island of Excellence

Value it: Make the decision that excellence is one of your core values.

Care about it: It all starts with caring about what you are doing. Refuse to have an I-Don’t-Care attitude. Eric Liddell, known as the Flying Scotsman, and a 1924 gold medal runner once said, “I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure.” He cared that he pleased God.

Decide it: Set the standard. Know what you want. Set goals and rules of conduct. Know the main thing. Do the main thing. Be committed. Be passionate. Decide today, I will create an island of excellence. I will, with the help of God, do my best!

Henry Kissinger in his book *The White House Years* tells a story of a university professor who gave an assignment. Students handed in their papers, and days later they were returned. One student searched his paper for a grade or a comment. The only remark was, “Is this the best you can do?”

The student pondered the question, looked for ways to improve his paper, and returned it to the professor. It came back again after a few days with the same comment, “Is this the best you can do?”

He knew it was better than the first, but he could add a few quotes, and even make it a bit longer. He rewrote the paper again and passed it in. When returned the comment remained, “Is this the best you can do?”

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This went on ten times. Finally, the student was exasperated and went to the professor and said sternly, “Yes, this is the best I can do!”

The professor responded, “Good! Now I will read it!”

That story highlights two things. We should work until we reach a high standard of excellence. And, then, and only then, have we earned the right for someone to sit up and take notice of what we have done. When you create an island of excellence, believe me, people will notice.

Repeat it: Form good habits. Right decisions that are done repeatedly over time compound success.

Aristotle said that excellence is not an act, but a habit. Excellence is a result of what we repeatedly do. I might add; what we repeatedly do *correctly*. They say, “Practice makes perfect.”

A professional athlete or gifted musician spends more time in preparing than in performance. A preacher spends more time in preparation than in preaching (hopefully). Excellence requires repeated practice and discipline.

Pray it: God is able to help. Pray, “Lord, help me be all I can for your glory. Without you I can do nothing of any lasting or eternal value.” Prayer is talking to God concerning what He wants. It is an attempt to be pleasing to God. What made Abel’s sacrifice a more excellent one? Abel was trying to please God and to be obedient to what God instructed.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. *For then* you will make your way prosperous, *and then* you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8, NKJV).

Deliver it: Do what you say. Make promises and keep them. Deliver more, and deliver it sooner. Go beyond the expectations of others. Be realistic about telling people when you will have something done. Make promises based on your current capacity to fulfill.

Learn it: Find continuous improvement opportunities. Grow through acquiring new knowledge. Research. Become an expert in your field. And don’t be afraid to teach others. Pass on what you know to the next generation.

Review it: Allow for positive feedback and input from your peers, your students, or your followers. Permit evaluation by others and conduct self-evaluation yourself. How am I doing? How can I improve? Am I staying true to my God, my family, and my clients or customers? Ask, what am I doing that is not

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excellent? If you were the recipient of your work, would you be satisfied and/or impressed? Find ways to improve.

Specialize in it: Determine your gift mix and how it can be best used for the kingdom of God. Put the accent on strengths. People notice negatives first, and become captured by them. Determine your strengths, and allow them to open doors to freedom to do what you want for God's glory. God expects us to use what we have been given to its fullest potential. Remember Paul said, "This one thing I do" (Philippians 3:13).

Focus on it: Keep your mind on your priorities and goals. Those that chase two rabbits end up catching none. Doing a little of everything usually means ending up with a whole lot of nothing. We don't need a Jack-of-all-trades. He's usually master of none. Be careful of how you manage your time.

"But only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42, *NIV*).

Expose it: Be willing to serve others. Give your excellence away. Be helpful. Hang around or be exposed to other people of excellence. This will challenge and encourage you to excel.

Finish it: Begin by doing your best in little things. Follow through. And remember to finish well. It is not only important how you begin the race, but how you finish it.

Colin Powell said, "If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude."

"Whatever work you do, do your best, because you are going to the grave, where there is no working, no planning, no knowledge, and no wisdom" (Ecclesiastes 9:10, *NCV*).

One company advertises, "If it must be done; it must be done well."

It is often said, "If it is worth doing, it is worth doing right." It's worth creating an island of excellence.

Rest from it: Take time to rest and reflect. This refreshes and restores.

James Michener said, "One who has mastered the art of living simply pursues his vision of excellence at whatever he does, leaving others to decide whether he is working or playing."

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Creating an Island of Excellence in the Classroom

Now it's time for specific applications.

It is registration day. Students step into the classroom with a heart to learn. You feel it as you look over the class. You see it in their eyes. What will you teach them? How will you go about teaching it? Will you create an island of excellence in the classroom, or flounder in the muddy, murky, waters of mediocrity?

1. Use plain language. If people do not understand what is being said, the lack of understanding prevents the seeds from taking root. Clarify hard words to increase understanding. Keep it "simple." The real test of intelligence is the ability to come down to the level of the students/learners.

2. Use good questions to deepen understanding. These should not only be recall questions that ask, "What do you remember?" but questions that ask, "What do you think?" Asking questions will allow you to know whether the student has understood what has been taught. Students enjoy answering questions if they know the answers. It builds confidence and motivates them to learn more. It also convinces them they can learn what is being taught. Teachers can also check and see if students are paying attention through asking questions. Let your students learn by asking questions. The only foolish question is the unasked question. When a student asks a question do not punish him (or the rest of the class) by saying, "That is a good question. For an assignment I want you to find the answer." Many times this is a cover-up for not knowing the answer yourself. If you don't know the answer, admit it. Tell the student that you will find the answer and bring it to the next class.

3. Make your teachings "relevant." We should teach things that are applicable to life. Jim Rohn once said, "Don't let your learning lead to knowledge, let your learning lead to action." Students must be encouraged to practice what they have learned. Check out the Epistles. They have more application than content.

Howard and William Hendricks in their book *As Iron Sharpens Iron* wrote, "One of the fundamental laws of education: people only learn what they can use. If information has no use, people won't learn it. They may write it down, they may file it, they may be able to regurgitate it on an exam; but that doesn't mean they've learned it. Learning involves change."

Look for truth in the lessons you teach. Reinforce truth! Determine life principles in your lessons. This provides students with teaching they can apply to life situations.

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4. Focus on learning and not just covering the content. “More” is not always better. Teach those things that are important and let your students know what is important. Ted Sizer says, “Less is more. Thoroughness counts more than coverage.” Jesus said, “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear” (John 16:12). Choose the main points and teach them.

Arlo & Jane Moehlenpah in *Teaching with Variety* said, “There is a great difference between covering a subject and teaching it. It is much better to cover less and teach something than to cover much and teach nothing. If the students fail to learn, the teacher has not taught.”

5. Make your subject interesting. We are teaching from the most exciting Book in the world. Don’t be boring. Be an expert in your subject. You cannot teach what you do not know. People learn best when they enjoy the process.

Howard Hendricks has said, “If you stop growing today, you stop teaching tomorrow...If you don’t know it - truly know it - you can’t give it out.” We must learn first before we can teach it to others. The best teachers possess a teachable spirit. There is always a striving for excellence and continuous improvement in the life of a teacher. Before we can expect others to learn and grow, we must first grow ourselves. There are five teachers in life to glean from - family, school, media, peers, and church.

6. Prepare well. Know your subject matter. You become more confident when you have prepared properly. Don’t be caught pulling out your notes fifteen or thirty minutes before your session and rushing to class. Rodney Shaw in his article, “Striving for Greatness” advises that we should treat each classroom encounter as another opportunity to connect with your students and with those to whom you minister.

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“He who learns, teaches.” (Ancient Proverb from Ethiopia)

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7. Care about your students. It has been said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

8. Set the example. Someone is watching you. We are walking Bibles. People learn least by what we say. They learn a little more by what we do. People learn most by what we are. Students are saying to us, “Don’t tell me, show me!” Teaching is not what you do, it is what you are.

9. Protect your teaching time through:

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Study	You must learn first.
Specialize	Become an expert in your subject.
Prayer	Depend on the Holy Spirit to work.

10. Start from where your students are. Take them from the known to the unknown. Take them into a deeper understanding. Effective learning builds on what the student already knows. Assume nothing. Your students may not understand the basics. A pre-test helps determine knowledge students bring to the course.

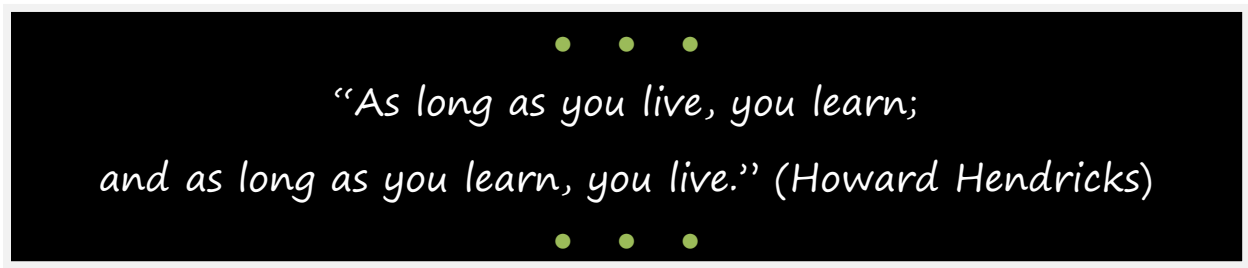
11. Allow the students to discover truth and answers. Encourage their creativity. Give them assignments that cause them to discover the lesson you want to teach. Students learn by doing. Remember, “Tell me and I’ll forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I’ll understand.” (Anonymous)

12. Make your teaching time a priority. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by telephone calls, knocks at the door, and other things that pull you away from your class. Be on time for class.

13. Give regular tests and assignments to encourage learning and to check learning progress. Use more than one type of evaluation method in your classes.

14. Practice what you teach. Teach what you practice. Bruce Wilkinson says, “The teacher of God is a living link between the Word of God and the people of God.” He states that communication of God’s Word can be choked in one of four ways: The *character* of the communicator can dull the impact of the application. The *conduct* of the communicator can hinder teaching if the teacher is guilty of sin or carnal behavior. The *communication* of the teacher or poor delivery can greatly diminish the message. The *change* in the communicator is important. If it transforms the teacher it can transform the students.

15. Personalize the lesson material. Build a skeleton by finding the main points. Add personal illustrations, things you have found from study or experience, and relative scriptures.



16. Most teachers place emphasis on “what” instead of “why.” Content alone cannot be our focus. Aim for understanding. W. Durant said, “Woe to him who teaches men faster than they can learn.”

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17. The first ten minutes of your class are most important for learning. Review is also important but should be done later in the class time. Review frequently: at the end of the class, week, and/or month. This reinforces learning.

18. The most often used teaching method is the lecture; yet it is the least effective for learning. Follow Jesus' example. He used the lecture plus method; incorporate other teaching methods with your lectures.

Lesson in Review

1. What is referred to when the author writes concerning an "island of excellence"? _____

2. Prove using Scriptures we should excel in everything we do? _____

3. What is "excellence"? _____

4. According to the poster at the Lake Williamson Christian Center how is excellence achieved?

5. How is excellence the best deterrent to racism and sexism? _____

6. What did Ben Carson's mother promise him? _____

7. Explain five ways we can create an island of excellence? _____

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8. How can one develop a specialization? _____

9. According to Howard Hendricks, what is one of the fundamental laws of education? _____

10. How can one (without money) show he cares for his students? _____

11. Outline ways you can make teaching your personal priority? _____

12. According to Bruce Wilkerson the communication of God's Word can be choked in what four ways?

The Teacher and Core Values

“A good reputation is more valuable than costly perfume”
(Ecclesiastes 7:1, *NLT*).

“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold”
(Proverbs 22:1, *NIV*).

“Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold”
(Proverbs 8:10, *NLT*).

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Define core values.
2. Discover core values (by outlining the process).
3. Divide sub-values into major categories of core values.
4. Describe ways of distributing (spreading and reinforcing) core values.
5. Develop a biblical/spiritual culture through implementing values.
6. Defend the selection of core values. (What questions can be asked to test core values?)
7. Discuss the validity of universal core values for any spiritual organization.

