

Spiritual Leadership Training



Fox Valley Church of Christ

Spiritual Leadership Training – Introduction

Being a Good Minister of Jesus Christ

In 1 Timothy 4:6-16 Paul gives Timothy twelve characteristics that he should emulate in order to be a good minister of Jesus Christ. It is easy to think that this calling might not apply to someone who is not in the full-time paid ministry but the reality is that everyone in the kingdom of God is a minister in one way or the other. The word “minister” used in this passage simply means “servant.” We are all servants in God’s kingdom, especially those called by God to lead. As House Church leaders, these principles will come up time and again throughout the lessons of this spiritual leadership training guide. Memorize them and seek to implement them in every aspect of your ministry. The good minister:

- 1. Warns People of False Teaching and Error**
“Point these things out to the brothers [and sisters]”
- 2. Is a Faithful Student of Scripture**
“Nourished by the words of the faith and of the good teaching you have followed”
- 3. Avoids Worldliness**
“Have nothing to do with irreverent and silly myths”
- 4. Is Disciplined in Personal Godliness**
“Train yourself in godliness”
- 5. Is Committed to Hard Work**
“We labor and strive for this”
- 6. Teaches With Authority**
“Command and teach these things”
- 7. Sets an Example in everything they do**
“Be an example to the believers. . . ”
- 8. Builds on the Scripture**
“Give your attention to public reading [of Scripture], exhortation, and teaching”

9. Uses Spiritual Gifts

“Do not neglect the gift that is in you”

10. Strives for Passion and Diligence

“Practice these things; be committed to them”

11. Is Constantly Growing Spiritually

“So that your progress may be evident to all”

12. Perseveres in Ministry

“Persevere in these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers”

Throughout this guide you will find a total of 30 lessons that are designed for the small group leader (the term “house church” leader is used in this training manual). We will be meeting twice a month to go through these lessons together as house church leaders.

In addition, you will find a corresponding house church lesson for each house church leader training lesson that you can share with your house church. The lessons go through similar material as the house church leaders training lessons but are changed and adapted where necessary and appropriate to fit the audience and the context of a house church lesson. This will provide the house church leader with the opportunity to share similar material with his house church that they are learning as a house church leader so that the entire group can take the journey of learning and growing together.

Before We Begin

Roles within a House Church

Before getting into the specific aspects of leading a house church it is important to be familiar with the various roles and responsibilities within a house church. It is vital for each member of the house church to know what their role is as well as what responsibilities they have and do not have.

House Church Leader Role

Philemon 1:2; Jeremiah 23:3-4; Isaiah 32:8

- The House Church leader is the glue of the house church and is really the focal point of the church as a whole
- The church leader is there to support the house church leaders and provide them the necessary resources to lead their house church
- The house church leader, in many respects, leads his own church
- He is the one motivating, shepherding, and coordinating evangelism
- The house church leader is responsible, first and foremost, in modeling spiritual behavior that can be imitated and will inspire the house church
- The house church leader takes on the responsibility of discipling and raising up the Assistant to lead the next house church
- The house church leader is responsible for coordinating and encouraging the members of his house church family to use their unique God-given gifts to benefit the entire group
- The house church leader is responsible for ensuring that the house church gathering is well planned and executed
- The house church leader is responsible for ensuring that a calendar and planning of activities for the house church is completed and well communicated to the house church
- The house church leader should continue to motivate members to bring visitors to gatherings and ensuring that the visitors are well cared for when they come
- The house church leader is responsible for making sure that discipling is taking place throughout his group and meeting the needs of the disciples within his group
- Specifically within the Fox Valley Church of Christ, the role of the house church leader include the following:
 - Have a consistent walk with God
 - Pray and read the word of God regularly
 - You cannot give what you do not possess
 - Lead your own family spiritually
 - Pray consistently with your spouse
 - Lead your children in regular spiritual training (age appropriate)
 - Have regular discipling times/ spiritual times with your spouse
 - Have at least one consistent discipling relationship
 - You should have at least one relationship where you regularly meet with someone with whom you can be open and who will challenge you to grow (this can be individual or as married couples) – Currently each HCL will meet once a month with the Burns and the men will meet weekly with Michael (either phone or in person) to talk and connect
 - Shepherd the members of your house church
 - Make sure through regular questioning that they are fulfilling nos. 1-3 in their own lives
 - Make an effort to talk to every same-gendered member of your house church at least every other week on average

- Communicate any needs that any members of your house church have to the rest of the HCL group (where appropriate), to someone in the fellowship that can help meet the need, or to the ministry staff if need be
- Ensure that plans are made for each and every house church meeting
- Direct members of your house church to the Holy Spirit
 - Following the Holy Spirit is not an individual sport but there is an element of individual responsibility for each member of the body
 - House church leaders are not responsible for the spiritual condition of their members but we are deeply connected as family and we do belong to one another (Romans 12:5) and are to have care and concern for one another and so we want to know each other, be known, and lead one another to the Spirit
 - This means that we do not need to full the weight of having all of the answers or feeling guilty if they refuse the spiritual help and advice given
 - House church leaders should listen empathetically and offer biblical and sound advice when possible but the main responsibility is to guide others to the Holy Spirit, to the word of God, to pray with them and spur them on to more prayer, to help them learn how to make biblical and godly decisions on their own, and help them to seek appropriate help to make sure that their issues are being met

Assistant House Church Leader Role

Ezekiel 22:30; 1 Samuel 14:6-7; 1 Corinthians 4:16-17

- The house church assistant has two primary roles
 - One is to support the house church leader in any way that they can
 - The other is to prepare to lead their own group
- The assistant should always be learning as well as training others, always preparing to lead his own group
- He should always have his eyes, ears, and heart open to give the house church leader a different perspective, and needed advice and input
- The assistant should be discipling with the house church leader (in most cases) as well as learning to disciple others
- Specifically within the Fox Valley Church of Christ, the role of the house church leader include the following:
 - Have a consistent walk with God
 - Pray and read the word of God regularly
 - You cannot give what you do not possess
 - Lead your own family spiritually
 - Pray consistently with your spouse
 - Lead your children in regular spiritual training (age appropriate)
 - Have regular discipling times/ spiritual times with your spouse
 - Have at least one consistent discipling relationship
 - You should have at least one relationship where you regularly meet with someone with whom you can be open and who will challenge you to grow (this can be individual or as married couples) – Currently each HCL will meet once a month with the Burns and the men will meet weekly with Michael (either phone or in person) to talk and connect
 - To carry out many of the details of an actively meeting house church such as hosting or making sure that a venue is set and prepared, preparing a lesson or ensuring that it is prepared, any consistent and ongoing communication within a house church, organizing any church-wide events that carry responsibilities for individual house churches
 - Have at least one time a month with the house church leader to train and discuss nos. 4-5 above.

Disciple's Role

Isaiah 60:22; Romans 12:6-7

- Each and every disciple is critical to the growth of the house church
- Each disciple should seek to be supportive of the house church leader and the leadership that they provide
- Each disciple should use their unique gifts and talents to edify the house church as a whole
- Every disciple should come to house church gatherings ready to serve, encourage, and give to the other disciples and visitors
- Each disciple is responsible for making every effort to bring visitors to the group
- Every disciple is responsible for being urgent and persistent about receiving the discipling and mentoring that they need

Spiritual Leadership Training

Unit 1:

A Leader's Relationship with God (1st lesson listed is always House Church Leader's Training Lesson)
Growing in our Relationship with God (2nd lesson listed is always House Church lesson for HC Midweeks)

Unit 2:

Leading the House Church Time
Why We Do What We Do

Unit 3:

Humility in Leadership
Humility in Relationships

Unit 4:

The Importance of Discipling (for Leaders)
The Importance of Discipling (for everyone)

Unit 5:

An Effective Discipling Time
An Effective Discipling Time

Unit 6:

The Elements of a Spiritually Healthy House Church
The Elements of a Spiritually Healthy House Church

Unit 7:

The Signs of a Spiritually Healthy House Church
The Signs of a Spiritually Healthy House Church

Unit 8:

The Prayer Fueled House Church
A Humble House Church Prays

Unit 9:

The Spirit-led House Church
Being a Spirit-led House Church

Unit 10:

Leading for Transformation not Conformation
Seeking Transformation

Unit 11:

Family Unity
Being a Unified Family

Unit 12:

A Leader that Trains Others
The Value of Training

Unit 13:

Setting Goals
Having Goals

Unit 14:

Accountability

Being Accountable to One Another

Unit 15:

Expectations

Having and Meeting Expectations

Unit 16:

Effective Encouragement

Encouraging One Another

Unit 17:

Developing an Evangelistic Plan

Planning to Evangelize

Unit 18:

Multiplication

A Multiplying House Church

Unit 19:

Winning Souls as a House Church

Having an *Oikos*

Unit 20:

Urgent to Study the Bible with People

Urgency and Perseverance

Unit 21:

Winning Hearts

Giving Our Heart

Unit 22:

Strong Friendships

Strong Friendships

Unit 23:

Spiritual Breakthroughs

Helping One Another with Spiritual Breakthroughs

Unit 24:

Being Imitatable

Worth Imitating

Unit 25:

Leading Proactively

Being a Proactive House Church

Unit 26:

Replicating Yourself

Being the Body

Unit 27:

Routine Leadership
A Routine House Church

Unit 28:

A House Church Leader's Sunday
Prepared for the Day

Unit 29:

The Cost of Leadership
Leaders and Leading

Unit 30:

Potential Pitfalls of Leadership
Be on the Lookout

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 1

A Leader's Relationship with God

Everything that we do as house church leaders flows from our relationship with God. Our desire is to be living streams that are constantly taking in from our relationship with God and flowing out to others rather than a stagnant pool that neither takes in from God on a consistent basis, nor is able to give consistently because of our lack of relationship. If our relationship with God is strong everything else will fall into place spiritually. If our relationship is weak everything else will be a struggle and highly inconsistent.

A Leader's Faith

Philippians 1:12-22

- Paul is in prison, yet because of his faith, he sees God's hand in it
- Faith allows us to see God's hands through any situation, pleasant or difficult
- This kind of faith is contagious for those that you lead
- Paul chose to focus on God's sovereignty and control even when confronted with people that deliberately set out to do him harm
- In verse 19 he says "I know" that God will deliver me
- In verse 20 he says that he "Eagerly expects and hopes" that he won't be ashamed
- In verse 21 he says that no matter what happens, life or death, it will work out according to God's will
- In verse 22 He says that he is sure that if he lives he will be abundantly fruitful
- What happens to someone who has this type of faith?
- Here are four ways to develop this type of faith
 1. Through Obedient Action – Philippians 2:12; Galatians 5:7
 2. Through Studying God's Word – Daniel 9:2-3
 3. Asking God for faith – Mark 9:24; James 1:5
 4. Living as you truly believe – Romans 4:21

Your Spiritual routine

Psalm 5:3; Psalm 119:97

- Leaders must develop a spiritual routine that will meet both our own needs and the needs of those we lead
- Your time with God is extremely important and enables you live the crucified life each day
- Your time with God will restore your soul, direct your thoughts and work, connect you with God's will and fill you with ideas and inspiration from God
- We must develop a personal desperation from our times with God
- Lack of discipline in our time with God is not usually a discipline problem but much more of a pride issue – When we really understand how much we need God we will turn to him in consistent desperation
- It is generally not wise to determine the amount of time we spend with God by how we can fit it into our schedule
- We must start by asking what we need to be a doer of God's will and the leader that God has called us to be
- Commit to God a spiritual routine that will meet the needs of what God has called you to do; if we trust in him he will provide for the time and energy to complete all of the other things that we need to do

Praying for Your House Church Philippians 1:3-6; Romans 16:3-16

- The writings of Paul makes clear that he prayed constantly for other disciples
- As leaders we must pray daily for those we lead
- If we love people, we will feel the desire to help them and meet their needs
- We cannot do this or handle that kind of pressure without turning to God
- God wants us to cast these cares onto him and to genuinely demonstrate our love for others by praying for them consistently
- As we pray for people consistently, we develop a deeper love for them, we see them through God's eyes, we will think of their needs more and more and we will be more active in directing them to the Holy Spirit and in meeting those needs when we can

Think Time 2 Corinthians 11:28-29

- We should spend consistent time during our time with God simply thinking about our lives and responsibilities and what God wants us to do
- We will be much more capable and Spirit-led leaders if we spend time seeking God's will each day and then a few minutes thinking through our upcoming schedule and our various responsibilities as disciple, leader, spouse, parent, etc.

Extended Time to Study and Pray Mark 4:24-25

- We should seek out extended personal time with God on a consistent basis when we can. This may come weekly, monthly, or during some other special time.
- As we really devote ourselves to extra (and often sacrificial) times with God, he will often open up doors that were previously closed
- As our time with God increases our faith will increase and we will become more attuned to God's will and impervious to the ups and downs of life around us

Assignment:

- Head – Spend some time evaluating your personal time with God
 - Rate yourself in each of the above areas on a scale of 1 (needs significant improvement) to 5 (extremely strong)
 - Which areas need specific improvement?
 - Write out a specific plan to improve in any areas that you didn't already rate 5
- Heart – Evaluate why you think that your convictions or practice in the areas which you rated low were that way
 - What Scriptures can you return to on a regular basis that will keep your convictions in those areas strong
- Hands – Spend the next two weeks carrying out your plan to improve in each of the areas covered in this study
 - At the end of that time evaluate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 again
 - How have you improved in each area?
 - Also consider what improvement your renewed walk with God has wrought on your leadership and spiritual life as a whole

House Church Training – Lesson 1

Growing in Our Relationship with God

Introduction – A Living Stream or a Stagnant Pool

- **Question: Can you describe the differences between a flowing stream and a stagnant pool in as graphic and descriptive terms as you possibly can?**
- 2 Peter 3:18
 - **Question: What does this passage call us as Christians to do in our spiritual walk?**
 - **Question: What are some effective ways to grow spiritually?**
 - **Question: What are things that we can do or neglect to do that cause us to die spiritually?**
- The reality is that we are either actively growing spiritually or actively dying spiritually

Growing in Stature

- Luke 2:52
 - What are the four areas that Luke mentions that Jesus grew in?
 - We should always be seeking to grow:
 - Intellectually
 - Physically
 - Spiritually
 - Socially
- We want to focus in this lesson on growing spiritually
- We will focus on four areas that will help us to continue to develop spiritually

1. Faith

Philippians 4:11-14

- **Question: What allowed Paul to be content and trust in God despite his circumstances?**
- Prepare small cards ahead of time and (if possible) split your house church into four groups (the size of each group is unimportant). On the cards write down one of the below topics with Scriptures below. Ask the group to look up the passages and to take just a few minutes to draw a picture that depicts their aspect of growing the kind of faith that Paul had. The pictures can be simple or creative as long as they help to make the point.

1. Through Obedient Action – Philippians 2:12; Galatians 5:7
2. Through Studying God's Word – Daniel 9:2-3
3. Asking God for faith – Mark 9:24; James 1:5
4. Living as you truly believe – Romans 4:21

2. Your Spiritual routine

Psalm 5:3; Psalm 119:97

- **Question: What is the importance of developing a spiritual routine?**
- **Question: What is the most effective spiritual routine that you have ever followed in your life (it may not necessarily be something that you are doing right now)?**

- Give everyone a chance to share briefly and let the group discuss effective spiritual routines

3. Praying for One Another **Philippians 1:3-6**

- **Question: Why is it so important to pray for one another constantly**
- Discuss the need and value of praying together for each other daily

4. Think Time **2 Corinthians 11:28-29**

- Explain to the group that we should all spend consistent time during our time with God simply thinking about our lives and responsibilities and what God wants us to do
- We will be much more capable and Spirit-led disciples if we spend time seeking God's will each day and then a few minutes thinking through our upcoming schedule and our various responsibilities as disciple, leader, spouse, parent, etc.

Conclusion

- Our spiritual growth will be greatly spurred on if we are consistent in:
 - Faith
 - Spiritual routine
 - Praying for one another
 - Thinking through our responsibilities at a spiritual level

Action

- Write down your current spiritual routine
- Denote which areas currently need improvement
- What is your specific plan for improving in those areas?
- Share this plan with your discipling partner and get their input and thoughts on your plan

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 2

Leading the House Church Time

Preparation is critical in making sure that the actual house church night is successful. Part of each discipling time with the house church assistant should be praying about the next house church. This is also critical in training the house church assistant to think like a house church leader. The house church leader makes sure that the visitors and potential visitors are contacted and set to come. Some house church leaders fast the day of the house church gathering to spiritually prepare to lead God's people. Time is needed to make the lesson powerful and effective. There are four primary elements to each house church gathering that we will consider today: Welcome, Worship, Word, and Work.

Welcome

Romans 12:9-13; 1 Corinthians 14:26

- A warm, welcoming atmosphere is important to set the mood for hearts to immediately feel open and ready to connect and learn
- Training the Christians to prepare before they come to be ready to love, give, and serve helps everyone look forward to being together
- There are many introduction questions, and exercises that can help people be excited about the house church gathering
- You can use an ice breaker either before the Worship section or before the Word section
- Sharing ideas with other House Church leaders is an easy way to continually have fresh ideas.

Worship

Colossians 3:16; Psalm 146:1-2; Acts 16:25

- Praying at the beginning of the house church will help everyone put the worries of the day behind them and focus on the power and presence of God
- This will soften everyone's heart to prepare them to hear God's word
- This is also a great time to be creative
- Perhaps you could use a guitar or a meditative CD of a spiritual song to help set a prayerful mood
- You might want to create a prayer journal for house church in which the disciples and visitors could put their prayer requests
- A member of the house church can maintain the journal, highlighting the answered prayers and removing the ones that are no longer applicable
- There are many other ways, as well, to keep the prayer time creative and meaningful
- Again, sharing ideas with other house church leaders about ideas during this time is helpful
- Prayer time should be kept to about 10 minutes
- You can also add a little time for a song or two

Word

Psalm 119:107; Isaiah 66:2; 2 Kings 22:11

- Helping people come to a deep conviction through the word of God is truly one of the great joys of leading a house church
- It is extremely important to be thoroughly prepared for this time

- This is not a time to teach a lesson but a time to direct people to the word and asking thoughtful, open-ended questions that enable people to come to their own convictions
- After a series of questions it is important to wrap up the discussion in a way to drive home a certain point
- The discussion should direct both visitors and disciples to the Holy Spirit
- It is a great idea to pick out a few disciples after each lesson to get feedback on how it went
- The time for the Word should be about 30-35 minutes

Work

1 Corinthians 15:58; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

- As a leader of the house church you are responsible for utilizing all of the disciple's gifts to insure that all of their work harmonizes and produces results for God's kingdom
- At the end of each house church gathering it is important to focus the house church in a particular area of God's work
- Each house church should end with a specific call to action for the house church that relates to the lesson and discussion that week
- At the beginning of this section you can have good news sharing about the previous week's challenge
- This will unify the group and keep the disciples focused on the work and the importance of following through on these challenges
- The good news and this week's challenge should last about 10 minutes

Afterwards

Ephesians 5:16

- Immediately after the house church time is a great time to have a good talks with both visitors and disciples
- After the house church time the leader acts a spiritual quarterback
- As you see the Christians and visitors fellowshiping you can tap shoulders to ensure that everyone's needs are met
- This is a great time to follow up on comments that were made during the house church lesson
- It is also a great time to set up personal Bible Studies with your visitors because their hearts have been softened by the worship and the word

Assignment:

- Head – Go back through and make sure that you have the main elements of a house church committed to memory
- Heart – Spend a few moments writing down in your own words, what each element should entail, what should be accomplished during that time, and why it matters
- Hands – Make a detailed plan for your next house church, being sure to include all of the important elements. After the house church gathering, be sure to evaluate how your time went

House Church Training – Lesson 2

Why We Do What We Do

Introduction

- Question: Have you ever had a time when you did something for a period of time (perhaps especially when it comes to your relationship with God or in church) and actually had no idea why you were doing what you were doing?
- Question: What is the danger of continuing to do things when you don't know the reasons for doing what you're doing?
- As Christians we can become pretty accustomed to doing things without knowing why but God has given us his word and wants us to know why we are doing the things that we do so that we can have the right heart behind what we do

Welcome

Romans 12:10

- Question: Why is it important to have a welcoming atmosphere when you come into a place and begin a meeting or gathering time?
- Question: Why is it important to prepare our minds to worship God together during house church gatherings
- Question: What are some of the ways that this can be done to really help everyone feel welcomed, loved, and prepared to worship?

Worship

Colossians 3:16

- Question: When we show up for house church gatherings, what are some of the typical things that are flooding our minds and dominating our thoughts?
- Question: Why is it important to let worshipful, God-honoring thoughts dominate our thoughts?
- Question: How do our days and weeks look differently if the worship and word of God is truly dominating our thoughts?
- Question: What are some of the potential dangers of not letting the message about the Messiah dwell in us richly?

Word

Mark 4:24-25

- Question: What are the purposes of God's word?
- Question: Why do we study and learn it for ourselves?
- Question: What are the ramifications for us if we don't devote ourselves to the learning of the word?