Introduction

You and your team have been dropped into a jungle of opportunities. You have limited time to make an impact and leave a legacy. Your final destination is heaven. You are determined to please your Maker. You are destined to make a difference. But, you must first discern what is important, your mode of operation, and your route on the expedition. What tools are given? Your charter (mission) is to

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evangelize the world. You are tasked with transforming and training next generation leaders. A set of binoculars will establish vision. Your map is the Word of God. Last but not least, carefully accept and protect a compass demarcating your core values. Our prayer is that you will finish the voyage and hear, “Well done!” Welcome to the journey called Ministry!

This lesson focuses on core values. “Core” speaks of something essential, fundamental or central. “Value” speaks of what is significant, useful, or important. What is valuable to one person may not be so to another. An elderly missionary lady I worked with once bought me a tiny crystal globe. It is hidden away. Her message was as valuable as the gift. She said, “I bought you this globe because your vision is as big as the world.” That little globe is priceless and precious. However, someone ransacking my room probably would toss it aside, looking for greater treasures. I also have a little box of papers colored, created, or crafted by my children and loved ones. Perhaps, to others, these have minimal worth. Yet, there *are* things in life and ministry that we *all* could—and should—value. We can’t succeed without them. They are core values; existing at the heart of all we do, think, and speak. If removed, the context of everything that surrounds them is destroyed. There can be no solid system or structure without a set of core values.

Let’s pause for a minute for some tech-talk. A compass is a direction finder used for navigational purposes. It is a proven life saver and instrument of survival. A compass is always used in connection with a map. It contains a magnetic needle that points to the true north. There are four cardinal points on the compass. In our study we propose four core values. They are like the points on the compass. Core values help determine what is important in our lives. Ray Disney, the nephew of Walt Disney, once said, “It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.”

Defining Core Values

Core Values:

1. Create the organization and church culture/community.
2. Guide organizational and personal behavior.
3. Assist in making decisions.
4. Anchor all that is central to life, mission, and vision.
5. Are rooted in principles that do not change based on circumstances, culture or time.
6. Outline the never-changing definition of what we stand for.
7. Declare what we are willing to live and die for.
8. Are pivotal to the organization’s success or failure.
9. Provide a lens through which we accomplish our goals.
10. Advise us what we need to be and do every day, in every action.

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11. Are clear. You don't have to wait around for someone else in order to know what to do.
12. Identify the common core of understanding.

Describing Core Values

Core values describe:

1. What matters most and how we go about our lives and responsibilities.
2. A common language and culture for all to understand.
3. The soul of the leader and the organization.
4. The organization's DNA; its life's blood.
5. The heart or foundation by which we conduct ourselves.
6. The values and ideals we embrace.
7. Our reason for existence.

Discovering Core Values

Andrew Seidel in *Charting a New Course* revealed, "We all have values that we live by, whether we are conscious of them or not. Our values energize the motives that drive our actions. The important thing is that we consciously choose the values we live by."

Before proceeding further, complete the "Discovering Core Values" worksheet. Core values are most effective when discovered rather than merely forced upon us. People are more likely to commit to a list of values when they helped discover them.

Welcome back from discovery time. Now, let's see how close you came to our thinking. We propose that every spiritual organization—church and theological school—shares at least these four values:

- ❖ We value truth.
- ❖ We value spiritual growth.
- ❖ We value evangelism.
- ❖ We value relationships.

The following chart gives a deeper overview of the personal and organizational values/habits we stand for.

We value <i>truth</i> .	This includes: (a) doctrinal correctness; (b) telling the truth; (c)
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	willingness to take a stand for what is right; (d) possessing integrity; (e) being sincere; (f) having a blameless character; (g) practicing financial accountability; and (h) refusing to be captivated by compromise and pressured into tolerance.
We value <i>spiritual growth</i> .	This consists of: (a) setting a standard of excellence; (b) being involved in lifelong learning and continuous improvement; (c) possessing a servant’s heart; (d) providing stewardship in every aspect of life; (e) being faithful, reliable, and dependable; (f) being committed; (g) staying obedient to God’s Word, commandments, and principles; (h) being responsible; (i) utilizing spiritual wisdom; (j) being willing to sacrifice for the sake of others and God’s kingdom; (k) developing Christian leadership; (l) mentoring; (m) discipling; and, last but certainly not least; (n) being an avid reader and student of God’s Word.
We value <i>evangelism</i> .	This entails: (a) having a God-directed vision, purpose, and mission; (b) being involved in evangelism—the priority of the church; (c) participating in world missions; (d) focusing on church growth; (e) promoting revival; (f) preparing saints for ministry; and (g) equipping the next generation of leaders.
We value <i>relationships</i> .	This includes relationships with: (a) God; (b) spouse; (c) family; (d) others; and (e) society. It involves: (a) unity; (b) love; (c) fellowship/sense of community; (d) caring for others; (e) humility; (f) ability to work with a team; (g) proper communications; (h) respect; (i) openness; (j) compassion; (k) moral purity; and (l) embodying proper ethics.

Developing Core Values

Values are planned, proclaimed and practiced. They don’t just appear. They must be planned. This requires work. You’ve experienced some of that with the “Discovering Core Values” worksheet. Doug Fields in *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* says planned values reveal what is important to our ministry. They are our keys to success because they influence all we do. Proclaimed values are those we say we hold. Practiced values are the ones we actually live by. The difference between the two is sometimes referred to as hypocrisy.

Your personal and organizational values need not be limited to four. One can have many values, but only a few values can legitimately be considered as core. We have selected what we feel are evident in every church, theological institution, and Christian ministry. These are made up of any number of sub-points

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capable of standing on their own as values. Additionally, using four core values will enable everyone to be able to remember them. Some organizations use as few as two. Other ministries have ten or twenty. Some distinguish between: (a) biblical; (b) cultural; (c) personal; and (d) family core values. We want to make our study as easy, as practical, and as applicable as possible.

Core values, in order to be relevant and have cross-cultural acceptance, should be deeply connected with principles. Principles are consistent. They do not change. They are applicable in any culture, anywhere in the world, and at any time. Core values are lived out through the application of principles and in obedience to God's Word. Core values and principles operate hand-in-hand. Our values need to be rooted in principles so they do not change based on the situation.

Lately, I have been captivated by the potential of core values in our churches and Bible schools. This subject, in the past, has been one that has confused me. It is usually tackled from a secular point of view. Organizational values tend to change based on the type of product or service rendered. The church is universal so has a set of core values that do not change based on location. They are worldwide, timeless, and we simply cannot survive without them. They serve as the compass for all we do. If handled properly and consistently they can not only impact, but transform, the cultures we work in. There is no need for us to testify, "We will never be able to change the culture!" Take a look at history. Such statements do not hold true with someone whose distant ancestor was a cannibal, slave trader, or headhunter.

Admittedly, I do not see all of these values often displayed in my cultural context. There is a drought of commitment to integrity, honesty, accountability, and faithfulness. The church operates in maintenance mode instead of evangelistic enthusiasm. It is not time to declare defeat but to take action. Graffiti on the Berlin Wall read, "When you change points of view you can change the world." We can change the world for Jesus Christ. One helpful way is to institute core values in our organization. Great leaders are agents of positive, progressive change. We can create a biblical and spiritual culture.

H. B. London, Jr. and Neil Wiseman in *The Shepherd's Covenant for Pastors* said, "One social scientist recently expressed...the quality of a whole culture can be changed if just two percent of the population has a new vision of what needs to be done and starts doing it." What better place to start the revolutionary process than with Bible school teachers; those that mold the hearts and minds of the next generation of Apostolic/Pentecostal preachers.

Our values not only define (organizational) culture but create it. Culture in its simplest terms is the way we do things around here. It includes values shared by old members, and taught to new ones. Plato said that a society cultivates whatever is honored there. Make no mistake about what we honor. We honor truth. We honor spiritual growth. We honor evangelism. We honor relationships. We pass along values

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to the new, and reaffirm them to the old. A prerequisite for exemplifying and embodying core values is that people in our organization need to understand them.

Stephen Covey in *Principle Centered Leadership* stated, “The people who are transforming education today are doing it by building consensus around a common set of principles, values, and priorities.” Our aim exceeds transforming education. We transform lives. Our curriculum with the Global Association of Theological Studies is value-driven. It is organized around core values. It is also an objective-based, criterion-referenced, transformation-oriented delivery system.

Distributing Core Values

Richard L. Daft in *Leadership Theory and Practice* stated that culture is made up of assumed values, understandings, and way of thinking shared by members of the organization and taught to new members as correct. We pass on values to new members and reaffirm and reconfirm them to the old ones. It is important to build an organization that preserves core ideology in tangible ways. We can shape our Bible school culture through core values; by utilizing ceremonies, stories, symbols, songs, quotations, and examples.

John W. Gardner in *On Leadership* said, “Every healthy society celebrates its values. They are expressed in art, in song, in ritual. They are stated explicitly in historical documents, in ceremonial speeches, in textbooks. They are reflected in stories told around the campfire, in legends kept alive by old folks, in the fables told to children.”

Max DePree in *Leadership is an Art* tells of a friend, Dr. Carl Frost, who had an interesting experience in Nigeria during the sixties. Electricity had newly been introduced to the village where Dr. Frost and his family were living. Each family received one light bulb in its home. This was progress. Problems came at night. Families would sit in their little houses and stare at the lonely light bulb. Light-bulb watching replaced gathering around the fire, where storytellers would pass along history. The people “were losing its history in the light of a few electric bulbs.” DePree concludes that every family, college, and institution needs storytellers. “The penalty for refusing to listen is to lose one’s history, one’s historical context, one’s binding values. Like the Nigerian tribe, without the continuity brought by custom, any group of people will begin to forget who they are.” It has been said, “We teach what we know. We reproduce what we are.” I would like to rephrase that. “We teach what we know. We reproduce what we value.”

Leaders, Bible school administrators and teachers should:

1. Confirm shared values.

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2. Retain, refine and redefine core values.
3. Stress them.
4. Reject values not appropriate to the organization.
5. Celebrate value-victories.
6. Embody the values; walk the talk. We lead others based on the values we embrace as leaders.
7. Reflect on and review values regularly.
8. Align actions with values.
9. Evaluate students based on core values.
10. Teach values.
11. Become men and women of value—valuable.
12. Define acceptable and unacceptable behavior based on core values.

The *Little Blue Book* of the USAF encourages the “Schoolhouse Weave.” This means (in our context) that core values need to be a major, recurring topic in education, training, and woven into existing Bible school courses. This can be done by: (a) creating a short lesson defining core values; (b) building opportunities within courses to discuss core values in the context of the subject-matter one is teaching; (c) weaving core value discussions into lesson plans and interaction with students; (d) taking advantage of unexpected opportunities that arise during instruction; (e) incorporating core values into all education and training; (f) designing and teaching a core values series within the curriculum; and (g) as you teach a lesson indicate which core value is highlighted.

Defending Core Values

Each (core) value should be put to the test. Ask the following questions:

1. Is it biblical?
2. Does it engender passion? Am I willing to fight for it?
3. Is it shared?
4. Is it constant?
5. Will it pass the test of time?
6. Is it clearly expressed?
7. Is it harmonious with other values?
8. Can it be implemented? (Above points adapted from a list by Aubrey Malphurs.)

Discussing Core Values

- A. Can you think of ways to remember core values?

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- B. Provide examples from song, proverbs, history, speeches, or the Bible that reveal cultural, biblical, and family values in your context.
- C. List several courses in the Bible school curriculum and suggest which core value is quickly revealed?
- D. Go over the list of lessons recently taught in faculty education seminars and assign core values to each.
- E. Reflect over the past month of your preaching, teaching, and writing. What were your messages? What core values are attached to each?
- F. Mention a lesson taught or message preached that touched your life in a special way. Which core value would be associated with it?
- G. What can be done to ensure that teachers and other leaders have a clear understanding of core values?
- H. What can be done to ensure that students have a clear understanding of core values?
- I. What can be done to ensure that core values are clearly understood in our curriculum?
- J. What can be done to measure, identify or highlight students (or team members) behaving or acting out the core values?
- K. What can be done to secure an understanding of core values taking a top-down approach within the church organization? This would be from national leadership, moving to regional or district leadership, to the local pastors, local church lay leaders, all the way down to membership in the local church.
- L. How can we prevent corrosion of core values?

Conclusion

Jane Fleming in her book *Staying Found: The Complete Map and Compass Handbook* provides different methods of route-finding. She said, "When searchers eventually locate lost hikers, alive or dead, they sometimes have with them compasses they never learned to use." It is imperative that each learn how to use our *core value's compass*. Otherwise we risk wandering lost; unmindful of what should guide us in

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life and ministry. We lose focus of what is truly important and fail to have a guiding compass pointing us in the right direction when making key decisions.

Lesson in Review

1. Using your own words, define core values. _____

2. Why is a compass a good metaphor in studying core values? _____

3. Why is it important to select only a few core values? _____

4. What are four types of core values mentioned in this lesson? _____

5. List several ways one can share core values within the organization. _____

6. What are the four core values proposed to be applicable and/or shared by every spiritual organization? _____

7. According to Stephen Covey, how is education being transformed today? _____

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8. What process can one follow when determining/discovering core values? _____

9. What percentage of the population does it supposedly take to change a whole culture? _____

10. Once core values are determined, what are some things leaders and/or Bible school administrators can do to implement them? _____

11. What is meant by the "Schoolhouse Weave"? _____

Discovering Core Values

Review the values listed below. At the end of the chart you will notice blank lines. This is where you can add other potential values. Place a checkmark beside all values important to you. Cross off any value from the list you feel is not appropriate. Beware: There are a few values thrown in that have no business in any Christian organization.

Integrity		Stewardship	
Love		Missions	
Conformity		Sacrifice	
Truth		Fasting	
Wisdom		Doctrinal Correctness	
Character		Responsibility	
Prayer		Vision	
Relationship with Wife		Compromise	
Compassion		Unity	
Excellence		The Word of God	
Evangelism		Righteousness	
Respect		Ethics	
Selfish Ambition		Faithfulness	
Relationship with Community		Relationship with God	
Giving		Revival	
Discipleship		Evangelism	
Academic Achievement		Spiritual Reproduction	
Willingness to stand for what is right.		Cross of Calvary	
Position		Pride	
Conflict Resolution		Humility	
Church Planting		Disciplined Lifestyle	
Commitment		Communication	
Teamwork		Holiness	
Church Growth		Lifelong learning/Continuous Improvement	
Honesty		Financial Accountability	
Gossip		Obedience to God's Word	
Evangelism Techniques		Servanthood	
Refusing to Compromise		Preaching	

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The Teacher and Priorities

“During this time, as the disciples were increasing in numbers by leaps and bounds, hard feelings developed...So the Twelve called a meeting of the disciples. They said, ‘It wouldn’t be right for us to abandon our responsibilities for preaching and teaching the Word of God...choose seven men from among you...and we’ll assign them this task. Meanwhile, we’ll stick to our assigned tasks of prayer and speaking God’s Word’”
(Acts 6, *The Message*).

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Explain the “accomplish more; do less” leadership concept taught in this lesson.
2. Demonstrate one’s understanding of the meaning of “main thing.”
3. Identify the characteristics of overload, stress, and burnout.
4. Develop a personal plan of how these can be avoided in one’s life.
5. Organize the work week to facilitate accomplishing one’s “main thing.”
6. List weekly activities and classify them according to the four major groupings advocated by H. Dale Burke.
7. State three blessings of rest.
8. Recall three gauges one needs to routinely check his/her life. Adopt these gauges effectively into one’s lifestyle.
9. Name three characteristics of one’s “main thing.”
10. Outline five things a teacher can do to protect and achieve the “main thing.”

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Do the Main Thing

The early church experienced success, and a few things that go along with it: the need to reevaluate, simplify, specialize, and delegate as an organization grows. People were griping, “Our needs are not being met.” The twelve quickly realized they couldn’t do everything required to sustain the church. It was necessary to stop, reflect, and refocus on what God had called them to do. They did and came up with the best solution, “We’ll stick with the main thing.” The church continued to grow. The apostles unveiled an important leadership concept: *to accomplish more, do less*. What an irony. Want to accomplish more? Do less.

Well, that is an interesting story from archives, but what about the here and now? Today, it looks more like this. I need to balance the checkbook, do the monthly financial report, preach twice this weekend, spend two days at the Bible school teaching, wash the clothes, help my wife with the cooking, visit the sick, in-laws are coming for a visit, the church is in the midst of a building project, my senior son needs to get off to university, and the list goes on. I’m exhausted just writing out the partial list. Excuse me while I go for a nap!

Handling weekly ministerial responsibilities is a lot like football. The week is off with a powerful kick, and you spend hours—even days—breathlessly chasing the ball. How can you find time to teach your classes, not to mention the time to prepare for them? It all comes down to *priorities*. What is important? What is your calling? What is your “main thing”? Find that and everything else organizes around it.

If you’re perceptive you probably noticed that it would be nearly impossible to eliminate anything from the list of personal responsibilities provided above. Perhaps, you could cancel the in-laws coming? Just joking! That would not be a good idea! Not only do we need to recognize our main thing, but we need to juggle carefully planning our week. Stagger activities so they don’t all come together. Notice what happens when two or three people sit at one end of the bench, and no one sits on the other end. People splatter on the floor. That’s what occurs when you overload, you fall, and the bench (we’ll call it your work week) flies up and knocks you in the head.

“Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of nonessentials.”

(Lin Yutang as quoted in *Ready for Anything* by David Allen.)

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Many are involved in making “to-do lists” but we also need to make “not-to-do lists.” This is also called “planned neglect.” We plan to neglect certain tasks so we can accomplish important ones. The *Daily Walk Bible* defines “specialization” as “the art of learning more and more about less and less.” If we want to accomplish more in life we must specialize.

The apostles knew if they focused on their “main thing” it would make a significant difference in advancing the church. Lesser goals make little difference in the health and growth of the ministry and can be delegated to others. What do you do when faced with the need to do more? Right. Do less. D. L. Moody once said, “The trouble with a great many men is that they spread themselves out over too much ground. They fail in everything. If they would only put their life into one channel, and keep in it, they would accomplish something.” Someone has rightly said that if we try to do a little of everything, we will end up doing a whole lot of nothing.

Jesus often referred to His purpose. Jon Walker in “Did Jesus Rush through His Week?” explains, “It’s not about getting everything done; rather it’s about doing the most important things!...Timing is everything. It means saying ‘no’ to the urgent in order to stay focused on the important. Think about Olympic athletes. They have just as many hours in the day as you and me, but they sacrifice constantly to press toward their goal. They don’t allow their day to be filled with busy-ness because they have a larger purpose in mind.”

Your “main thing” should be in alignment with your unique gift mix, calling, purpose, mission, and vision. It’s a humbling revelation but one person cannot do everything. In fact, Jesus does not expect any one person to do everything. He wants each to do the right things; and to do them right. God has equipped us with gifts, unique abilities, and a rich reservoir of experiences. There is no one just like you. He expects us to use these resources to advance His kingdom. However, we must understand we have limited resources. To minimize pride and to maximize team ministry, not all perform the same function nor possess the same gifts. Working together, operating in our areas of strength, propels the church forward. “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (Romans 12:3-6, *NIV*).

Matthew 25:14-29 tells a story about investment. Three servants served their Master. Each was given a gift to invest based on his unique abilities, and delegated responsibilities. Two servants invested their talents; one played it safe and did nothing. The Master was not happy with the third servant and threw him out. We are servants. Our assets are limited but need to be invested wisely.

Confused? You thought the Bible said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Exactly! We can do everything the Lord wants us to do, but He does not want us to

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do everything. He has a specific work in mind for us. Besides, the setting of this scripture refers to how God supplies the financial resources necessary to accomplish ministry. We are limited. He is unlimited.

H. Dale Burke's excellent book, *Less is More Leadership* proved to be a priceless resource in the groundwork of this lesson. He said, "You have only a certain amount of time, energy, giftedness, resources, and money. You've got only so much to give, and when it's gone, it's gone." He went on to say, "Leaders, as limited resources, must learn to simplify, reduce, and in fact 'do less' in order to accomplish more." When Burke asked leaders to describe their feelings about their lives they used three words: I am busy, buried, and behind.

Okay! It's time for a few word building exercises. Three new words:

- Overload
- Burnout
- Stress

Avoid these three culprits. They will rob joy, creativity, and productivity if given half a chance. Overload may be easier to describe than to define. Steve and Mary Farrar in *Overcoming Overload* explain, "Overload reminds us of the weight of everyday life. We are overwhelmed, overworked, overcommitted, overanxious, overmatched, and overextended. Our tanks are on empty and we are running on fumes."

Burke feels we need to make choices to pursue our dreams. It is necessary to off-load (responsibilities not in line with our "main thing") before we can reload (responsibilities in line with our main thing). Otherwise, we risk overloading. Do you know what happens when you overload electrical circuits? The lights go out, and power failure is experienced.

Burnout comes from unrealistic expectations. According to Robert Trapani, "It occurs when well-intentioned people try to reach unrealistic goals." We cannot accomplish everything, and need to focus on what God would have us accomplish.

Stress occurs when there are strong emotional demands made on the nervous system. It is when you have more problems than you can handle. Stress is a close cousin to "overload."

How do we prevent overload, burnout, and uncontrollable stress in our lives? Find the main thing, the one thing you do best in life, and stick with it. Once you have found it, stay focused. "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal...All of us who are mature should take such a view of things" (Philippians 3:13-16, *NIV*).

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Finding the Main Thing

Your “main thing” is your area of specialization; your unique God-given ability. Jesus described it this way, “For this is what I came for” (Mark 1:38).

H. Dale Burke in “How to Overcome Overload” says that our “main thing” includes three characteristics.

1. My main thing is “mission critical” essential to the growth of the ministry. Done well it moves the organization forward.
2. My main thing is “top priority.”
3. My main thing grows out of my unique abilities.

Organizing the Work Week

H. Dale Burke in *Less is More Leadership* groups activities into four major categories, and sets time aside for each in order to keep his work balanced. This requires planning your week in large blocks of time, either full or half days. Focus on one objective at a time.



Rest time—focus on your health, spirituality, and marriage. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates” (Exodus 20:8-10, *NIV*).

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly” (Matthew 11:28, *The Message*).

“Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest’” (Mark 6:31, *NIV*).

Mary Southerland in “How to Deal with Stress” tells the story of a tourist taking a safari in the jungles of Africa. He hired locals to carry his supplies and to serve as guides. On the first day they walked rapidly and went far. The tourist was thrilled with the progress, rose the second day, eager to get on the journey again. The locals refused to budge. They insisted that they needed to sit and rest. They

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explained to the tourist that they had gone too fast the first day. Now they were waiting for their souls to catch up. She concludes, “The more responsibility we carry and the busier we are, the more we need regular solitude!” A Greek proverb says, “You will break the bow if you keep it always bent.”

God is willing to help us if we will obey His Word, rest, and spend time in His presence. Rest accomplishes three things:

It Renews: “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

It Restores: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake” (Psalms 23:1-3).

It Refreshes: “The times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

Cecil Murphey in *Live Ten Years Longer* encourages ministers to do three things.

1. Find a regular exercise you will enjoy.
2. Change the way you eat and drink. He doesn't recommend a diet (which implies taking things away) but suggests a balanced diet. He also urges us to drink more water. During the night bodies lose the equivalent of two glasses of water in moisture.
3. Get more rest. Getting plenty of sleep is essential to the body. The body repairs the wear and tear of the day through sleeping. When you don't take time to sleep your immune system suffers. He also encourages ministers to rest their mind by laying aside the stress they carry within.

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:18-20, *NIV*).



Results time—focus on the “main things” that advance the mission. Time needs to be spent focusing on the unique role God has for you personally. Use the portion of the day or week when you do your best work. Structure your schedule around the “main things.” Tackle priorities one at a time and in order of their importance. It may help to break a project down into chunks and approach the work one chunk at a time.

Burke finds that when he tries to fit more than one of these needs into a block of time he experiences frustration and defeat rather than fulfillment.