Work

James 1:22-25

- **Question: Why is it important to have a plan to act on something after you have learned or read about it?**
- **Question: What can happen if we allow ourselves to become mere hearers of the word and not doers**

Action

At the simplest levels, the elements of a house church gathering that we talked about today are: loving one another, worshiping God, dwelling on the word of God, and putting what we learn into practice. Find someone this week (friend, co-worker, neighbor, etc.) and get into a conversation of spiritual things with them. Try to explain to the importance of all four of those areas in your life. Hopefully it will spark them to consider whether or not they embrace those four elements in their own life and/or see the need for them. This might serve as a great opportunity to invite them out to the next house church.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 3

Humility in Leadership

Humility is critical when leading a group of any size but especially in a small group. The leader's openness and humility will generally set the pace for the openness and humility of the members of the house church. Genuine humility will give the small group a real sense of unity and freedom to be themselves which will enable everyone to grow according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Vulnerability

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

- As a leader, your vulnerability will help others be vulnerable
- There can be a temptation among leaders to present strength by never showing vulnerability but sharing your weaknesses and struggles will give your brothers and sisters hope with their own weaknesses
- Your comments and sharing will set the pace within your house church
- The more your sharing is personal, honest, vulnerable, and real the more theirs will be. The more open you are with your struggles, the more open your house church will be

Others Better Than Yourself

Philippians 2:3-4; Matthew 6:1-4; Proverbs 27:2

- As leaders we are called to do God's will. Our primary aim is to give God glory in everything. Our secondary aim is to lift others up rather than ourselves, to look out for their interests ahead of our own
- We should seek to find the good in others and to let others know about it. We don't want people to be motivated by praise and attention but genuine appreciation is important within a Messiah community
- When we feel the need to let people know the good we are doing (whether we do so overtly or more manipulatively and subtly) people will either resent our leadership or exalt us inappropriately
- God will reward what you do without needing praise from others
- Leaders need to be prepared to serve God constantly without the immediate gratification of praise from men
- When you pray for each member of your house church each day, identify ways in which you can put their interests ahead of your own but also gifts and strengths that they have that surpass your gifts in those areas. Be grateful for the strengths that they bring to your house church

All for God's Glory

Psalms 115:1; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Corinthians 12:26

- Bringing glory to ourselves, even when we do so quietly and subtly, is a sin
- It is attempting to bring to ourselves what God deserves
- There is no room in God's kingdom for competition or selfish ambition
- It should be everyone's goal to bring honor and glory to God
- We are all part of God's family and so we share honor and identity with one another as well as shame
- Trying to separate ourselves from the family for our own benefit is to commit the sin of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)
- Trying to be the best or at the top is not a godly desire
- We should seek to do great things for God and not for our own recognition or success

- Self glory can easily destroy a house or house church. We are to be people who live by the values of the age to come where only God's glory will matter

Invite Healthy Analysis and Assessment **Proverbs 12:1; 12:15**

- As leaders we should constantly be self-assessing but we should also invite analysis, opinion, assessment and even constructive criticism from others
- Correction or challenges should not threaten us or make us angry (if someone does so inappropriately then they can be lovingly corrected for their own benefit)
- We must be humble enough to recognize that God will correct us through others and so we should desire to ask the people we lead what we could be doing differently
- People will often be emotionally charged when they do this so we need to constantly prepare ourselves to respond to any such situations with humility, overlooking an inappropriate tone, etc., and recognizing the valid points of what they are saying
- We need to listen to their input and genuinely be open to make legitimate and appropriate changes. This will demonstrate our true humility
- Feeling that they can truly approach you with ideas will spur people on to an exciting and godly exchange of ideas as well as opportunities for your own growth

The Importance of Being Approachable **2 Timothy 2:24-25**

- Leaders need to take extra care to be approachable from the perspective of those we lead
- It is super important to be kind, gentle, and not have resentment towards those that oppose us or hold a differing view
- An unapproachable or offending leader can have a far more damaging impact on someone than a non-leader but a humble and gentle leader can also have an incredibly great impact for the good on people
- Humble leadership does not mean letting others lead you
- You still set the course for your house church, make sure that others are strengthened, follow the guidance that the Spirit is giving you, and ensure that your house church grows spiritually and multiplies
- Being humble in leadership means that we confidently follow God's plan and ensure that your family church does so, but that you do so with a humble and gentle spirit

The Blessings of Humility **Proverbs 11:2; Psalm 25:9; 1 Peter 5:5-6**

- God says that genuine humility produces great and godly fruit in our lives
- With humility comes grace and wisdom
- As we are humble, God will guide us, lead us, and lift us up

Genuine Humility **Daniel 4:34**

- After being humbled by God, Nebuchadnezzar showed genuine humility. False humility simply confesses its own weaknesses but still focuses on self. True humility takes eyes off of self and puts them on God and his greatness and glory

Assignment:

- Head – Complete a topical study of “pride,” “proud,” “humble,” and “humility” in the book of Proverbs
 - Take special note of what you learn through the study as it relates to your leadership
- Heart – Ask at least three people that you lead what they think of your leadership, pride, and humility
 - Ask them for specific suggestions on areas in which you can improve and grow
- Hands – Create a plan to specifically grow in at least one area that was pointed out to you by those you asked about your leadership, pride, and humility (if one area popped up more often than any others it would make sense to focus on that area)
 - What will you do specifically to grow in that area?

House Church Training – Lesson 3

Humility in Relationships

Introduction

- There was once a house church that was so impressed by the constant humility of one of their fellow members that they got together and had a medal made for him that read “the most humble person in America.” They gave it to him following a Sunday worship gathering but then promptly took it away that next Wednesday night at house church because he wore the medal to house church.
- Pride is one of the most destructive elements in building a genuine and godly community, while humility is inestimably valuable to the growth of a mature community
- Split your house church into groups of two or three and ask each group to create a list of the positive elements of humility for building and maintaining a healthy house church; also ask each group to create a list of the negative elements that pride can bring in trying to build and maintain a healthy house church
- Then ask them to have a little fun and exercise a bit of creativity. Ask each group to choose an animal that represents humility and one that represents pride. Ask them to explain each of their choices.
- Once finished, tell the group that you will be considering four important aspects of humility in relationships:

1. Consider Others Before Yourself

Philippians 2:3-12

- **Question: What does it mean to truly put the interests of others ahead of our own?**
 - What are some of the very real and specific obstacles to doing this?
- **Question: How are you spurred on/challenged by Jesus’ example?**
- In light of the context of vv. 3-11, what does Paul mean by encouraging the believers to “work out your own salvation”?

2. All for God’s Glory

1 Corinthians 10:31

- **Question: What does it mean practically to do “everything” for the glory of God?**
 - What would that look like if we applied that principle to work, school, home, how we spend our time, what we watch and listen to, etc.?

3. God’s Strength not my Weakness

Daniel 4:34

- **Question: What is true humility?**
 - **What is false humility?**
- Nebuchadnezzar is a picture of genuine humility here
 - After being deeply humbled by God he turns his eyes towards God
 - That was always his problem because everything in his life was about him previous to this
 - False humility simply confesses our weaknesses to others but still makes everything about us
 - Genuine humility turns our eyes towards God and focuses on his greatness
- **Question: Why is genuine humility so important to a healthy house church?**

4. Lifted up By God

Proverbs 27:2; James 4:10

- Question: What are some of the ways that we subtly (or not-so-subtly) lift ourselves up in the presence of God or others
 - What is the cost of this?
- Question: Why is God so adamant about us allowing him to lift us up?
 - In the practical world of this house church and your daily lives, what does it mean to humble ourselves before the Lord and allow him to lift us up?
- Question: What should be our response if we don't praise ourselves but then others don't notice or praise us either?
 - Why is it important to put the concepts of these two verses together?

Action

- Make a plan this week to ask at least two other disciples about your pride. Ask them to be specific about the areas in which they see you displaying pride.
- Humbly pray about these things and develop an action plan to humble yourself in those areas.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 4

The Importance of Discipling (for leaders)

One of the fundamental elements in God crafting us into a peculiar people set apart for himself is the spiritual relationships that we have with one another. They can take many forms but these discipling relationships are one of the primary vehicles through which God has called us to grow. It is through these close discipling relationships that we challenge one another, encourage one another, teach one another, hold one another accountable and so much more. Discipling relationships allow us to go from being religious with one another to truly being the spiritual family that Jesus has called us to be.

The Need

Colossians 1:28-29

- By its very definition, Christianity is a family, a mutual way of life lived among believers. It was not designed to and cannot ever be a solo activity
- We must encourage, teach, and support one another in order to stand up to the rigors of the Christian life
- We will have times when we need someone to inspire us, to help us spiritually, or to mentor us towards spiritual growth
- The reality is that we can often be blind to our own sin and unable to see it or the consequences of it without someone else helping us to see them and repent
- We need others to confess our sins to so that we keep our hearts soft and humble and more focused on what God knows of us than what others think of us
- We need others to push us past our comfort zones and challenge us in ways that we would never do on our own
- Sometimes we need someone to be empathetic or just listen as we process through struggles
- Sometimes we need to be taught things that we would never be able to learn if left to our own devices
- It is in these needs that discipling comes to life and can be so effective

A Two-Way Street

Galatians 2:11-13

- By any human standards, Peter would have been the senior partner in his relationship with Paul, but this passage demonstrates clearly that we are all equal in Christ
- We all have sin, blind spots, weaknesses, and areas of needed growth and we must commit to teaching, challenging, and learning from one another
- Matthew 28:18-20 challenges Jesus' disciples to teach believers everything that Jesus commanded. To do this, we will have to always be prepared to teach and learn from anyone
- It is important for spiritual growth that we have relationships where we can help each other grow
- The moment you think you can't learn anything from someone is the moment you stop really being able to learn at all (even if it is a very young disciple we can learn from just through the questions they ask that we would never think to ask)
- We must always be committed to speaking the truth in love to one another (Eph. 4:15) and to being committed to contributing to the edification and growth of each other through our words (Eph. 4:29)
- A truly prospering discipling relationship will have mutual edification and mutual admonition

A Decision to Love

1 John 3:16

- Loving others is Christianity 101
- Biblical Love consists of three things:
 - An intense loyalty to one another
 - A willingness to sacrifice for one another
 - A commitment to laying down our lives for one another
- We can and must make the decision to love those that are in our lives without limiting to the world's version of love which often limits love to those that are pleasing to me in one way or another
- Loving people means giving to them with our lives and hearts
- Loving people is to act in the best interests of God and the entire body rather than just my or their best self-interest (Phil 2:3-5)
- We must look for the ways that they have grown in God's glory (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18) rather than just looking for faults
- The decision to love one another out of loyalty to God rather than as a result of our feelings is powerful and will keep relationships from being dictated by how we perceive we are being treated by the other person or by what we "get out of" the relationship

Winning Hearts Corinthians 6:11-13

- It is a leader's role to win the hearts of those they lead and it is their responsibility to make every effort to do that but this is also a two-way street
- Both leaders and members of the group must give their hearts to one another consistently and freely and not hold back their loyalty or affection
- This demands that we patiently, honestly, and lovingly work through issues and don't sweep things under the rug
- True unity and love within the community does not come through people pleasing, avoiding issues, or dealing with them harshly. It comes through mutual affection, mutual humility, and subjecting ourselves to submit to one another

God-Focused 1 Samuel 23:16

- In his actions here, Jonathon serves as a great model for us in building strong relationships in Christ
- The goal of our discipling relationships is to strengthen one another in God, mature us in Christ, and direct us to the constant guidance and training of the Holy Spirit
- Discipling is not about just getting together and talking about our opinions to help out one another; this will have long-term negative effects as we either won't grow spiritually or will become overly-dependent on one another
- We need to open God's word and train one another in it so that we can be transformed through the word and training of the Spirit rather than conforming to the patterns of the world
- Discipling times can include other things, but should always be centered on a time of prayer and Bible study
- In doing this, we will make sure that we are helping each other grow in our dependence on God and that our wisdom and power comes through the word and from the prompting of the Holy Spirit

Radically Consistent Hebrews 3:12-13

- The most radical thing that a Christian can do is to be consistent

- The Bible calls us to be active in our relationships daily because the temptations of life and the rigors of being faithful don't take vacations
- There is a dire need for us to be consistent in our godly relationships
- We need to actively love one another and be in contact and encouragement daily as well as having consistent discipling times that take place regularly (if we don't have a firm conviction of our need for that, we will surely drift away from consistency)
- We may have to be creative and sacrificial in getting together consistently but it will be worth it in the long run

A Higher Calling

Hebrews 10:22-25

- We all want to draw near to God and hold unswervingly to our faith but surprisingly, perhaps, one of the primary ways to do that, according to the author of Hebrews, is to meet together, to encourage one another, and to spur one another on
- The Bible is clear that the truest measure we have of our love and devotion to God is the way that we love and the degree to which we are devoted to the body of believers
- Discipling is not about maintaining where we are at but spurring one another higher and farther
- We should and must expect growth in one each other's lives
- When we call one another higher according to the standards of the Scriptures (and not our own opinions) God is glorified and we will continue our process of being transformed to the image of Christ

Assignment:

- Head – Compile a Bible study that explains, according to your understanding, what discipling relationships are for and what they should look like
- Heart – Go through your Bible study on discipling and examine your own heart
 - What are your own convictions regarding discipling?
 - Do your convictions match your study?
 - Do your actions match your convictions and/or the study?
 - Are there any areas where you have slacked in your convictions or actions when it comes to discipling relationships?
- Hands – Create or review the discipling as it currently takes place in your house church.
 - Is everyone in your house church in an active discipling relationship in one form or another?
 - Are the discipling times effective in that they are directing people to the Holy Spirit, the Word, and ultimately towards spiritual growth?
 - Are there any changes that you might need to make in the format, convictions, or structure of your current discipling process within your house church to maximize the potential of your group, to help each other grow, and to ensure that the actions and convictions of the group meet the standards of the Scriptures

House Church Training – Lesson 4

The Importance of Discipling (for everyone)

Introduction

- Question: Can you think of a time when you were unable to accomplish something on your own but then you received reinforcements from others and were able to complete your task?
- Activity: Ask everyone in the group that is physically able to attempt this to sit on the floor. You will then ask them to stand up without using their arms in any manner (they must keep them folded on their chest) and without getting on their knees at all
- After letting people try that on their own for awhile, ask them to find a partner and try again
- This time they still may not use their arms or knees but they can use each other
- The task is still a challenging one, but much more achievable when done with a partner
- There is an old Chinese proverb that says that “a single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle”
- Similarly, Ecclesiastes 4:12 teaches that there is strength in numbers
- The topic of today’s house church lesson has to do with finding spiritual strength in assisting one another through discipling

The Need

Colossians 1:28-29

- By its very definition, Christianity is a family, a mutual way of life lived among believers. It was not designed to and cannot ever be a solo activity
- We must encourage, teach, and support one another in order to stand up to the rigors of the Christian life
- This means that we must have a true conviction of the need for discipling one another
- Ask the group to share where they are at right now in seeing their need for discipling relationships (this may be a challenging but necessary discussion for some groups and so must be handled with wisdom)

A Two-Way Street

Galatians 2:11-13

- What does this passage teach us about concerning our spiritual relationships with one another?
- Why was Paul willing to challenge Peter despite Peter’s much higher level of experience and prestige?
- Why is it important to be willing to teach anyone and to learn from anyone?
- Have a discussion with the group and ask if they really believe that they can learn something from every single disciple
- We must always be committed to speaking the truth in love to one another (Eph. 4:15) and to being committed to contributing to the edification and growth of each other through our words (Eph. 4:29)
- A truly prospering discipling relationship will have mutual edification and mutual admonition

A Decision to Love

1 John 3:16

- Loving others is Christianity 101
- Biblical Love consists of three things:
 - An intense loyalty to one another
 - A willingness to sacrifice for one another

- A commitment to laying down our lives for one another
- **Question: What does it mean right now for us to truly love one another in general and specifically through discipling relationships?**

Sharing our Hearts

Corinthians 6:11-13

- True loving relationships require that both parties give their hearts and loyalty to one another
- What are the dangers of withholding affection within a relationship?
- **Question: Has there ever been a time that you were in a relationship and felt that one of the parties withheld their godly love and affection? What was the outcome of that relationship?**
- **Question: Why is this mutual loyalty so vital?**

God-Focused

1 Samuel 23:16

- In his actions here, Jonathon serves as a great model for us in building strong relationships in Christ
- The goal of our discipling relationships is to strengthen one another in God, mature us in Christ, and direct us to the constant guidance and training of the Holy Spirit
- Ask the group to share their feelings about what it means to do that practically

A Higher Calling

Hebrews 10:22-25

- We all want to draw near to God and hold unswervingly to our faith but surprisingly, perhaps, one of the primary ways to do that, according to the author of Hebrews, is to meet together, to encourage one another, and to spur one another on
- **Question: What would it look like for our house church to truly live out this passage or to live it out at an even higher level than we are currently doing**

Action

- Hebrews 3:12-13 and 10:22-25 both call for believers to encourage one another daily
- Commit ourselves (if we're not already doing it) to have specific, intentional, and edifying contact with at least one other disciple in the house church every single day for the next two weeks
- Ask them to write down their observations at the end of the two weeks. What did they learn? What was challenging? What was beneficial?
- Ask them to share at the beginning of the next house church about their two-week challenge.
- After everyone has shared that wanted to, challenge the group to extend the practice of talking with other disciples everyday and make it a life habit

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 5

An Effective Discipling Time

No one likes to waste time or to do things that ineffective. There is nothing worse than putting in a tremendous amount of effort into something only to find out that it was to no avail and was largely or completely ineffective. Paul addresses this precise concept in 1 Corinthians 9:23-27 when he urges Christians to make sure that we are running the race of the Christian life effectively. Paul says that he doesn't want to live his life like a boxer that wildly and aimlessly punches the air, only to tire himself out with nothing to show for it. Nor does he want to run aimlessly like a runner who has veered off course and is piling up mile after mile but no longer running the course of the race. No, we want to be effective and maximize our time. This is especially true when it comes to our discipling relationships. Discipling relationships are an integral part of a healthy and maturing church so it only makes sense that we want to be the most effective in those relationships that we can possibly be.

Preparation **2 Timothy 1:3-6**

- Paul was not haphazard about his relationships; he didn't just get some time with people and say whatever came to mind
- Paul spent time to pray and think through the needs of the people with whom he had important relationships
- As Paul was dedicated to spending time praying for and thinking about the needs, the strengths, and the life of these individuals he was able to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit and to truly help these individuals grow according to their needs

The Whole Man **Luke 2:52**

- Even a quick perusal of Paul's letters, especially those to Timothy, demonstrates that Paul took interest in the whole of the people that he was helping to grow spiritually. He didn't just focus on one aspect of the person
- We are whole human beings with many different facets of our nature. Discipling that doesn't address all of these areas is discipling that will leave us unbalanced
- Luke described four areas of growth for Jesus, areas that we all need to pay attention to as well so that we can become the balanced and spiritual beings that God desires us to be:
- Jesus grew in :
 - Wisdom – intellectual sphere
 - Stature – physical sphere (maintaining a healthy body and mind)
 - Favor with God – spiritual sphere
 - Favor with men – social and emotional sphere
- It is important to be balanced and grow in all of these areas
- Examine your habits and practices:
 - Some need to be retained, some need to be refined and retrained, and some need to be rejected
 - The biggest danger is not that we fail but that we succeed at doing the wrong things

Prayer **James 5:13-16**

- Discipling times at which we don't pray or offer just a little token prayer are times that are in danger of us trusting in our own abilities and strengths rather than God's
- Discipling times should be rich in prayer as together we seek to align ourselves with God's will
- James talks about prayer for those that in trouble, sick, or in sin although we should certainly pray constantly (1 Thess. 5:17) in all situations (Phil. 4:6) and humble ourselves before God (Jam. 4:10)
- This passage reminds us to pray for and with one another
- Spending good portions of time praying together ensures that our eyes and focus stay on God and that our direction comes from the Holy Spirit

Scripture Colossians 3:16

- The message of the Scriptures should dwell in us richly
- That means that all of our thoughts, opinions, and advice should come from the timeless principles of the Word of God; the more that we know God's word the better able we will be to direct people to proper biblical principles in every kind of situation and not be forced to rely upon our own wisdom or opinions
- If the Words dwells in us richly then our counsel will naturally be biblical and full of Scripture
- Focusing on the Scriptures during discipling times brings the authority of God's word rather than relying on worldly wisdom and humanistic advice

Open, Honest, and Vulnerable 2 Timothy 4:9-18

- For any relationship to be real and to grow there must be openness, honesty, and vulnerability
- Paul serves as a great example in all three of those areas
- Paul relied on others and built deep relationships but he never lost sight of the fact that it was God who would truly enable him to stay faithful throughout his life. The role of his relationships was to encourage him and keep him focused on God
- Deep relationships, though, are a balancing act between being open and real on one hand while still being willing to love one another to challenge each other and help each other repent
- Discipling relationships that are healthy require that both parties are humble, open, and honest not just one person

Encouragement Colossians 4:7-15; 2 Timothy 1:16-18

- Paul constantly looked for ways to build up, show appreciation for, and encourage other faithful disciples (the above are just two examples)
- We need to always look for ways to build up and encourage one another during our times together
- The amount that we show appreciation, encouragement, and gratitude for one another should far outweigh the number of areas of weakness or needed growth that we bring up
- An atmosphere of encouragement is an atmosphere for growth
- An atmosphere of genuine appreciation and gratitude is an atmosphere for healthy relationships to flourish

Teaching and Training Colossians 3:16

- We return to Colossians 3:16 to note that not only should the word dwell richly in us but that one of the main results of that is that we teach and admonish one another
- Discipling times should foster biblical study and spur us on to go deeper in our knowledge of the Word of God
- Healthy discipling relationships should encourage us to rely more on the Spirit and the Word of God and less on one another; the role of the discipling partner never goes away though but is to continue to spur one another on towards God and his Word

Social Time

Mark 6:31

- Jesus knew that it was vital that his disciples not only share their lives together in everything but that this included rest time, time to re-charge, and time to just get away and enjoy one another
- This can be taken to an extreme but fun times together can be great opportunities to bond together, to have memorable times together, and to help us understand and appreciate each other more

Expect Change

2 Timothy 4:1-2; 1 Timothy 4:15

- Discipling relationship need to be relationships that are about the mutual edification of one another which means that we will care more about each other's growth than each other's comfort
- When we genuinely expect that people will change as they encounter God's Word and learn to listen to his Spirit and we constantly urge them towards growth, then they will change and grow
- Our spiritual growth should be consistent and should be evident to all

Assignment:

- Head – What are the four areas of human growth and development mentioned in Luke 2:52? Take some time to think about each of those four areas in your own life.
- Heart – Do you know how your discipling partner(s) are doing in each of those four areas?
 - Do you know them well enough to know?
- Hands – Talk to each person that you are in a discipling relationship about these four areas of spiritual growth
 - Each of you should share how you are doing and how you think the other is doing in growing in each of those areas and keeping them in balance
 - If you need to work on growth or development in any of them, work together to develop a specific plan to do so

House Church Training – Lesson 5

Effective Discipling

Introduction

- Activity:
 - Have each group member take a piece of plain white paper. Ask them to either draw a picture of one of their favorite childhood memories.
 - Once everyone has finished, ask them to fold the paper up and put them away. Do not let anyone share their picture with someone else. Once all the papers have been put away point out that you will not be using their pictures at all during the lesson.
 - The whole activity was a waste of time. No one likes to waste their time or be ineffective do they? Ask the group what the importance is to them to ensure that when they do things they are being effective. Explain to them that the lesson this week will have to do with being effective when we disciple one another.