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Response time—focus on things that result from your results time or “main thing.” These are things not critical to the mission but still important. This is usually focused on others, processing things that flow out of your “main thing” including administration and follow-up.



Refocus time—focusing on how you adjust what and how you undertake projects. This is when you work on the mission, reflect, assess, adjust, and innovate for the future. Retreat to refocus. Refocus weekly, monthly, and yearly. An ancient Chinese proverb says, “Muddy water let stand will clear.”

Rick Warren in “Seven Secrets of Stress Management” says that “Preparation prevents pressure but procrastination produces it. You work by either priorities or pressures.” The old cliché “don’t put off until tomorrow what can be done today” goes a long way to prevent overload.

When involved in emotionally draining activities take time to prepare, and then to recover. Richard A. Swenson said, “Calendar congestion and time urgency have robbed us of the pleasure of anticipation. Without warning, the activity is upon us. We rush to meet it; then we rush to the next; and the next.” He advises that when the activity is over take time to reflect, evaluate, and remember. I think we should also celebrate our victories.

Reading the Gauges

Bill Hybels in a *Leadership Journal* article entitled “Reading Your Gauges” talks of three gauges that we need to routinely check in our lives.



Spiritual Gauge—How am I doing spiritually? The spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, Bible reading, meditation, sacrifice and others pump high-octane fuel into our lives providing strength for ministry.



Physical Gauge—How am I doing physically? Exercise, proper diet, and rest are important.



Emotional Gauge—How am I doing emotionally? Certain activities drain our emotional petrol tank. Bill Hybels calls these “Intensive Ministry Activities” which include confrontations, counseling sessions, exhausting ministry sessions, board meetings (to name a few). Refilling your emotional tank takes time. To maintain emotional resources use your spiritual gifts or unique abilities. Many times you will feel more energized after using them. Serving outside your gift areas tend to drain you. Remember Jesus at the well talking to the Samaritan women? When His disciples returned

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bringing food, Jesus said, "My food...is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:34, *NIV*). Doing what He was called to do was fulfilling, and energizing, rather than draining. You will receive strength from doing your main thing, and the church will be thrust forward.

Applying the Main Thing to Teaching

Let's get a little more specific. Here are a few pointers in helping you do your main thing—passing the truth on to the next generation.

1. Plan in advance. Ask your Bible school administrator what courses you will be teaching next semester and begin preparing now.
2. Specialize. Try to teach according to your interests and gifting. Rev. Joseph Asare recommends teaching according to blocks of courses. For example: Hebrews and Tabernacle go together; Evangelism, Missions, Church Growth, and Church Planting are all interrelated.
3. Work carefully within deadlines. Turn your work into the administrative office on time. Why not surprise everyone and turn it in before the due date? When late, you cause others to be delayed in getting their work done.
4. Allow ample allowance to make sure you'll be in class on time. Excuses like, "I was stuck in traffic" do not get your teaching time fulfilled. Leave early from home. Arrive early to school.
5. Block off times for preparation. John Milton Gregory said, "Many teachers go to their work either partly prepared or wholly unprepared. They are like messengers without a message." "Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?" (2 Samuel 18:22).
6. Do not overload on the number of courses you agree to teach (or on other activities for that matter). You might need to adopt the "Just Say No" policy when the proposed activity does not align with the main thing or is not the best use of your time.
7. Taking on new responsibilities usually mean giving up some of the old ones. Delegate. Let go. The world will still go on. Remember to offload before you reload.

Christmas Evans, a British evangelist, once made the comment, "I'd rather burn out than rust out in the service of the Lord." I recently saw a taxi with the words "Rust in God" sprawled across the back windshield. The letter "T" would have made it "Trust in God." The letter had long been lost. It humored me. Many ministers operate on a similar principle. When they should trust in God they would rather rust in God. James Berkeley gives this alternative: "I admire the bravado. It sounds dedicated, bold, and stirring. However, when I view the burn-outs and the almost burn-outs who lie by the ecclesiastical road, the glory fails to reach me. I see pain and waste and unfinished service. Is there not a third alternative to either burning out or rusting out? In Acts 20:24, Paul stated, 'I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me.' Herein lies the model I

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choose to follow. I want neither to burn out or rust out. I want to finish out the race.” (Taken from *Going the Distance: How to Stay Fit for a Lifetime of Ministry* by Peter Brain)

Lesson in Review

1. What did the apostles do when they realized they couldn't do everything to sustain the church?

2. What is meant by planned neglect? _____

3. How do athletes accomplish their quest for achievement? _____

4. What is meant by the “accomplish more, do less” leadership concept? _____

5. What is overload? _____

6. How can one prevent overload? _____

7. What is meant by one's “main thing”? _____

8. List Burke's four major categories used in organizing the work week. _____

9. State three things rest accomplishes. _____

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10. Why is getting plenty of sleep essential to the body? _____

11. What is the significance of results time? _____

12. Bill Hybels talks of three gauges we need to routinely check our lives. What are they? _____

13. What are four things you can do to help achieve your main thing (referring to your teaching)?

The Teacher and His Family

“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation” (KJV).


“Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged by God with greater strictness” (NLT).


“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” (NIV)
(James 3:1).

Lesson Objectives


At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to . . .


1. Analyze requirements for church leaders. The word “masters” in James 3:1, means “teachers” and includes pastors, church leaders, missionaries, preachers of the Word, or anyone who gives instruction to a congregation.


 A topical Bible study on this subject is outlined for completion in this lesson.


 Following a chain reference of 1 Timothy 3:1-13, James 3:1 and 1 Timothy 5:7-8, students will learn the seriousness of teaching/training others.

2. List Scripture references, and be familiar with key verses (underlined in bold), describing expectations for roles of different family members.

 Husbands – **Colossians 3:19**; 1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:25-33; Proverbs 5:15-18

 Wives – **Colossians 3:18**; 1 Peter 3:1-5; Ephesians 5:22-24, 1 Corinthians 7:39

 Fathers – Colossians 3:21; **Ephesians 6:4**

 Mothers – Genesis 3:16; Proverbs 6:20; 30:11, 17; 31:1; Isaiah 49:15; Psalm 139:13; Genesis 2:18; **John 16:21**

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📖 Children – **Colossians 3:20**, Ephesians 6:1-3; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Luke 18:20

3. Contrast these biblical roles with their own culture, noting things that are alike and unlike God's Word. These similarities and differences should be written on a separate sheet of paper, with Scripture references that explain God's family plan beside each.
4. Practice transforming cultural models unlike God's Word into those that agree with Scripture (Romans 12:1-2). Transformation happens when we:
 - 📖 Understand the importance of family for every believer's growth and walk with God (1 Timothy 5:7-8).
 - 📖 Recognize where and when we fail to follow God's pattern for the family (Psalm 119:9-11).
 - 📖 Search the Scriptures to gain further insight on God's plan for the family (John 5:39).
 - 📖 Obey the Scriptures to transform our family into God's plan (Matthew 7:24-25; Luke 6:47-49).
 - 📖 Teach the Scriptures to our physical and spiritual children (1 Timothy 4:11-16).
5. Quote James 3:1 (KJV) as a reminder of the seriousness of teaching. This verse appears in subsequent lessons in this series for teachers as the key verse.

Introduction

Teaching is serious business. God expects those who share Him with others to be true to His Word. The key verse for this series makes this clear (James 3:1). 1 Timothy 3:1-2 supports this with some requirements for anyone desiring any leadership place in the church. The desire and call to lead must be confirmed by the Word of God and the church (1 Timothy 3:1-10; 4:12), using the qualifications given by God.



Beginning Exercise (May be done in class or at home, depending on time available).

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- ✓ Memorize James 3:1 (KJV). (*One easy way to do this is by writing the verse five [5] or more times, reading the verse aloud after every writing. Include Scripture reference before and after the verse.*)
- ✓ After completion of this exercise, call on participants to stand and quote the verse at different intervals during the lesson.

Teaching Requirements

God's requirements for the first church leaders – started in the book of Acts and continued consistently throughout the New Testament – are still for the church today. As Bible college instructors, guiding men who will themselves become overseers – pastors, bishops, deacons, or elders – (all teachers of the gospel), we need clear understanding of and obedience to these requirements.

📖 If you cannot rule your own house, you have no place in the leadership of God's kingdom (1 Timothy 3:2-5).

📖 Paul wrote Timothy, directing him to be careful of what he taught, and to be an example to the believers (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3).

📖 Paul instructed him to proclaim the original faith taught by Christ and the apostles (2 Timothy 1:13-14).

These requirements are especially true of those involved in training others to share the gospel. The "stricter judgment" of teachers (James 3:1) means we have to be more careful than others who lead.

Exercise 1 – (*May be done in class or at home, depending on time available*)

- ✓ Using your Bible and an exhaustive concordance, look up every verse possible that speaks about the role of church leaders. (*To help you get started, use the verses mentioned in the Lesson Objectives.*)
- ✓ List these references, and the qualifications mentioned, one at a time, on a separate sheet of paper.
- ✓ According to *The DAKE Annotated Reference Bible – KJV*, there are at least sixteen (16) qualifications for overseers/bishops, and ten (10) for deacons. How many can you find?

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- ✓ For clarification, write the meaning of each qualification, using a Bible dictionary.
- ✓ Put a special mark (*star, black dot, etc.*) beside each qualification that relates to the family.



Teaching by Example

Teaching by example is one of the greatest ways to deliver a lesson. Our example must be blameless. God begins this search for “blameless” men with their leadership of the family (Titus 1:6). “An elder must be well thought of for his good life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or rebellious” (Titus 1:6, *NLT*).

God has always made it clear that a man whose family leadership follows the biblical plan is required for Kingdom leadership. The consequences of failure in this area appear often in Old Testament examples of men like Abraham, Jacob, and David. These suffered their most serious heartache for failing to lead their family in a godly pattern.

📖 Abraham “harkened to the voice” of His wife, and took her maid as the mother of God’s promise (Genesis 16:2). This was the same failure as Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:17). Does this mean it is wrong to listen to your wife? Only when she is persuading you to go against God’s Word. Abraham’s mistake caused great heartache – to himself, his son by the bondwoman, and God’s chosen people, Israel. Throughout history, Abraham’s firstborn of the bondwoman (Ishmael – Arab nations of the world) and God’s covenant son of Sarah (Isaac - Israel) have remained bitter enemies.

📖 Jacob was the younger of Isaac’s twin sons, born after Isaac entreated the Lord for children (Genesis 25:21). Even though God had promised his mother “the elder shall serve the younger” (Genesis 25:23), Rebekah and Jacob took matters into their own hands by deceiving Isaac for the birthright (Genesis 27:1-29). This deception grew out of the partiality each parent gave to one of their sons (Genesis 25:27-28). For the rest of his life, Jacob suffered deception at the hands of others. His father-in-law tricked him into taking Leah instead of Rachel as his wife (Genesis 29:21-25). His own sons deceived him in their revenge for Dinah, their sister (Genesis 34:13-31), and again, most grievously, when they sold Joseph into slavery (Genesis 37:12-36).

📖 David was called “the man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22; 1 Samuel 13:14). Yet he committed serious offenses against the law of the Lord in His family. With Bathsheba, David broke three of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:13-14, 17). Although forgiven, the consequences of this act followed David the rest of his life and even after (2 Samuel 12:7-12). Rebellion and trouble were a

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constant in David's family (2 Samuel chapters 12-17) and the whole nation of Israel (2 Samuel chapters 18-20) because he failed as a family head.

These few examples are a clear warning to us of the seriousness of family leadership with anyone called and chosen of God. The New Testament brings this closer to home with the admonition given by the Apostle Peter to believers everywhere: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7 *KJV*). Wrong treatment of a wife creates a blockage between a man and God.

Since proper family leadership is so important, let us look at God's plan for the chain of authority in the home.

Roles of Family Members

Who is first?