Preparation 2 Timothy 1:3-6

- **Question: What is the importance of preparing properly for an important activity?**
 - **What is usually the difference in results between being prepared for something versus being not prepared?**
- What is the importance of properly preparing ourselves for effective discipling times?
- What are ways that we can properly prepare to have effective discipling times with other believers?

The Whole Man Luke 2:52

- We are whole human beings with many different facets of our nature. Discipling that doesn't address all of these areas is discipling that will leave us unbalanced
- Luke described four areas of growth for Jesus, areas that we all need to pay attention to as well so that we can become the balanced and spiritual beings that God desires us to be:
- Jesus grew in :
 - Wisdom – intellectual sphere
 - Stature – physical sphere (maintaining a healthy body and mind)
 - Favor with God – spiritual sphere
 - Favor with men – social and emotional sphere
- **Question: Why is it important to focus discipling times on all areas of one's life? How does 1 Corinthians 10:31 add to that concept?**

Prayer James 5:13-16

- Discipling times at which we don't pray or offer just a little token prayer are times that are in danger of us trusting in our own abilities and strengths rather than God's
- Discipling times should be rich in prayer as together we seek to align ourselves with God's will

- James talks about prayer for those that in trouble, sick, or in sin although we should certainly pray constantly (1 Thess. 5:17) in all situations (Phil. 4:6) and humble ourselves before God (Jam. 4:10)
- Spending good portions of time praying together ensures that our eyes and focus stay on God and that our direction comes from the Holy Spirit
- Question: What message does it send to God when we fail to really truly pray deeply during our discipling times together?

Scripture Colossians 3:16

- The message of the Scriptures should dwell in us richly
- That means that all of our thoughts, opinions, and advice should come from the timeless principles of the Word of God
- If the Words dwells in us richly then our counsel will naturally be biblical and full of Scripture
- Focusing on the Scriptures during discipling times brings the authority of God's word rather than relying on worldly wisdom and humanistic advice
- **Question: What are the benefits of centering discipling times around the Word of God?**
- **Question: What are the potential dangers of centering discipling times around opinions and humanistic advice?**

Open, Honest, and Vulnerable 2 Timothy 4:9-18

- For any relationship to be real and to grow there must be openness, honesty, and vulnerability
- Paul relied on others and built deep relationships but he never lost sight of the fact that it was God who would truly enable him to stay faithful throughout his life
- Discipling relationships that are healthy require that both parties are humble, open, and honest not just one person
- **Question: How open, honest, and vulnerable are you with other Christians?**
- **Question: How can we grow in this area to be more open, honest, and vulnerable?**

Expect Change 2 Timothy 4:1-2; 1 Timothy 4:15

- Discipling relationship need to be relationships that are about the mutual edification of one another which means that we will care more about each other's growth than each other's comfort
- When we genuinely expect that people will change as they encounter God's Word and learn to listen to his Spirit and we constantly urge them towards growth, then they will change and grow
- Our spiritual growth should be consistent and should be evident to all

Action

- Ask each house church member to take some time this week to make a list of each of the four areas of growth that were discussed in relation to Luke 2:52. Ask them to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 5 as far as how much they have grown in each area during the past 2 years. Ask them to choose the area in which they find themselves to be in the most need of growth and to come up with a specific plan to grow in that area. Then ask them to share the results of this exercise and their plan with their discipling partner.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 6

The Elements of a Spiritually Healthy House Church

In 1 Timothy 4:15, Paul exhorts Timothy to let his spiritual growth be evident to all. Although that was advice given from Paul to Timothy, there is surely that all believers should be growing spiritually. In fact, consistent growth is one of the primary indicators of a spiritually healthy growth. The spiritual reality is that we are either growing or we are dying. Groups don't really maintain the status quo although it's easy to convince ourselves that this is what we are doing. We are either healthy and growing in many ways, or we are not growing and slouching towards decay. Today we will at the necessary elements of a spiritually healthy house church.

God's Expectation **Colossians 1:28-29**

- God's goal is that every disciple in our church family is spiritually strong and continuing to grow so that should be the goal of each house church leader for each person in the group as well
- It should be our loving expectation that each disciple in our house churches is totally committed to God, his family, his will, and his righteousness because that is what God expects
- How do we go about doing this though and becoming a spiritually healthy group?

A Positive Atmosphere **1 Corinthians 15:33**

- If bad company corrupts a good character then it is also true that good company encourages good character
- It is absolutely vital to create positive momentum in our house churches by modeling god-focused behavior ourselves which will become contagious
- Once we clearly model and define the expectations of the group, that ethos (the fundamental character or spirit of a culture or group) will become established and be the norm for the group

Constant Evaluation **1 Thessalonians 5:14**

- Evaluating the needs of the group or individual saints is the important first step to achieving growth
- We must constantly be seeking to evaluate our group as a whole and the individuals within the group to see what their needs are (while being careful not to become negatively critical)
- We should always be praying for God to reveal ways in which we can help our group and the individuals in the house church change while remembering always that our primary goal is to lead them to the Holy Spirit for fundamental transformation

Willingness to Get Messy **Galatians 6:1-2; John 5:13**

- At times we can be afraid to really get involved in helping people because we are afraid of their response or we can feel that it will require too much to really help them in a lasting way

- God certainly uses us to prompt change in others and there are often things that we can do but we must also constantly be aware that our role as house church leaders is to direct others towards the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit and train them in the spiritual maturity to be able to use those resources effectively rather than just relying on us
- We must be willing to listen, challenge, pray with, follow up with, love, encourage, and pull in others who can help in specific areas to help people to grow spiritually
- We must be willing to put their interests ahead of our own (Phil. 2:3-5)

An Air of Repentance

Acts 26:20; Acts 3:19

- One of the reasons that Paul was so consistently effective and powerful in his leadership was that he was an agent of repentance in people's lives
- Our house churches should always be a place that lovingly expects repentance and growth
- True repentance is challenging but is also motivating, refreshing, and gratitude inducing
- It is Satan that wants us to ignore, minimize, or gloss over the sins of others because then they will never really change or grow
- A lack of repentance will create an environment of frustration for everyone in the group
- But an atmosphere of repentance in a house church will create the environment for true spiritual growth that is contagious and invigorating

An Atmosphere of Love

1 Corinthians 13:7-8

- Our house churches must be overflowing with love and hope for each person rather than giving into a spirit of negativity
- Love for others and faith that God can and will work in their lives are incredibly powerful realities
- Believing in someone's ability to grow through the guidance of the Spirit can actually open them up to being receptive to the Spirit in ways that they would not have without your encouragement

Assignment:

- Head – Take time this week to evaluate your house church in each of the above categories. What are areas of strength? What are areas of growth?
- Heart – Do you genuinely love and have hope for every member of your house church and for the group as a whole? Take some time to pray and truly consider whether that is so. If not, what do you need to do about it?
- Hands – Take the next two weeks to write a note or card to each member of your house church (of your same gender) that encourages them, demonstrates your love for them, and lovingly communicates your vision for them in the future.

House Church Training – Lesson 6

The Elements of a Spiritually Healthy House Church

Introduction

- **Question: What are some of the elements that are necessary in order for a plant to grow properly?**
- After receiving some answers discuss the fact that there may be a few optional things to create a proper growing environment, but there are certain necessary fundamentals like soil, seed, water, and sunlight
- Activity:
 - After discussing the ramifications of that, give each household of the house church two (Styrofoam) cups with a little bit of soil in them.
 - Give them a seed that they can plant in the soil of each cup (pick some easily accessible seed that will grow well inside a house).
 - Ask them to take the two plants home and put them in a place where they can receive sunlight. Ask them to be sure to water only one of the plants and don't give any water to the other. Each day they should go back and check the progress of the two plants and let it serve as a constant reminder of the point of today's lesson: We need the proper elements in a house church in order for it to sustain healthy growth.

God's Expectation Colossians 1:28-29

- **Question: What is God's goal for each disciple and for our house church as a whole?**
- **Question: Why is it important to know that this is God's expectation for us?**
- **Question: What then should be our own expectations for one another and for this house church as a whole?**
- It should be our loving expectation that each disciple in our house churches is totally committed to God, his family, his will, and his righteousness because that is what God expects
- How do we go about doing this though and becoming a spiritually healthy group?

A Positive Atmosphere 1 Corinthians 15:33

- If bad company corrupts a good character then it is also true that good company encourages good character
- **Question: What are some ways that we could possibly serve as bad influences on one another within the life of our house church?**
- **Question: What are some ways that we can serve as good influences on one another within the life of our house church?**

You First Philippians 2:3-5

- At times we can be afraid to really get involved in helping people because we are afraid of their response or we can feel that it will require too much to really help them in a lasting way
- We must be willing to put their interests ahead of our own (Phil. 2:3-5)

- Question: What are some practical ways that we can do this within our group t really help it grow in a godly and healthy way?

An Air of Repentance **Acts 26:20; Acts 3:19**

- Question: What does having a healthy environment of repentance within a house church look like? What are the necessary elements?

An Atmosphere of Love **1 Corinthians 13:7-8**

- Our house churches must be overflowing with love and hope for each person rather than giving into a spirit of negativity
- Love for others and faith that God can and will work in their lives are incredibly powerful realities
- Believing in someone’s ability to grow through the guidance of the Spirit can actually open them up to being receptive to the Spirit in ways that they would not have without your encouragement
- **Question: How can we genuinely show love and vision for one another within our house church?**

Action

- Ask each person to go home and prayerfully and thoughtfully come up with one specific action that they can take within our house church in each of the categories discussed:
 - A Positive Atmosphere
 - Putting the Interests of Others First
 - An environment conducive to repentance
 - An atmosphere of love

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 7

The Signs of a Spiritually Healthy House Church

In the last house church lesson we illustrated the need for certain fundamental elements that are necessary in order for a plant to grow. Have you looked at your two plants recently? What does the plant that has been receiving water regularly look like? Do you see signs of life that are not visible on the plant that has not been watered? As house church leaders we should always be looking for signs of life. Today's lesson will be looking at some key signs of an active and healthy house church.

Christ-Centered **Colossians 2:8; 3:15-17**

- Living a Christ-centered life means rejecting the patterns, lifestyles, and philosophies of the world and doing everything in the name of Jesus which is another way of saying in accordance with his will
- Just as individuals need to be Christ-centered so do churches and small groups such as the house church
- A true sign of spiritual health is that a group is Christ-centered
- This also means that each member is Christ-centered in their individual lives but also in their participation within the life of the house church
- Being Christ-centered goes beyond just having lessons on Jesus and permeates every aspect of our lives together
- It requires that we be on constant guard against the thought patterns of the world and seek to be a transformed people that live for the will of God (Rom. 12:1-2)

Characterized by Love **John 13:34-35**

- Jesus said that his disciples would be distinguishable by the way that we love one another
- A healthy house church will embrace and live out the reality of Jesus love in a mature manner
- It is vital to understand that the biblical concept of love is different than the worldly concept of love. The biblical concept of love includes three important elements:
 - Loyalty
 - Sacrifice
 - Laying down our lives for the interests of others

Faithful in the Little Things **Jeremiah 12:5**

- House churches often want God to bless them in the big ways like in reproducing and having great relationships but that is unlikely to happen consistently and in a sustained manner if we are not being faithful and obedient in the little things
 - How can we outrun horses if we cannot keep up with humans? How can we run in rough terrain when we cannot do so on easy ground?
 - How are we going to grow numerically if we are not obedient in evangelism?
 - How are we going to grow in wisdom and knowledge if we are not obedient in reading the word?
 - How are we going to grow in our discernment and ability to follow the Spirit if we are not obedient in prayer and following the prompting of the Spirit?