In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul is writing to the church about the proper relationship between men and women. He upholds that relationship as one ordained by God. This letter was written to those Christians living at Corinth, possibly the most prominent Greek city of Paul's time. It emphasizes the fact that no matter where you call "home," God's plan for the family is the same. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3, *KJV*). Paul is teaching the Corinthians several things here (points adapted from notes in *The Full Life Study Bible, KJV*, Zondervan Publishing House, Donald C. Stamps, General Editor, [Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1992], p. 1785, [note on 1 Corinthians 11:3]:

📖 In Christ, there is true equality among men and women as heirs of God's grace. This equality comes from the order and subordination with respect to authority that is His plan (Galatians 3:28). God is head of Christ, Christ is head of man, and man is head of woman. This "head" refers to both authority and origination – the order each came into being (1 Corinthians 3:23; 11:8, 10; 15:28; Ephesians 1:21-22; Colossians 1:18). When anyone – man or woman – gets out of this proper order, there is trouble.

📖 The husband's headship is not because of culture (men are not "over" every woman), but because of God's creative activity in making the woman to help the man (1 Corinthians 11:8-9; Genesis 2:18; 1 Timothy 2:13).

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- 📖 Subordination does not mean suppression or oppression. This is the mistake made by too many cultures of the world. God’s plan requires the husband to see the worth God puts on his wife. It is his responsibility to protect and lead her so she can fulfill God’s will in the home and church.
- 📖 Being the “head” does not make the husband superior to his wife. In the kingdom of God, leadership never implies “greater,” but servanthood and obedience. These are the signs of greatness in God’s eyes (Matthew 20:25-28; Philippians 2:5-9).

As “head” it is the responsibility of a man to choose a wife that is God-fearing. This process begins with one of the most serious commandments in God’s Word – one that is too often ignored. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14)

The seriousness of this verse cannot be overemphasized. The marriage relationship is the closest kind. Your marriage partner will become a part of you – you become “one flesh.” All the way back to the Garden of Eden, when God brought Eve to Adam, this has been God’s plan. “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:23-24).

Husbands

Too many times, the role of “husband” is confused (or just fused together) with that of “father.” These two family titles are not the same and their job description is very different. Although both belong to the man, they have serious effects on all other family members.

The husband’s first responsibility is mentioned above – leaving father and mother and cleaving to his wife. In many societies of the world, this command is totally ignored. In order to become “head” of his family, a man must be out of the “headship” of his father’s house. As long as he is eating and sleeping under his father’s roof (or mother’s, as the case may be), he has a certain obligation to obey their rules.

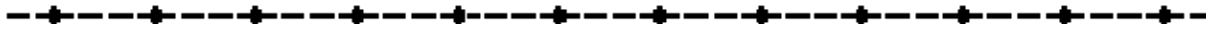
Jesus considered this important enough to mention Himself. Some Pharisees came to Jesus, asking questions about divorce, and trying to trick Him. Jesus used this opportunity to remind them (and all His listeners) of the original family plan.

“And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall

cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:4-6).

Mark's record of this event is almost word for word (Mark 10:5-9). This cleaving is serious business, and cannot happen unless there is some "leaving" first. "Cleaving" means "to stick like glue," and is vital to the growth of any marriage relationship.

Parents are not abandoned (continue to honour your father and mother), but there must be a change of loyalties. A husband must make decisions (even with mistakes), and make up his mind to consider and work things out with his wife *first*. *Together*, they learn to weather life's storms by following God's plan for their lives as a new family unit.



Exercise 2 – (May be done in class or at home, depending on time available)

- ✓ Be familiar with Colossians 3:19.
- ✓ Look this verse up in another translation (besides *King James Version*) to see what the word "bitter" means.
- ✓ Using an exhaustive concordance, locate other verses that speak to husbands. What is the repeated theme in these verses? (*Take note of the good examples listed in the Lesson Objectives. These will help you get started.*)
- ✓ On a separate sheet of paper, list references to husbands, writing a short explanation of requirements mentioned in each. Be sure to keep this separate from the position of "father."
- ✓ List requirements/expectations of husbands in your culture.
- ✓ Compare cultural expectations with biblical requirements.
- ✓ Mark those that are the same as Scripture with a check mark. Those that are different should be marked with an X.
- ✓ Go over these biblical and cultural comparisons together in class.



Husbands who follow God's family plan are truly rare. Too many times, men get caught up in the business of provided for their family's physical needs. They forget that spiritual leadership in the home (pastoring their family) is one of God's biggest priorities.

Wives

A wife and a mother are not the same thing. Women in general are not to be treated the same as a wife. These actions cause confusion and strife among men and women today. Discovering the God-given plan

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for wives will open our eyes to reasons why women are suffering at the hands of over-bearing, disobedient men.



Exercise 3 – (May be done in class or at home, depending on time available)

- ✓ Be familiar with Colossians 3:18.
- ✓ Look this verse up in another translation (besides *King James Version*) to see what the word “submit” means. If there is no difference, look “submit” up in a Bible dictionary.
- ✓ Using an exhaustive concordance, locate other verses that speak to wives. What is the repeated theme in these verses? (*To help you get started, use the verses provided in the Lesson Objectives.*)
- ✓ On a separate sheet of paper, list references to wives, writing a short explanation of requirements mentioned in each.
- ✓ List requirements/expectations of wives in your culture. Remember to keep this separate from the position of a mother.
- ✓ Compare cultural expectations with biblical requirements.
- ✓ Mark those that are the same as Scripture with a check mark. Those that are different should be marked with an X.
- ✓ Go over these biblical and cultural comparisons together in class.



Solomon said, “Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord” (Proverbs 18:22). The New Living Translation says it like this: “The man who finds a wife finds a treasure and receives favor from the Lord.”

Then Solomon increased the market value of godly women when he said, “Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10). I checked, and rubies are the most valuable gemstone anywhere. They are more precious because they are rarer than other jewels. Women who understand and obey God’s plan for being a wife are definitely the most valuable possession a man can receive from God. She is valuable in so many ways – especially as his God-chosen helpmate (Genesis 2:18).

Fathers

When He chose to create man first, God set the pattern for family leadership. God always intended fathers to be the spiritual leader at home, so He established the covenant with Abraham as the one

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responsible to train his children to “keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment” (Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:7). If you are blessed with a godly father, you are blessed indeed.



Exercise 4 – (May be done in class or at home, depending on time available)

- ✓ Be familiar with Ephesians 6:4.
- ✓ Look this verse up in another translation (besides *King James Version*) for clarification. The *New Living Translation* or the *New International Version* gives a more simplified reading.
- ✓ Using an exhaustive concordance, locate other verses that speak of fathers. What is the repeated theme in these verses? (Take note of the good examples listed in the Lesson Objectives. These will help you get started.)
- ✓ On a separate sheet of paper, list references to fathers training their children, writing a short explanation of requirements mentioned in each.
- ✓ List requirements/expectations of fathers in your culture. Remember to keep this separate from the position of a husband.
- ✓ Compare cultural expectations with biblical requirements.
- ✓ Mark those that are the same as Scripture with a check mark. Those that are different should be marked with an X.
- ✓ Go over these biblical and cultural comparisons together in class.



“And now a word to you fathers. Don’t make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4, NLT).

Two words in this translation make it clear that the father’s responsibility is a consistent, ongoing one. Can you find those two (2) words in the verse above?

Discipline implies daily exercise. What verse in the Old Testament supports this command of God? (*Proverbs 22:6*) The word “train” in this verse speaks of consistent discipline that helps children “cultivate a taste for” God’s plan for their lives. Parents dedicate their children to doing what God says is right from the time of their birth.

Instruction implies consistency, and a change in material as growth occurs. This can only take place if fathers are present and observant of their children’s needs and capabilities. If your work hours are too long, make a change the priority in your life. Obeying God in regard to your children is not an option. It is a commandment to fathers everywhere.

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📖 List three (3) other Old Testament verses (besides Proverbs 22:6) that command fathers to daily and consistently train their children. (*Use your concordance to help with this exercise.*)

So many times, fathers turn the training responsibility for their children over to their wife. This is not God's plan. It is true that mothers are in the home more. However, to place the mother in charge of the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4) for children is to take her out of her God-given place in the home. This is the responsibility of fathers, and must be taken seriously.

Mothers are helpers who agree with, support, and uphold the training given first by fathers. There should never be the possibility of playing fathers against mothers. Mothers should never go against the set regulations and expectations laid down by fathers. To do so causes serious problems with children. This is another reason why husbands and wives should have the same set of values and agree on the standards of their home before children become a part.

With the serious work schedules followed by most men – especially men of God – what can be done to insure the father's role in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" for his children? (*Below are some suggestions. Add other ideas [different timeframe or setting] from your own culture.*)

- ✓ Except for extreme emergency, make sure you are home from work early enough to spend time with your children.
- ✓ If at all possible, make the evening meal one shared by all family members.
- ✓ Use this time together to talk about things of God.
- ✓ Allow family members – from oldest to youngest – to share a question, or discuss something that is disturbing them.
- ✓ Do not allow disagreements or strife into family discussions.
- ✓ Make the Word of God a priority.
- ✓ If possible, assign verses to memorize, using methods that are fun and encouraging.
- ✓ Pray for, and with, each family member. Praying for each other – especially between members who are having difficulty getting along – is a special way to bond as a family.
- ✓ Encourage Bible reading with fun activities. Passages should not be too long, but comprehension is important. Talk about the verses read, and make sure all understand their meaning and purpose.
- ✓ Do not make these family times seem like school or church. Thirty minutes is a good length of time.
- ✓ If available, use a family devotional book. These are available with ideas for every day of the year. (*One Year Family Devotionals*)
- ✓ Incorporate your own cultural traditions into these family times. God's Word applies to everyday life – no matter where we live.

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No matter where you live and work, make the training of your children a priority. Be sure your wife knows (and hopefully agrees) with this training. Encourage her participation in whatever activities you choose to use.

“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

It is always a good idea to work “with” your wife. However, you both need the Holy Ghost working in you – that three-fold cord – to be successful in your family.

Disobedience to the command “be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” causes serious problems. I Corinthians 6:15-17 tells us why: “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” God cannot join you to become a “three-fold cord” in such situations. Be careful when choosing a wife, the one who will become the mother of your children.

Mothers

Mothers are important – no matter where you are born. A true mother (not just a female who gives birth) is one of God’s greatest gifts, and more valuable than all the riches of this world. God’s plan for mothers is special. The earthly mother He chose is a great example for us all. Mary was very young, but dedicated totally to obedience to God’s plan for her life (Luke 1:26-38).

Becoming a mother is never easy. Because of Eve’s choice to “know good *and* evil,” we will never know how God intended the process, because Eve never gave birth until *after* the curse. That curse was specifically dealing with the pain of childbearing, and submission to her husband: “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16).

In our world today, giving birth occurs often, even with children/youths not ready for the responsibility. “Giving birth” and “motherhood” are NOT the same. Sadly, many *females* give birth, but abandon or refuse to take care of, help train, and raise up godly children. Remember a mother’s major responsibility is to help her husband in the spiritual training of their children. “My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother” (Proverbs 6:20). Proverbs 1:7-9 and 4:1-5 give similar instruction that fathers teach first, and mothers support that teaching.

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Deuteronomy 11:18-21 are verses for God's chosen people, Israel. They are the original plan for making sure our children know and follow His ways. Fathers were given the responsibility of sharing God's law with his children. Moses spoke these instructions first in Deuteronomy chapters 4 and 6. Solomon made it clear that this responsibility was shared with mothers.



Exercise 5 – (May be done in class or at home, depending on time available)

- ✓ Be familiar with John 16:21.
- ✓ Look this verse up in another translation (besides *King James Version*) for clarification. The *New Living Translation* or the *New International Version* gives a more simplified reading.
- ✓ Using an exhaustive concordance, locate other verses that speak of mothers. What is the repeated theme in these verses? (Take note of the good examples listed in the Lesson Objectives. These will help you get started.)
- ✓ On a separate sheet of paper, list references to the mother's role, writing a short explanation of requirements mentioned in each.
- ✓ List requirements/expectations of mothers in your culture. Remember to keep this separate from the position of a wife.
- ✓ Compare cultural expectations with biblical requirements.
- ✓ Mark those that are the same as Scripture with a check mark. Those that are different should be marked with an X.
- ✓ Go over these biblical and cultural requirements together in class.