- How are we going to have a healthy and loving house church if we are not obedient in our commitment to getting together and loving one another?

Everyone is Involved Philemon 6

- Any house church can have one or two “stars” who do everything. They plan everything, volunteer to pray all the time, are the only ones that fully participate in discussions and lessons, and so on.
- That sort of dynamic, however, does not signal a healthy house church
- A healthy house church is one where everyone is actively involved whether it be attendance, discussions, praying, volunteering, coming up with ideas, etc.
- This will demand both an open environment that is conducive to everyone feeling welcomed to participate but also relies on people having the convictions to step forward and see their need to be involved actively rather than waiting in the background to be asked to do something
- As house church leaders, it is our special focus to try to make sure that everyone has a chance to be involved and/or have an active role in the life of the house church

Forward Focused Philippians 3:10-14

- Healthy house churches are looking forward
- They have clearly defined goals and everyone knows where they are going and how they plan to get there
- Paul kept focused on where he was going and what kind of life he desired to live rather than dwelling on the past
- We can learn from past mistakes but it is vital that we have a plan for the future and communicate that plan often to the members of our house church

Don't Say One Thing and Do Another James 2:14-17

- One of the signs of a mature house church is that they act on their stated beliefs
- It is easy to say that we believe in discipleship but a healthy house church lives out those beliefs regularly
- To do this we need to have clearly defined core principles to which we try to attain
- Within the family life of our house churches we have maintained these five core principles:
 - To know and be known
 - To accept and be accepted
 - To serve and be served
 - To speak the truth and be spoken to in truth
 - To encourage and to be encouraged

Making Disciples Matthew 28:18-20

- This passage gives us four fundamental elements when it comes to making disciples:
 - Call everyone around us (including ourselves) to discipleship of Jesus
 - Invite everyone into the life of Christ and demonstrate it by living it ourselves
 - Always be ready and willing to teach and learn about following Jesus
 - Consistently living with an awareness of Jesus' power and presence

- This means that our house churches should be consistently focused on building up one another as disciples as well as calling our unbelieving family, friends, and neighbors to be disciples of Jesus

Assignment:

- Head – Go back through this lesson carefully with an eye towards committing the important elements (such as the five core principles of a house church) to memory
- Heart – Take some time to write your thoughts on each of the five core principles of a house church but do so with your heart. How do you feel about them? Do they frighten or excite you? How do they stretch you? What are you afraid of? Etc.
- Hands – Take the material from this lesson and as creatively and efficiently as you can, chart, draw, or depict the material from this lesson on the signs of a healthy house church
 - Develop a small number of clearly defined goals for your house church both in the immediate future and in the next year or two

House Church Training – Lesson 7

The Signs of a Spiritually Healthy Family Group

Introduction

- **Question: What do the two plants that you have from our last lesson look like?**
- **Question: What are the visible signs of life that you can see in the (presumably) healthier plant?**
- **Question: What do you think some of the signs of a healthy and growing house church might be?**

Christ-Centered Colossians 2:8; 3:15-17

- Living a Christ-centered life means rejecting the patterns, lifestyles, and philosophies of the world and doing everything in the name of Jesus which is another way of saying in accordance with his will
- Just as individuals need to be Christ-centered so do churches and small groups such as the house church
- A true sign of spiritual health is that a group is Christ-centered
- **Question: What does a Christ-centered life look like?**
- **Question: What does a Christ-centered house church look like?**
- Being Christ-centered goes beyond just having lessons on Jesus and permeates every aspect of our lives together
- It requires that we be on constant guard against the thought patterns of the world and seek to be a transformed people that live for the will of God (Rom. 12:1-2)

Characterized by Love John 13:34-35

- Jesus said that his disciples would be distinguishable by the way that we love one another
- A healthy house church will embrace and live out the reality of Jesus love in a mature manner
- It is vital to understand that the biblical concept of love is different than the worldly concept of love. The biblical concept of love includes three important elements:
 - Loyalty
 - Sacrifice
 - Laying down our lives for the interests of others
- **Question: How does this type of love differ from worldly love? What is particularly challenging about the biblical type of love for you?**

Faithful in the Little Things Jeremiah 12:5

- House churches often want God to bless them in the big ways like in reproducing and having great relationships but that is unlikely to happen consistently and in a sustained manner if we are not being faithful and obedient in the little things
 - How can we outrun horses if we cannot keep up with humans? How can we run in rough terrain when we cannot do so on easy ground?
 - How are we going to grow numerically if we are not obedient in evangelism?
 - How are we going to grow in wisdom and knowledge if we are not obedient in reading the word?

- How are we going to grow in our discernment and ability to follow the Spirit if we are not obedient in prayer and following the prompting of the Spirit?
- How are we going to have a healthy and loving house church if we are not obedient in our commitment to getting together and loving one another?
- **Question: How does this verse challenge and convict you right now?**

Everyone is Involved

Philemon 6

- A healthy house church is one where everyone is actively involved whether it be attendance, discussions, praying, volunteering, coming up with ideas, etc.
- This will demand both an open environment that is conducive to everyone feeling welcomed to participate but also relies on people having the convictions to step forward and see their need to be involved actively rather than waiting in the background to be asked to do something
- **Question: What are some of the obstacles that can prevent everyone from being actively involved in the life of a house church?**
 - **Question: What can the individuals that struggle with those obstacles do to lessen them?**
 - **Question: What can other members of the house church family do to reduce obstacles for others?**

Don't Say One Thing and Do Another

James 2:14-17

- One of the signs of a mature house church is that they act on their stated beliefs
- It is easy to say that we believe in discipleship but a healthy house church lives out those beliefs regularly
- To do this we need to have clearly defined core principles to which we try to attain
- Within the family life of our house churches we have maintained these five core principles:
 - To know and be known
 - To accept and be accepted
 - To serve and be served
 - To speak the truth and be spoken to in truth
 - To encourage and to be encouraged

Action

- Challenge each person in your house church to memorize 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 this work. Encourage them to do it together as much as possible by helping one another, calling each other unexpectedly throughout the next two weeks and quizzing each other, etc. At the beginning of the next house church gathering, give a couple of people the chance to recite it for the group.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 8

The Prayer Fueled House Church

In *A Song of Ascents*, author E. Stanley Jones says that “Prayer is surrender—surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boat hook from a boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.” At the heart of prayer is the expressed need that we need to connect with God’s will. Prayer is an act of humility and submission to God and a constant recognition of our need for him. As house church leaders we don’t just want to pray in our groups, we want to be groups of prayer.

Desperation and Dependence

Acts 4:23-31; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Psalm 102:17

- The early church was clearly dedicated to constant prayer
- They believed that to pray was to unleash the power of the God’s Holy Spirit within their community whether they were seeking unity, strength, boldness, preservation, or comfort through trials
- They prayed consistently because they understood the desperation of their situation without God’s power in their lives
- They had experienced the failure of the days following Jesus’ resurrection when they operated under their own strength and they had seen what the Holy Spirit was capable of on Pentecost and the time after that when he used them to do amazing things
- The early church knew that failure was always just around the corner if they didn’t desperately seek God’s guidance through prayer
- Prayer is an act of humility by those who understand their own weakness; the lack of consistent prayer is not a time issue or a discipline weakness, it is a pride problem
 - We pray exactly as much as we truly think we need to
- Dependence on God is not weakness, but strength
- The more dependent we are on God, the more God can and will use our House Churches
- Prayer should be one of the central features of any time we gather together, not just a ribbon that we tie on the outside of the package
- It is the role of the house church leader to creatively keep our house church family members inspired to pray constantly and humbly

Faith Filled Prayers

John 14:13-14; James 1:6-8

- Faith is a critical ingredient to effective prayer
- It is so easy to pray for things without really believing that God will answer these prayers
- Learning to truly have faithful prayers that both recognize God’s power to act and keeps prayers focused on things that God has actually promised to his people will inspire those in our house churches to pray with greater faith
- Prayer that is not accompanied by faith yields very little if anything at all
- Faith moves the heart of God to act on our behalf
- Faithful prayer reminds us to rely on God for everything and recognizes that if the answer is “no” that God gives those types of answers for our own best interests
- A house church with faithful prayers is powerful and unstoppable
- Yet, this faith does not come automatically; it takes effort, training, and hard work

Faith through Connection

Psalm 73:1-28

- This entire Psalm demonstrates the power of transforming our words from merely talking and saying words to completely connecting with God at a heart level
- That is when our faith begins to soar
- Before verse 17, the Psalmist is struggling in his faith and his ability to understand God's ways
- In verse 17 it says that he entered the sanctuary of God and only then did he understand (the Psalmist isn't referring to a physical sanctuary but that he finally entered into and embraced God's will and his presence)
- After verse 17, the Psalmist is deeply changed and his faith soars
- We must work hard to break through the faith barrier so that our prayers are full of faith and move God's heart

Creating a Culture of Prayer

Acts 1:14; Acts 12:12

- God answers prayer and desires that we pray without giving up (Lk. 18:1-5)
- There are certain difficult situations that can only be changed through prayer (Mk. 9:29)
- It is one thing to say that we need to pray more but quite another to actually create a culture of prayer where praying is the expected norm
- Whenever trying to change the culture, ethos, or practice of a group there are two general truths:
 - It is never too soon to begin the changes necessary to change the culture towards the behavior and attitudes desired
 - It will take consistent effort and time to cement those behaviors and attitudes as the new accepted norm of the group
- The early church's default mode was prayer; it's what they constantly turned to; Is that true of your house church?
- It is vital that we learn to saturate our house churches in prayer in house church gatherings and all throughout the week when we are together and even when apart
 - We should seek to have prayer become a central feature of any of our gatherings
 - We should seek to constantly pray for those that we are helping to become disciples
 - We should seek to constantly pray for the strength of our house church
 - We should seek to pray for one another specifically each and every day
 - We should seek to teach those studying the Bible or visiting our house church the importance of prayer and the practice of it

Special Seasons of Prayer

Acts 13:1-3

- The early church practiced prayer regularly as a central feature of their communities but they also turned to prayer and fasting during special times
- It is beneficial to pick special times when the group will commit itself to special time of focused prayer and/or fasting to unite and focus the group and to appeal to God for strength
- This may be at special times of year like the beginning of the year, when important events are coming up for the church or house church, or when we need special guidance from the Lord
- Special times of prayer are great bonding times and memory builders and communicate the ongoing message that we are a family that is devoted to prayer
- Quite simply, prayer is one of the most powerful tools we have as Christians

Assignment:

- Head – Select your 3 or 4 favorite verses on prayer and memorize them
- Heart – Spend some time thinking about times in your life when you struggle to pray consistently or with humility. What is the real root cause of those times of struggle? What do you need to truly be consistently committed to the humbling discipline of prayer? What verses help to put your heart and mind in the right place to truly see your need for prayer?
- Hands – Schedule a special prayer time for your house church that will help kick off a renewed commitment to prayer within your group (whether it be all together, separate mens' and women's times, etc.).