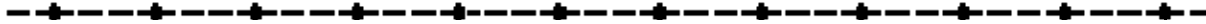
The prophet Ezekiel spoke of the example of mothers. His dire warnings to Israel are words we should remember today: "Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter" (Ezekiel 16:44). Good or bad, children copy their mother. What example are we giving them to follow?

Children

Obviously, if we talk about fathers and mothers, there must be children around somewhere. These most tender family members have a serious job to do. It is for training in future adulthood. It is the most valuable lesson anyone can learn about authority – "obey." For most of us, this is difficult to do. We have our own ideas, we "think" we know better than those in charge, and we plan ways to prove our right thinking – with rebellion.

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God's command to children comes with a promise: "Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. Honor your father and mother. This is the first of the Ten Commandments that ends with a promise. And this is the promise: If you honor your father and mother, you will live a long life, full of blessing" (Ephesians 6:1-3, *NLT*). Obedience is the key – blessed long life is the reward.



Exercise 6 – (*May be done in class or at home, depending on time available*)

- ✓ Be familiar with Colossians 3:20.
- ✓ Look this verse up in another translation (besides *King James Version*) for clarification. The *New Living Translation* or the *New International Version* gives a more simplified reading.
- ✓ Using an exhaustive concordance, locate other verses that speak of this commandment for children. (*You may find help in the examples listed in the Lesson Objectives.*)
- ✓ On a separate sheet of paper, list references to the children's role, writing a short explanation of requirements mentioned in each.
- ✓ List requirements/expectations of children in your culture. What do parents expect? What do other family members expect? What expectations for children are not part of the Bible plan?
- ✓ Compare cultural expectations with biblical requirements.
- ✓ Mark those that are the same as Scripture with a check mark. Those that are different should be marked with an X.
- ✓ Go over these biblical and cultural comparisons together in class.



Besides the reward for obedience, there is another good reason to follow God's plan. It prepares you for the future. When you are attending school, obedience is essential to teachers and principals/administrators. When you are working in the public, obedience to your boss is required. No matter what your life involves, obedience to authority is a lesson everyone needs to learn – especially as applied to God's role plan for every family member.

Conclusion

God has always had a plan. He has a plan for everyone ever born. Just as He spoke to His disobedient children (Israel): "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11, *KJV*). The *New Living Translation* makes this

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verse clearer: “‘For I know the plans I have for you’, says the Lord. ‘They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.’”

Disaster comes when we do not seek and follow His plan. Just as Adam and Eve decided to know the evil that God wanted to protect them from, so we live our lives following tradition, family norms, and peer pressure that takes us far away from His good plan for us.

Know God’s plan for your family, understand what he wants each member to do, and then follow His plan. Blessing and reward will follow because our God is faithful (Lamentations 3:22). Healing, restoration, and future blessing are all ours as a result. What joy here on earth – living with a family that follows God’s plan.

Lesson in Review

1. List (with Scripture reference) three requirements for church leaders (especially those involved in training others to share the gospel) as found in the New Testament.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

2. Write in full (with reference) the New Testament verse of Scripture that speaks of the “stricter judgment” of teachers. _____

3. What is one of the greatest ways to deliver a lesson? _____

4. Where does God begin His search for “blameless” men? (Support your answer with Scripture.)

5. Give three (3) Old Testament examples of men who failed as family leader. (Support with Scripture.)

- 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____

6. Write in full (with reference) the verse that agrees with the following statement: "Wrong treatment of a wife creates a blockage between a man and God." _____

7. Write in full (with reference) the verse that emphasizes the fact that no matter where you call "home," God's plan for the family is the same. _____

8. What does the term "cleaving" mean? _____
 What has to happen before the "cleaving" takes place? _____

9. Give a short explanation of how a man becomes "head" of his family. _____

10. List and briefly explain the two words (*found in New Living Translation*) of Ephesians 6:4 that make it clear the father's responsibility is a consistent, ongoing one. What Old Testament verse supports this command of God? _____

11. Write in full (with reference) the verse that tells us God's command to children comes with a promise. _____

11. In the blanks provided, write TRUE or FALSE to the statements given about family roles.

_____ 1) The desire and call to lead must be confirmed by the Word of God and the church, using the qualifications given by God.

_____ 2) God has always made it clear that a man whose family leadership follows the biblical plan is required for Kingdom leadership.

_____ 3) In Christ, there is true equality among men and women as heirs of God's grace. This equality comes from the order (man as head) and subordination (wife in submission) with respect to authority that is God's plan (Galatians 3:28).

_____ 4) The husband's headship is not because of culture (men are not "over" every woman), but because of God's creative activity in making the woman to help her husband (1 Timothy 2:13).

_____ 5) A wife and a mother are not the same thing.

_____ 6) "Husband" and "father" are two family titles that are the same, with the same job description.

_____ 7) Spiritual leadership in the home (pastoring their family) is one of God's biggest priorities for husbands.

_____ 8) A woman who understands and obeys God's plan for being a wife is definitely the most valuable possession a man can receive from God.

_____ 9) God always intended fathers to be the spiritual leader at home, so He established the covenant with Moses as the one responsible to train his children to "keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."

_____ 10) Mothers are helpers who agree with, support, and uphold the training given first by fathers.

_____ 11) The most valuable lesson anyone can learn about authority is to "obey."

_____ 12) Besides the reward for obedience, another good reason to follow God's plan is that it prepares you for the future.

_____ 13) Jeremiah 29:11 is a verse that supports the statement God has always had a plan for everyone ever born.

_____ 14) A mother's major responsibility is to help her husband in the spiritual training of their children.

_____ 15) Proverbs 22:6 give instructions that fathers teach first, and mothers support that teaching.

The Teacher and Mentoring

“Behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus...Which was well reported of by the brethren....Him would Paul have to go forth with him”
(Acts 16:1-3).

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Define mentor, mentoring, mentoring relationships, reverse mentoring, situation mentoring, and e-mentoring.
2. Explain the difference between mentoring and discipleship.
3. Recall five steps in equipping anyone to do anything.
4. Describe four types (or settings) of mentoring found in the Bible school context.
5. State and briefly explain the four stages of development in a mentoring relationship.
6. Identify five barriers to mentoring and suggest ways to overcome each.
7. Determine five activities found in a senior-junior faculty mentoring relationship.
8. Describe how mentoring is beneficial to Bible school students.
9. Point out five benefits the mentoring relationship brings to the mentor.
10. Develop a productive mentoring relationship (as a mentor, or a protégé, or both).

Introduction

Mentoring is more than a one-shot-hits-all approach to the classroom. It is moving away from the forest to focus on the tree. The mentoring teacher looks at the classroom but concentrates on the student.

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There were many disciples in Derbe and Lystra but Paul focused on a *certain* disciple, Timothy. Apostolic history records the depth of their mentoring rendezvous, “Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2).

Where did mentoring originate?

Mentoring has its origin in the Word of God. It dates back to Moses being mentored by his father-in-law, Jethro (Exodus 18). It shows itself when a father was commanded to mentor his sons, passing the truth from one generation to the next (Deuteronomy 6:1-2). Mentoring relationships are scattered throughout the Bible. However, a Greek story is credited with the term “Mentor” and the concept we now know as “mentoring.”

Long ago, when a Greek warrior named Odysseus went off to war, he left his young son in the hands of a man named Mentor. He possessed admirable qualities: teacher, guide, protector, counselor, advisor, role model, and father figure. When the warrior father returned, his son had grown into a man; thanks to Mentor.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is when someone more experienced is willing to help someone less experienced. This does not necessarily mean that the mentor must be older. Interaction exists between two people, usually one-on-one where one person empowers another. One is guided, taught, influenced by another. It is an effort to assist one in developing God-given potential, and preparing him to function in the same kind of ministry. Fred Childs said, “Mentoring is transferring knowledge, understanding, wisdom, skills, insight, vision, and expertise.”

What is a mentor?

Kenneth Gangel in *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry* said a mentor is “a teacher and leader who uses his or her experience to show others how best to walk life’s path, to accomplish goals and meet life’s challenges.” Sondra Higgins Matthaei in “Faith-Mentoring in the Classroom” likened a mentor to a guide, “a person who journeys through life with another, pointing out landmarks, modeling alternatives, supporting choices, and interpreting life events.” The mentor becomes a guide, a lead-learner. He provides—among other things—guidance, accountability, and encouragement. In other words a mentor is a coach, guide, wise/helpful friend, counselor, advisor, teacher, guardian, encourager, and father figure.

Thank God for those who guide us along the road of life becoming companions in the journey. Mentors have travelled that road before us, know the obstacles, and can provide guidance for development. Like the little Nigerian chorus says, “The road is rough and there are many dangers.”

Viv Thomas in *Future Leader* wrote, “Leaders are in desperate need of friends and mentors, people who will direct us towards God and show us the way. One good and able mentor is worth a hundred consultants, a thousand motivational ‘how to’ seminars and only God knows how many sermons. Soul drought, which is the experience of many leaders, is often related to a lack of mentoring.”

A touching story surfaced at the Commonwealth Games in Fiji. The crowd waited anxiously for the first of the marathon runners to appear. Finally, they caught a glimpse of the first runner. He was running well and seemed to be full of energy. Surely, he would finish the race and win. The second runner also came into view. He appeared weak and couldn’t keep straight. The crowd stood and shouted, “Go on, you can make it!” He fell. Several spectators ran to the side of the track to verbally urge him on. “The end is in sight. Don’t quit now. You can do it!” The runner mustered his strength and crawled across the finish line. The man had to run his own race, but others could encourage him from the sidelines. Encouragers help keep us going when times are tough and life’s road is rough.

A mentor pours himself into others—intentionally investing in the next generation of leaders—and adapts a supportive, guiding role. So, mentoring involves a minimum—and many times preferably—two people.



Mentor	More experienced
Mentoree, Protégé, or mentee	Less experienced

How is mentoring different from discipleship?

The mentoring relationship is similar to discipleship but noticeably different. Discipleship focuses on ongoing growth of the disciple as a Christian, and is concerned with the commands of Christ. The intent is for the disciple to become like Jesus Christ. Certainly, a mentor hopes for the same to take place, but is specifically concerned with focusing on elements pertaining to the development of expert skills and practices. Mentoring and discipleship are interrelated; both are growth-oriented, and developmental in nature.

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What are mentoring relationships?

For our purpose, mentoring exists in four settings. This lesson specifically addresses faculty to student; and faculty to faculty mentoring. However, its principles apply to the other two settings noted, and in many cases to mentoring in general.

Setting	Relationship	Comments
Setting One	Faculty to student mentoring	This is one-on-one or small group.
Setting Two	Faculty to faculty mentoring	Sometimes referred to as “workplace mentoring.”
Setting Three	Student to student mentoring	This is “peer mentoring” and usually exists when a senior, returning student mentors a junior, entering student.
Setting Four	Faculty to outside protégé	Perhaps, a faculty member is mentoring a pastor or someone outside of the normal school environment.

What are the basics of mentoring?

Donald Bubna in “Teaching by Coming Alongside” provides five steps in equipping anyone to do anything.

Steps	Jesus as Master Mentor	Comments
Step One	Jesus showed them what to do.	Knowledge is important but it is only the first step.
Step Two	Jesus showed them how to do it.	Don’t just tell the way. Show the way.
Step Three	Jesus let them try it.	Practice the principles learned.
Step Four	Jesus sent them out alone.	Try it and provide feedback to mentor.
Step Five	Jesus evaluated what they did.	This includes self-evaluation by the protégé and the mentor.

L. Thomas Strong in *Mentoring in a Seminary Community* speaks of doctors in rural areas who were taught through the practice and lifestyle of being a doctor through *modeling* and *mentoring*. Often, an older doctor would select a successor and would invest time and effort in training him to continue the practice. Most manual labor skills are taught through mentoring. Long ago pastors were trained in the same way. Those that desired to be pastors would be invited into the home of a senior minister and he would teach them by *lecture* and *lifestyle*.

What are the stages of mentoring relationships?

Kathy E. Kran in “Phases of Mentor Relationship” provided four stages of development reflected in the table that follows.

Stages of Development	Comments
Initiation Stage	Mentoring relationship begins; discern roles, spend time together, and develop ability to communicate easily. It is here that the “quality of trust is either formed or forfeited.”
Cultivation Stage	Continue to work on communication skills. Strengthen the relationship.
Separation Stage	In the educational setting normally there is a beginning and ending date dictated by the academic calendar.
Redefinition Stage	The protégé moves from being a student or a mentee to being a friend. He moves to the level of being a colleague. The mentoring relationship may continue; only at a new and higher level.

What are the mentoring be-attitudes?

Effective mentors possess certain characteristics. Let’s call them the ‘be attitudes’ of a mentor. Some of these are reflected in the following table.

The Be-Attitude	Comments
Be respectful	Strong relationships are based on mutual respect.
Be committed	Meeting together requires time and a willingness on the mentor’s part to assist in the growth process of the protégé.

Be ethical	Mentoring requires confidentiality much like the relationship between a doctor and his patient.
Be visionary	Possess the ability to readily see the potential in others. Mentors see down the road of the protégé's life and suggest steps to be taken.
Be tolerant	People make mistakes. A protégé may have opinions quite different from his mentor.
Be a listener	Resist the lure to always be the teller. Most people have two ears and one mouth. Why?
Be an expert	Without expertise mentors have little to offer a protégé.
Be perceptive	This is the unique ability to discern what is happening in a mentee's life and ask the right questions.
Be consistent	Time is valuable. Keep appointments. Meetings should be regular. There should be a consistency in the way the mentor handles things, the viewpoints he has, and with his lifestyle. A mentor's teaching and lifestyle should match.
Be available	A mentor has to have enough time for a protégé and be there when needed.
Be relational	A mentor that does not enjoy being with people should leave mentoring to others.
Be persistent	Don't threaten to give up on your protégé.
Be an example	Integrate theory and practice. Exhibit it.
Be transparent	Demonstrate you are still growing and explain how.
Be real	Honesty and integrity are crucial. Mentors should steer clear of hypocrisy.
Be clear	Clarify your level of expectations.
Be patient	The protégé is a work-in-progress.

What are some barriers to mentoring?

Why do some choose not to be involved? Here are some possible reasons. Perhaps, you can think of more.

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Reasons	Comments
Time	Mentoring is an investment. It requires time. Some potential mentors do not feel they have time for the process.
Dependency	Some fear that protégés will become dependent upon them. Mentors need to guard against overdependence but not assume that it is going to be a problem in every case.
Losing Position	Others fear the loss of position, that protégés will take away favor that the mentor presently possesses.
Inferiority	May entertain feelings of inferiority, or even coming to terms with one's own indiscipline.
Jealousy	Not willing to impart knowledge into the lives of others; the person may become better than the mentor. Missionaries or senior officials need to be careful in mentoring students so that special treatment does not encourage jealousy from other students; that they do not provide resources that other mentors cannot provide; and that protégés do not take advantage of the mentor.
Power Struggle	One may be trying to hold on to power. The other may be attempting to take it away.
Not encouraged	Administration must recognize the value of mentoring and encourage involvement. It needs to be a prominent component of faculty education or development. State emphatically that mentoring is a valid, appreciated, and expected part of the teaching ministry.
Apathy	Some mentors and even protégés are not enthusiastic of involvement in the mentoring process.
Disenchantment	An unsuccessful attempt at mentoring or being mentored may cause one to be disappointed or bitter.
Ignorance	Some faculty members assume that casual contact with students is the same as mentoring and is their contribution to the process.

Not teachable	The potential protégé must possess a teachable spirit or attitude.
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What are the mentoring activities in a Bible school environment?

The table that follows indicates some of the activities or ways a senior faculty member can mentor a junior one.

Activities:
Find Resources.
Explain how the school or institution works.
Feedback on professional progress.
Accountability.
Lend a hand in improving skills.
Help learn organizational values.
Senior faculty members nurture junior faculty members.
Stimulate intellectual and spiritual growth.
Aid with research.
Encourage (Hebrews 10:25; Philippians 2:1-2).
Help others contribute more effectively toward achieving goals and vision of the school, while assisting the protégé in realizing personal vision and goals.
Model teaching style and strategies to junior faculty.
Aid in a smooth transition to a new institution.
Boost protégés' level of confidence.
Provide learning opportunities.
Serve as a sounding board, allowing protégé to freely express himself without criticism or correction.

How is mentoring beneficial to Bible school students?

Cutting-edge schools should consider setting up a mentoring program for students. There should be an established curriculum or way of going about mentoring, along with an orientation. Make it clear what you expect from the mentoring process and establish course objectives. Define student outcomes and establish a communication process. The student body can be divided among faculty members. Match the protégé with the mentor according to ministry interests.

Patricia Cross pointed out that excellence in education “is not so much related to how much is learned or even how well a subject is understood. Rather, excellence is dependent on how learning changes the learner.”

Thomas Strong in *Mentoring in a Seminary Environment* explains that mentoring touches on the need for faculty to go a step further than the classroom in order to impact the lives of students. Theological education aims at assisting students in spiritual and personal formation. Education should shift to focusing on the student rather than focusing on providing information. There needs to be a balance between character development and academics. What a student is actually becoming is seldom—if ever—examined. There is also a wide gap between the textbook (the ideal) and reality (real life challenges in an actual church setting).



Mentoring is a precious gift. The table that follows indicates some of the benefits for the protégé involved in the mentoring process.

Benefit	Comments
Encourages	...career development, perseverance, and reaching for dreams and vision. Mentors are friends, like Barnabas, a source of encouragement.
Enhances	...confidence in one’s ministry and abilities.
Empowers	...a speedier adjustment to new role.
Equips	...with skills, research,
Establishes	...protégé in his ministry or profession.
Exposes	...new ideas, suggestions, and people to network with for achievement of goals and effective ministry.
Engages	...one in active, progressive, measurable development.
Evaluates	...progress made and provides feedback.
Examples	...provide a role model for one to follow.
Enthuses	...or stirs excitement for both the protégé and the mentor.

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Enables	...protégé to reach his God-given potential.
Educates	...through continuous learning.

Mentoring is a profitable investment. There are also multiple benefits for both the mentor and the institution. For the mentor the relationship achieves the following.

Excites	...or kindles new ideas and stirs one's creativity.
Encourages	...renewed interest in one's field of expertise.
Establishes	...a model of continuous learning.
Earns	...personal satisfaction that you have helped another person to grow. Facilitates the joy of investing in others, and in the next generation of leaders.
Encounters	...friendships that may last a lifetime.
Enriches	...through serving others. You cannot bless another, without receiving a blessing yourself.
Extends	...one's own ministry, provides succession, and secures the continual development of ministry leaders. Sometimes the protégé will exceed or go beyond the mentor's ministry. This is a sign of a good mentor.
Enlarges	...patience, interpersonal skills, and life skills. Mentoring is widely practiced in the church and business world. It also deepens our insight into various avenues of the teaching/learning experience.

What types of mentoring can be found in the Bible School environment?

The table that follows unveils some of the types of mentoring relationships found within the Bible school environment.

Type	Comments
Workplace mentoring	Accomplished within the workplace. In our case this is the Bible school.
Reverse mentoring	Mentoring is not restricted to age; the older mentors the younger. In a developing society the

	younger person may be able to provide mentoring in acquisition of new skills. Consider the servant girl in 2 Kings 4:1-8.
Peer mentoring	The mentor and protégé are about the same age; like student to student mentoring.
Informal mentoring	Relaxed, not necessarily deliberate, but unstructured, and casual.
Formal mentoring	Usually well defined; time, place, content, contract.
Situational Mentoring	Providing the right help at the right time. Usually short-term and addresses a particular situation.
E-mentoring	This is using modern technology of the Internet and e-mail to enhance the role of mentors. Works especially well with distance education. However, it is not limited to that. An electronic mentoring program could utilize a bulletin board for a central meeting place; have chat room, and a discussion forum. E-mentoring in its simplest form would be carried on through e-mails and attached documents. Several e-mail programs also provide some sort of instant messenger. This permits two-way communications. Services such as Skype provide computer to computer voice communication at no charge.

What are the activities in senior-junior student mentoring?

Since senior students mentoring juniors may be a new concept to you, let me illustrate some of the activities and benefits in the table that follows. Of course, a student peer mentoring program would have many similarities to a faculty to student mentoring program. Both need guidelines and training from administration to achieve program objectives.

Activities

Demonstrates an interest in the development and well-being of others.

Share knowledge, skills, study techniques, and wisdom.

Discuss new ideas, perspectives, concepts, and standards.

Explain school values.

Serve as a guide acquainting the student with the environment: school, area United Pentecostal

Churches, and how to get around the city or community.
Encourage. It would be amazing to know how many students feel like quitting and turning back.
Serves as an example to the protégé of what he can become.
Help them determine and achieve goals (Adapted from E-Mentoring: Creating the Connection – Staffordshire University).

Being a good mentor requires character, capabilities, confidence, competence, and commitment. Mentoring is an intentional *investment* into the next generation. It is a God-given opportunity to *influence* others to reach their maximum potential.

Question for Discussion or Personal Reflection

Who are your mentors?

How formal is the relationship?

What benefits did you gain from the relationship?

What was it the other person did to mentor you?

What did you appreciate about your mentor?

What do expect from the mentoring relationship?

What are you willing to bring into the relationship?

Lesson in Review

1. What is a mentor? _____

2. What is mentoring? _____

3. Viv Thomas stated one good mentor is worth what? _____

4. How many people are involved in a mentoring relationship? _____

5. What is the difference between mentoring and discipleship? _____

6. What are the five steps in equipping anyone to do anything? _____

7. List and briefly explain the phases of a mentoring relationship? _____

8. List the characteristics of being a mentor that you do especially well. _____

9. List the characteristics of a mentor that you need to work on. _____

11. What are some barriers to mentoring you've encountered in your cultural/ministerial context?

12. How can you (as an experienced teacher) mentor an emerging teacher in the Bible school or the church-at-large? _____

13. Provide the names of those you are presently mentoring and indicate whether they are a student, emerging teacher, or someone in the church-at-large. _____

14. How could you better assist in mentoring students? What special skills or wisdom do you have to offer? _____

15. How could e-mentoring be utilized effectively for faculty education with your cultural/ministerial environment? _____

The Teacher and Creative Impact

“The power to connect the seemingly unconnected”

Objectives

At the conclusion of this course the learner will be able to:

1. List several barriers to creative thinking.
2. Analyze chief culprits to creative thinking.
3. Assess their attitude towards creativity.
4. Explain how they know they have creative potential.
5. Recall four ways in which they can develop their creativity.
6. Summarize the need for creativity in their teaching.

Introduction

Bill McNabb and Steven Mabry tell the following story in their article “Awaken Your Students to Scripture: “A woman read somewhere that dogs were healthier if fed a tablespoon of cod liver oil each day. So each day she followed the same routine – she chased her dog until she caught it, wrestled it down, and managed to force the fishy remedy down the dog’s throat.

Until one day when, in the middle of this grueling medical effort, the bottle was kicked over. With a sigh, she loosed her grip on the dog so she could wipe up the mess – only to watch the dog trot to the puddle and begin lapping it up. The dog loved cod liver oil. It was just the owner’s method of application the dog objected to.” (www.youthspecialties.com)

How are we teaching the Word of God? Feel like you are in a wrestling match for the learner’s attention? If so, this lesson is for you. God’s Word is inspired, thus life-changing. It’s exciting and

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relevant, ready to meet the needs of the learner. Howard Hendricks cautions us in *The 7 Laws of the Teacher*, “Whatever you do, don’t bore people with the Word of God.”

Keep in mind, just because you value the Word of God does not mean the learner does – although most people do want to know more about the Bible. We, as Christian educators, do ourselves an injustice not to take advantage of all the research that has gone into how and what motivates people to learn. So, glad you’re here! Let’s discover how creativity can impact your teaching.