House Church Training – Lesson 8

A Humble House Church Prays

Introduction

- Start out the lesson tonight in a rather abrupt way. With no other introduction, simply ask the group to turn to and read Matthew 6:8 then ask the following:
- **Question: If God already knows what we need, why do we need to pray?**
- Give a decent amount of time for people to discuss that one as a group as it should create some good discussion
- Once the discussion has reached a good point and is starting to wind down (although you probably want to keep it to no more than 10 minutes of discussion time) mention the following if these points haven't already been brought up:
- Just as we don't give our kids everything they need even though we might know what they know, neither does God do that for us. The reasons that we expect our kids to ask for things that we already know they need are very similar reasons to why God expects us to pray:
 - Why don't we give them everything they want?
 - It fosters appropriate gratitude
 - It creates the need for recognition of the caregiver
 - Teaches them appropriate reliance
 - It gives opportunities for them to learn what they can do on their own and what they need help with
 - Teaches them boundaries
 - Avoid selfishness
- We need to be a people of prayer and that is what this lesson focuses on
- Before beginning, though, read this quote from John Bunyan (author of *Pilgrim's Progress*): "You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed."
- Question: What does this quote mean in the context of our house church?

Desperation and Dependence Psalm 102:17

- **Question: What keeps us from praying more?**
- **Question: What keeps us from praying less?**
- Prayer is an act of humility by those who understand their own weakness; the lack of consistent prayer is not a time issue or a discipline weakness, it is a pride problem
 - We pray exactly as much as we truly think we need to
- Dependence on God is not weakness, but strength
- The more dependent we are on God, the more God can and will use our House Churches
- We need to become a praying house church

Faith Filled Prayers James 1:6-8; 1 John 5:14

- Faith is a critical ingredient to effective prayer
- It is so easy to pray for things without really believing that God will answer these prayers

- Learning to truly have faithful prayers that both recognize God's power to act and keeps prayers focused on things that God has actually promised to his people will inspire those in our house churches to pray with greater faith
- Prayer that is not accompanied by faith yields very little if anything at all
- **Question: Why is it important to keep the truths in both of these verses together**
- **Question: Are your prayers filled with faith or do we have room for improvement?**

Faith through Connection

Psalm 73:1-3; 13-17; 25-28

- **Question: What changes the heart of the Psalmist from regret-filled and faithless to faith-filled and regretless?**
- This entire Psalm demonstrates the power of transforming our words from merely talking and saying words to completely connecting with God at a heart level
- That is when our faith begins to soar
- Before verse 17, the Psalmist is struggling in his faith and his ability to understand God's ways
- In verse 17 it says that he entered the sanctuary of God and only then did he understand (the Psalmist isn't referring to a physical sanctuary but that he finally entered into and embraced God's will and his presence)
- After verse 17, the Psalmist is deeply changed and his faith soars
- We must work hard to break through the faith barrier so that our prayers are full of faith and move God's heart

Action

Take the time right now as a house church to humble yourselves before God and pray. Then talk about ways that you can become a praying house church all of the time in ways that extend even beyond just formal gatherings.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 9

The Spirit-Led House Church

A house church will go as far as our friend the Holy Spirit leads us and no further. Because of this it is vital that we ensure that we are indeed seeking out the leading of the Spirit and not trusting in our own strength or methods to bring success. Those things are temporary but the Spirit is eternal. This doesn't mean that being a Spirit-led house church means to sit back and do nothing and just let the Spirit work. It's quite the opposite actually. Being a Spirit-led house church means approaching the Spirit with the proper mindset so that he can lead us to proper actions that will take us precisely where he wants us to go.

Led as Sons **Romans 8:14-17**

- Just as the children of Israel were shown to be God's people because he led them through the Red Sea so are Christians shown to be God's children now as we are led by the Spirit
- Being a house church that is led by the Spirit can be a tricky thing because it is so easy to push him aside and begin to operate under our own strength, our own power, our own flesh
- Learning to partner with the Holy Spirit as our helper not only shows us to be God's family but is actually part of the act that creates us as that family
- Groups that are motivated by things such as duty, obligation, or the praise of men will eventually falter and run out of motivation
- House Churches that are motivated and led by the Spirit have access to an unlimited source of power, encouragement, strength, and motivation
- Although we are not used to being guided by the Spirit so it takes much time and effort, it is worth it in the long run

Led by the Spirit **Romans 8:5-13**

- The first step in being a Spirit-led group is to have our minds set on the things that the Spirit desires
- If we have our minds and desires set on worldly things like being happy, or comfortable, or having a nice quality of life, or whatever it may be then we will never be able to truly follow the leading of the Spirit
- Trying to be led by the Spirit while seeking the fundamental desires of the flesh in like trying to run while lying down
- Just as individuals can have their minds set on the wrong foundational desires and leave themselves unable to follow the Spirit and bring God so can house churches have their minds set on the wrong things such as making sure that everyone is happy or wanting everyone in the group to feel comfortable
- We have to have our minds set on the fundamental things that God desires like holiness and family unity first and then we can follow the prompting of the Spirit
- It's not that being happy or comfortable are wrong but if we set our minds on those things as our fundamental desires then we will go after those things and the Spirit will not be able to lead us where he wants us
- To be a Spirit-led group means that we must first set our minds and hearts on being Christ-like, then the Spirit can lead us exactly where he wants to take us

Choosing the Spirit

Romans 6:16; Romans 12:1-2

- Being led by the Spirit starts with a fundamental choice to offer ourselves to the Spirit as living sacrifices and do things his way rather than ours
- To do this it requires that our house churches are fundamentally committed to not being like the world and being conformed to the patterns of the world
- This means that we must not conform to patterns of the world such as basing our participation in things based on convenience or what we get out of it, or only doing things that make us feel comfortable
- Following the Spirit is a growth course and will always stretch our house churches beyond their comfort zones

Our Personal Trainer

1 Timothy 4:7-10; Hebrews 5:13-14

- The word translated “train” in both of these passages is “gymnazo,” the word from which we get our word “gymnasium.” It carries the meaning of strict discipline and training in something as you would train for a sport
- We don’t often think of training ourselves in righteousness and discerning God’s will but that is exactly what we are called to do both as individuals (as in the case of the Timothy passage) and as churches (as in the Hebrews passage)
- As leaders of a house church we need to see to it that we are being trained by the Holy Spirit and one another in righteousness
- It helps us to understand the role of the Spirit if we understand him here as a personal trainer
 - Personal trainers have our health and fitness in mind, not our comfort; they will push us to do things that we wouldn’t normally do and past limitations that we thought we had
 - But we must partner with our trainers, follow their guidance and do the work or we will never have the results that they want for us
 - If we have our minds set on comfort, though, rather than the things that the Spirit (our trainer) has in mind then we will never be able to achieve what he wants and follow our lead
- The Spirit wants to train us to be holy and righteous and we need to take that approach in our house churches
- This calls us to be groups that seek the guidance, discipline, and training of the Spirit in order to grow
- In essence, to train ourselves in righteousness means to follow the prompting of the Spirit and correcting wrong attitudes and behavior by practicing the right attitudes behavior until the right attitudes and behavior become 2nd nature

Assignment:

- Head – Memorize Hebrews 12:7-11 (can you find the use of “gymnazo” in this passage?)
- Heart – What are the motivating and driving desires of your house church? Have you spent much time in the pas thinking about that? Does your house church really desire to sacrifice to become renewed in the image of Christ or do they want to please God while still being happy and maintaining a certain lifestyle? If it is close to the latter, then how do you help your group to see this problem in mindset and change their attitude?
- Hands – Think of one are right now in which your house church needs to step up its training-in-righteousness. Develop a plan with your house church on how you can improve in this area as a group. Make sure to spend much time in prayer and attend to the guidance of the Spirit as he trains you all in this area of needed growth.

House Church Training – Lesson 9

Being a Spirit-led House Church

Introduction

- Most human beings want to be happy at one level or another don't they?
- Yet, as much as humans desire to be happy, studies show that the higher up that we rank that on our list of desire and goals, the less happy we are
- **Question: Why do you think desiring to be happy actually prevents us from being happy?**
- **Question: In what ways do you think that trying to be happy can actually keep us from the life that the Holy Spirit wants for us?**

Led as Sons

Romans 8:14-17

- **Question: What is the connection here between our position as God's children and the guidance of the Holy Spirit?**
 - Just as the children of Israel were shown to be God's people because he led them through the Red Sea so are Christians shown to be God's children now as we are led by the Spirit
 - Being a house church that is led by the Spirit can be a tricky thing because it is so easy to push him aside and begin to operate under our own strength, our own power, our own flesh
- **Question: What are some ways that we can spurn the leading of the Spirit and rely on ourselves?**
- **Question: What does it mean to be led by the Spirit?**

Led by the Spirit

Romans 8:5-13

- The first step in being a Spirit-led group is to have our minds set on the things that the Spirit desires
- If we have our minds and desires set on worldly things like being happy, or comfortable, or having a nice quality of life, or whatever it may be then we will never be able to truly follow the leading of the Spirit
- Trying to be led by the Spirit while seeking the fundamental desires of the flesh in like trying to run while lying down
- **Question: What are some of the things that we can have our minds set on that keep us from truly being led by the Spirit to where he wants us to go?**
 - Just as individuals can have their minds set on the wrong foundational desires and leave themselves unable to follow the Spirit and bring God so can house churches have their minds set on the wrong things such as making sure that everyone is happy or wanting everyone in the group to feel comfortable
 - We have to have our minds set on the fundamental things that God desires like holiness and family unity first and then we can follow the prompting of the Spirit
 - It's not that being happy or comfortable are wrong but if we set our minds on those things as our fundamental desires then we will go after those things and the Spirit will not be able to lead us where he wants us
 - To be a Spirit-led group means that we must first set our minds and hearts on being Christ-like, then the Spirit can lead us exactly where he wants to take us

Choosing the Spirit

Romans 12:1-2

- Being led by the Spirit starts with a fundamental choice to offer ourselves to the Spirit as living sacrifices and do things his way rather than ours
- To do this it requires that our house churches are fundamentally committed to not being like the world and being conformed to the patterns of the world
- This means that we must not conform to patterns of the world such as basing our participation in things based on convenience or what we get out of it, or only doing things that make us feel comfortable
- What are some ways that house churches can conform to the patterns of the world if they're not careful?

Our Personal Trainer

1 Timothy 4:7-10; Hebrews 5:13-14

- The word translated "train" in both of these passages is "gymnazo," the word from which we get our word "gymnasium." It carries the meaning of strict discipline and training in something as you would train for a sport
- We don't often think of training ourselves in righteousness and discerning God's will but that is exactly what we are called to do both as individuals (as in the case of the Timothy passage) and as churches (as in the Hebrews passage)
- As leaders of a house church we need to see to it that we are being trained by the Holy Spirit and one another in righteousness
- It helps us to understand the role of the Spirit if we understand him here as a personal trainer
 - Personal trainers have our health and fitness in mind, not our comfort; they will push us to do things that we wouldn't normally do and past limitations that we thought we had
 - But we must partner with our trainers, follow their guidance and do the work or we will never have the results that they want for us
 - If we have our minds set on comfort, though, rather than the things that the Spirit (our trainer) has in mind then we will never be able to achieve what he wants and follow our lead
- The Spirit wants to train us to be holy and righteous and we need to take that approach in our house churches
- This calls us to be groups that seek the guidance, discipline, and training of the Spirit in order to grow
- In essence, to train ourselves in righteousness means to follow the prompting of the Spirit and correcting wrong attitudes and behavior by practicing the right attitudes behavior until the right attitudes and behavior become 2nd nature

Action

Talk with the group about the area that you, as the house church leader, believe the group could grow in and be further trained by the Holy Spirit in righteousness. Already have a general plan in mind from your own homework from the house church leader's training assignment but give the group an opportunity to work together to come up with a plan to grow in that area and be trained by the Spirit and one another. Seek to supplement their ideas with your own so that the final product is very much a joint venture.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 10

Leading for Transformation not Conformation

If you don't know where you're going you'll probably get there. It is important before undertaking any journey to know where you are heading. As house church leaders we have to be very clear where we are taking our house churches. We are not seeking to develop a community of people that act the "right" way. Rather, we are leading people to the Holy Spirit where they will be transformed to the image of God and restored in our ability to do his will. It is important that we have a clear vision of that because it will greatly affect how we lead our house churches.