Barriers to Creative Thinking

In his book *A Whack on the Side of the Head*, Roger von Oech identifies several barriers to creative thinking. Read the following list on the left and place a check beside any that reflects your attitude. I know it makes you nervous but go ahead and read the counteracting statements by John C. Maxwell.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. ____ That’s not logical. | 1. Listen to your intuition. |
| 2. ____ Follow the rules. | 2. Think results. |
| 3. ____ Be practical. | 3. Be outrageous. |
| 4. ____ To err is wrong. | 4. To err and learn from the mistake is to be one step closer. |
| 5. ____ There’s one right answer. | 5. The possibilities are endless. |
| 6. ____ Play is frivolous. | 6. Play is refreshing. |
| 7. ____ Avoid ambiguity. | 7. Explore ambiguity. |
| 8. ____ That’s not my area. | 8. Be a no-limit thinker. |
| 9. ____ Don’t be foolish. | 9. Take a leap of faith. |
| 10. ____ I’m not creative. | 10. I am creative – I was formed in God’s image! |

“But that’s just not my personality,” you say. Hmm...take fear out of the picture and then what would you do?

Howard Hendricks in *Color Outside the Lines* suggests five chief culprits who discourage creative thinkers.

- Parents
- Culture
- Teachers
- Television
- The Aging Process

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Do you agree? Why or why not? Take a few moments to brainstorm.

The Call to Creativity

It all began with God. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). With His words, the world came into existence. Light penetrated darkness giving us day and night. Waters were divided and gathered together to form oceans, seas, rivers, and streams. Dry land appeared at His bidding and upon it He placed a carpet of grass, herbs and fruit trees. God saw that it was good. He continued by hanging the sun, moon and stars. Birds of the air and creatures of the sea took their place. All colors, shapes and sizes were represented in a grand and glorious display. Our God is a God of impact! So much so, that thousands of years later men and woman are still devoting their life to studying one small aspect of God’s inexhaustible creation.

“And God said; Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:26-27). “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7).

Man...God’s great finale. Of all the creatures God created, this one stood alone in the image of the Maker. One plus one equals two – a fact easily understood. If we are created in His image...there is no denying His creative powers.

“Now wait a minute,” you say, “Are you implying that we have the ability to create?” No. The ability to create lies only with an omnipotent God. However, Spirit-filled believers do have a responsibility to exercise that creative Spirit that lies within. Anyone who relies totally on his own abilities will not produce impacting results in the Kingdom (John 15:5).

Paul said it this way, “So everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen, warning them and teaching them as well as we know how. We want to be able to present each one to God, perfect because of what Christ has done for each of them. This is my work, and I can do it only because Christ’s mighty energy is at work within me” (Colossians 1:28-29, *TLB*).

Let me illustrate...you are in a large room. A friend is leaning on the opposite wall. He blows with all his might. Will you feel it? Not likely. You both move a little closer and he blows again, letting a big gust of air billow forth. Yuck, you think. Feeling it yet? Probably not. Now you are standing very close. He once again blows – this time right in your face. You most definitely feel it! This would be a very gross

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illustration if not for the spiritual application. That “friend” is none other than the one who sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24).

Do you realize that breath, spirit and wind all come from the same root word as creativity? “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8). It is only when we draw close to God that we are able to feel that creative breath. It is only then that He is able to speak to our spirit and give us that creative idea that will solve our situation. He crowns our human effort with His supernatural impact.

We all want to teach with impact. “God-breathed” creativity is the key.

As Christians, we are called to creativity. Marlene D. Lefever in *Creative Teaching Methods* said, “It’s a gift that we have from God, and it’s a gift that we can give back to Him.” Without it we will be an incompetent servant, at worst, or handicapped, at best (Read Matthew 25:14-30).

Developing Your Creative Potential

“They’re just not getting it,” you silently groan, “Why does it have to always be this hard?” Imagine the Sermon on the Mount in this light...

Then Jesus took his disciples up onto the mountain and, gathering them around him, he taught them saying,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek;

Blessed are they that mourn;

Blessed are the merciful;

Blessed are they that thirst for justice;

Blessed are you when persecuted;

Blessed are you when you suffer;

Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven.”

Then Simon Peter said, “Are we supposed to know this?”

And Andrew said, “Do we have to write this down?”

And James said, “Will we have a test on this?”

And Philip said, “I don’t have any paper.”

And Bartholomew said, “Do we have to turn this in?”

And John said, “The other disciples didn’t have to learn this.”

And Matthew said, “Can I go to the bathroom?”

And Judas said, “What does this have to do with real life?”

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And Jesus wept.

(Bill McNabb and Stephen Mabry, “Awaken Your Students to Scripture”)

Obviously this is not the biblical account, but it sure does remind us of some situations we have found ourselves in. Jesus was the Master Teacher. Let’s learn from Him. Dorothy Sayers once said, “The people who hanged Christ never...accused Him of being a bore – on the contrary; they thought Him too dynamic to be safe” (Hendricks, p.14).

The age old question arises, “Can creativity be taught or are we born with that special gifting?” True, there are those born with an added measure of creative genius, talents, and motivational drive. However, it is just as true that one can develop their personal, God-given, creativity beyond its present level.

Want to develop your creativity? Ready or not...here we go!

- *Break Away!*

I admit - I’m a creature of habit. It’s something I have to battle against. I even like assembly line work! It doesn’t matter which restaurant we go to, I already know what I’m going to order. I figure if I like it, why try something new? Talk about a creativity squelcher!

I’m convinced this fear of breaking patterns has more to do with laziness than the reassurance of the familiar. How many times have we heard it said, “But we’ve always done it this way.” Uh huh...and we’ll always get the same results too!

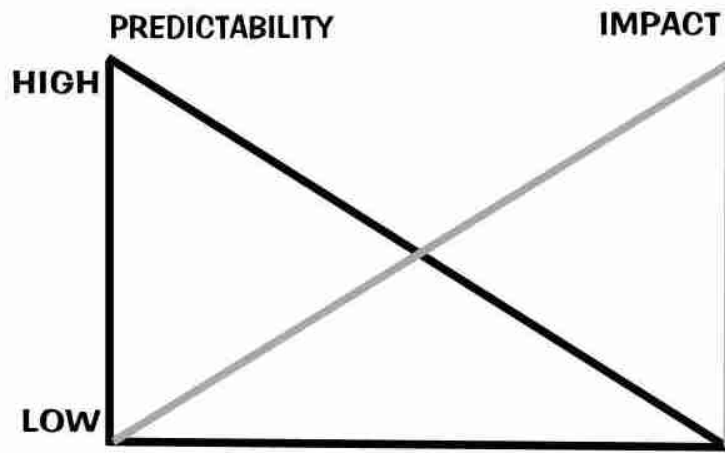
“The old patterns seem so much more right. Yet, they might not be; they might be just more familiar” (Lefever, p.16). In order to stir up your creative powers you must be willing to look beyond the “always done” and see new possibilities. Join me in stepping out of your comfort zone. Try a new method of teaching. Add the element of surprise. Adopt the idea of “failing forward.”

He failed in business in ’31. He was defeated for state legislator in ’32. He tried another business in ’33. It failed. His fiancée died in ’35. He had a nervous breakdown in ’36. In ’43 he ran for congress and was defeated. He tried again in ’48 and was defeated again. He tried running for the senate in ’55. He lost. The next year he ran for vice president and lost. In ’58 he ran for the senate again and was defeated again. Finally, in 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected the 16th president of the United States. (*Dare to Soar*, Byrd Baggett)

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Having said all that, remember in our efforts to be more creative, we sometimes accept an idea too soon. Ask yourself, is this idea helping fulfill my lesson aim? If not, keep thinking! Don't give up – Break Away!

Study the following chart adapted from *Color Outside the Lines* by Howard Hendricks. What exactly is being inferred?



- *Start Now!*

We've all heard it said, "There's no time like the present." This is an attitude that must be adopted if one is ever going to begin the creative journey. Unlike what some people suppose, creativity just doesn't happen. It's plain old hard work! There is a saying, "Perspiration oils inspiration." Pray, pick an idea and go – start now! Sure you might fail but keep trying.

A student once lamented, "I've tried to do everything that you have taught me but it just didn't work." Creativity is something that is developed. Boom! It just doesn't hit you and all of a sudden you are a creative person. Starting is the hardest part but from there you must continue with spiritual discipline. It's not an, "if I get around to it" kind of thing. It's a conscience effort of continually growing.

There was a very cautious man
Who never laughed or played.
He never risked, he never tried,
He never sang or prayed.
And when the day he passed away

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His insurance was denied,
For since he never really lived,
They claimed he never died.
(Color Outside the Lines, Howard G. Hendricks)

A study was done where 1,000 creative achievements were examined. The average age of the creator when creativity occurred was seventy-four years. The more we use our creative abilities, the better they become. So...start now!

- *Challenge the Familiar!*

Still with me? Assuming your answer is “yes”, you probably do want to become more creative. The desire is most likely there. You are on your way. That aspiration can free you to step out of your pattern and challenge the familiar.

By “challenging the familiar,” I do not mean challenging the Word of God that hopefully has become a part of who we are. The Word of God is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8). It will never change. However, how we communicate that Word in our generation changes.

In my culture growing up, door to door evangelism used to be very effective. Today, I would not open the door to a stranger due to the rise in crime. There was also a day when a twelve week Bible Study was the way to train new converts. In today’s busy world you would be hard pressed to find someone who would commit to twelve weeks. I’m not saying there is anything wrong with either method, but I am suggesting that there may be a better one.

The World Future Society estimated that human knowledge would double every seventy-three days by the year 2020. Living in our generation is a challenge. The words of the Lord to Jeremiah, “If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?” (Jeremiah 12:5, *NIV*). “Trust me, the days to come will find us in a footrace with more than just horses, and in thickets more treacherous than the Jordan’s. What we face will test more than our courage; it will test our creativity” (Hendricks, p.10).

Go to God in prayer. He alone has the answer that will meet the needs of your students. I believe that answer will be different for each location, people group and student body that you are working with.

Go ahead...challenge the familiar!

Pursuing Ministerial Excellence!

- *Let Loose in God!*

Some teachers have the idea that they should simply trust God to lead them and the class concerning what should be dealt with in that particular period. True, He may change your direction but spontaneity is not God's way of working in the vast majority of situations. Paul cautioned the Corinthian church whose approach to worship had gotten out of hand, "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace....everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40, *NIV*).

"It's God's nature to plan. In fact, we take personal encouragement in the midst of our life struggles from this truth. We rest in the fact that God is not haphazard. He has a sovereign plan for our lives." (*Creative Bible Teaching*, Richards/Bredfeldt, p.152) Being created in His likeness, we have the tendency to plan. Don't you find yourself planning your day, planning your weekend, planning your life? Why do any less in the classroom?

"Creativity is not a synonym for unlimited freedom" (Lefever, p.20). In today's world of weird and wacky, the word "creativity" has been severely abused. We recognize as Christians that there are limits to what we do. But have we really explored excellence within those limits? Let loose those self-imposed limits. Pull yourself out of that "it's always been" mentality. S-T-R-E-T-C-H!

There is no one on the planet quite like you and there never will be. You are uniquely designed. Let loose in God and see what He does through you!

Conclusion

God-breathed creativity is the ingredient that adds "impact" to teaching. You are a potentially creative individual. Notice the word "potentially." It's really up to you. **Break away** from predictability. **Start now!** Really look at your students and see their needs. This may mean **challenging the familiar** approach. Focus on the student, not the lesson. How will they learn best? **Let loose in God**...He alone will take you places you've never been.

I close with this challenge, "Live creatively, friends....Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourselves into that. Don't live vicariously. Each of us must take responsibility for doing the creative best we can with our own lives" (Hendricks, p.38).

Lesson in Review

1. List several barriers to creative thinking. What do you think is your biggest obstacle?

2. Do you have the potential to be creative? How do you know? _____

3. What is the key to teaching with impact? _____

4. List four ways to develop your creative potential. _____

5. Can creativity be taught or are we born with that special gifting? _____

6. What is the biggest hindrance to breaking patterns? _____

7. What does Marlene Lefever have to say about old patterns? _____

8. What do you think the idea of “failing forward” means? _____

9. Predictability yields what? _____

10. What is the hardest part of creativity? _____

11. In your own words, what is meant by “challenging the familiar?” _____

12. “Creativity is not a synonym for _____.”

13. Summarize the need for creativity in your teaching. _____