A New Heart

Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:26-27

- The Old Testament Law was given to God's people as a concession to sin. It was designed to keep God's people separate from the pagan nations until the coming of the Messiah
- But the Law could only go so far with God's people. It could only conform the behavior of people from without but it always pointed to something greater that God was going to do
- It has always been God's plan to have a people that are transformed from within to the image of his Son rather than a religious people whose behavior has merely been conformed
- Yet, it seems to be human behavior and patterns to turn even the truth of the transforming Christian life into just another religion of conformity if we're not extremely careful

Transformed vs. Conformed

Romans 12:1-2; 8:29

- God does not want a people that are conformed from the outside, that's what the world does
- God wants a people that are transformed from within through the laying down of our own will and lives and willfully submitting to the inner transformation of his Holy Spirit
- The problem is that it is much easier to be conformed to a mold and just curb outer behaviors than to truly be transformed from within and change our hearts and will permanently
- Conforming is easier than transforming
- Religion is easier than the transforming life of Christ
- The remainder of this lesson will consider aspects of embracing the life of transformation that God wants for his people and escaping the grips of falling into a religious lifestyle that merely conforms behavior

The Law of Love

Romans 13:8-10

- In Christ we are called to the simple commands of loving God and loving others. We don't need a law for that. We need the Holy Spirit
- But that doesn't mean that all morals (of the type covered by the OT) are off. Love encompasses and goes far beyond the mere behavior conforming law
- In creating a house church that is being transformed, the bottom line must be biblical love
- We are creating house churches that are motivated by the loving transformation of the Holy Spirit not people that are shaped and conformed by rules, pressure, expectations, and things of that nature
- This doesn't remove the standards of the Christian life but actually raises them significantly
- It is our job as leaders to ensure that love is the primary expectation and language of our house church

- We must remember though that biblical love has three elements
 - Loyalty
 - Sacrifice
 - Laying down our lives for the interests of others

From the Heart

2 Corinthians 9:7

- Although the immediate context of this passage has to do with giving generously to Christians that were in need, it holds an important principle that applies to the whole of the Christians life
- We must be motivated from our inner transformation from the Spirit rather than outward pressure
- If our hearts are not in the right place, outward pressure and rules will never get us there. The problem is in our heart not in our behavior so putting external pressures to change behavior actually works against what God wants
- Christians that are not behaving in love must have their hearts addressed not their behavior forced or conformed
- The reality is, though, that it is much more challenging to shepherd the hearts of a group and lead them to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit than it is to merely direct them, order them, or pressure them into “right” behavior but transformation is the only way that God’s purposes will be achieved

Teaching the Right Way

Titus 2:11-12

- Our role as house church leaders is to direct people to encounter God’s grace and the Holy Spirit
- It is the Spirit working through God’s grace that will teach us and transform us
- This is what will mature our groups into godly behavior
- This means that we must constantly be directing people to the Spirit and addressing their hearts rather than focusing on conforming behavior
- This takes much attention on our hearts because if people are “behaving rightly” then we tend to assume that everything is fine and relax in our shepherding role

Discernment and Maturity

Hebrews 5:11-14; John 7:24

- Christian maturity comes when we have been transformed by the Spirit and enabled to rightly discern between right and wrong behavior
- This means that the immature may need some help in keeping them from unwise behavior but we must never get fooled into thinking that this is how things should always be
- Our goal as leaders should always be to help the people in our house church move towards this type of discerning and maturity

Transformed to His Glory

2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 10:31

- God is transforming us into his image so that we can fully reflect his glory the way we were designed to
- That means that we are to be a people that seek to bring glory to God in whatever we do
- There are no rules or external pressures that can bring that about
- Only the transforming power and love of the Holy Spirit working within us can do that

Assignment:

- Head – Memorize 1 John 2:3; 3:23; 4:21; and 5:2-3
- Heart & Hands – As a leader it is easy to focus on all of the attitudes and behaviors that aren't ideal within the family of Christ rather than seeing the glory of God reflecting in one another and to focus on how he is transforming us (2 Cor. 3:18). Take some time this week to write a card that encourages each of the same-gendered members of your house church and encourage them based on the transforming growth that you have seen in their life.

House Church Training – Lesson 10

Seeking Transformation

Introduction

- Split into groups of around 2-3 people in each group (or whatever small group configuration makes sense within your house church) and complete the following:
 - Within your group come up with an explanation for the difference between conforming behavior and transforming character
 - Develop an example of what one community of people might look like if they were committed to conforming behavior and an example of what one community of people might look like if they were committed to transforming character. What would be the major differences in these two communities? What would be the similarities?
- As a general group discussion, discuss how it would look differently within a house church to be focused on transformation rather than conformation

Transformed vs. Conformed Romans 12:1-2; 8:29

- God does not want a people that are conformed from the outside, that's what the world does
- God wants a people that are transformed from within through the laying down of our own will and lives and willfully submitting to the inner transformation of his Holy Spirit
- The problem is that it is much easier to be conformed to a mold and just curb outer behaviors than to truly be transformed from within and change our hearts and will permanently
- Conforming is easier than transforming
- Religion is easier than the transforming life of Christ
- The remainder of this lesson will consider aspects of embracing the life of transformation that God wants for his people and escaping the grips of falling into a religious lifestyle that merely conforms behavior

The Law of Love Romans 13:8-10

- **Question: What are the differences between a house church being motivated by the Law versus one that is motivated by love and transformation?**
- In Christ we are called to the simple commands of loving God and loving others. We don't need a law for that. We need the Holy Spirit
- We are creating house churches that are motivated by the loving transformation of the Holy Spirit not people that are shaped and conformed by rules, pressure, expectations, and things of that nature
- This doesn't remove the standards of the Christian life but actually raises them significantly
- It is our job as leaders to ensure that love is the primary expectation and language of our house church
- We must remember though that biblical love has three elements
 - Loyalty
 - Sacrifice
 - Laying down our lives for the interests of others
- **Question: How is being motivated by love more demanding than external rules focused on behavior**

From the Heart 2 Corinthians 9:7

- Although the immediate context of this passage has to do with giving generously to Christians that were in need, it holds an important principle that applies to the whole of the Christians life
- **Question: How do we go about motivating one another from the heart?**

Teaching the Right Way Titus 2:11-12

- It is the Spirit working through God's grace that will teach us and transform us
- This means that we must constantly be directing people to the Spirit and addressing their hearts rather than focusing on conforming behavior
- This takes much attention on our hearts because if people are "behaving rightly" then we tend to assume that everything is fine and relax in our shepherding role
- **Question: What are some of the ways that we can help each other to be taught by God's grace and the Holy Spirit?**

Discernment and Maturity Hebrews 5:11-14

- Christian maturity comes when we have been transformed by the Spirit and enabled to rightly discern between right and wrong behavior
- **Question: What are other signs of Christian maturity**
- **Question: In what ways do mature Christians still need each other in things like discipling? How will discipling look differently for the mature Christian versus the immature Christian?**

Action

The action plan from our last lesson was as follows:

Talk with the group about the area that you, as the house church leader, believe the group could grow in and be further trained by the Holy Spirit in righteousness. Already have a general plan in mind from your own homework from the house church leader's training assignment but give the group an opportunity to work together to come up with a plan to grow in that area and be trained by the Spirit and one another. Seek to supplement their ideas with your own so that the final product is very much a joint venture.

This week take some time following the lesson to follow-up and see how things are going. Take the next two weeks to continue to focus on the area that your house church is seeking to grow in as we all take the journey to be a Spirit-led people together.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 11

Family Unity

Being united does not mean that we have unity. Two cats tied together and thrown over a clothesline may be united but they do not necessarily have unity. Just because individuals have been united together in a house church does not mean that there is genuine unity. Unity comes when we share a common heart purpose. It must be the deepest desire of the house church leader to strive for and build true unity within their house church. A house church that is unified in Christ is an unstoppable entity.

Unified

Philippians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 1:10

- Completely unity in the biblical world was a characteristic that was urged upon families, not religious groups typically so the Christian call for unity was not only unique it cemented the fact that they were a new family
- Unity between all members of the house church is vital
- We must be unified in our selfless love for God and each other
- We must be united in the priority of the house church, in our schedules, our resources, and our hearts
- We must be united in helping each other become complete in the life of Christ
- We must be united behind the leadership of the house church and the direction which does not necessitate that we agree with every little thing that is done
- There is incredible power when we are truly united
- The work of the house church becomes great joy, encouragement overflows, and we build on one another's strengths and help each other quickly when we stumble
- When we are unified the only agenda is God's agenda and the only glory is his glory

Here to Give

Matthew 20:26-28; Acts 20:35; Proverbs 11:25

- A prerequisite to unity is that we come to give. If we are not deeply committed to putting the interests of others ahead of our own then unity is impossible (Phil. 2:3-5)
- Division comes as a result of people putting their own will and "good" ahead of others
- Division comes when people come to house church to meet their own needs
- We will have problems if people come to receive rather than to give
- A group has to be trained to give and constantly reminded that this is what we're called to do and be
- It is not wrong to have needs, but if that is our focus we will always feel hurt that people haven't fully met our needs
- On the other hand, he that refreshes others will be refreshed (Prov. 11:25)
- If we pour our energy and time into meeting the needs of others, then our own needs will be met but if we go around seeking our own needs then they never will be met nor will anyone else's
- How powerful would a house church be if everyone was focused heart and soul on meeting the needs of others
- When a house church begins to embrace that way of living, you won't be able to keep people away

Love One Another

1 Corinthians 12:26; John 15:13; John 13:34-35

- We simply must decide to love and give our hearts to all of the other house church members
- This decision is absolutely vital
- Once we make this decision, the ramifications will be staggering
- When one person is going through a trial, the whole group goes through the trial
- When one person rejoices, the whole group rejoices
- This comes as a result of a family identity that shares honor and shame with one another as members of the one family
- When we embrace this mindset, sacrificing for one another becomes second nature just as it is with our physical family
- Each disciple will use his talents for the good of others without expecting anything in return
- This is the type of love that every member of the house church must strive for, not just the leader
- It is in this type of love that Jesus says the world will truly know that we are his disciples. It will not be from holding the right doctrine or anything else (although that is important) but in the way that we genuinely love one another sacrificially

Bearing with One Another Colossians 3:12-14

- Satan wants to destroy our house churches and he will do it through our own weaknesses if we let him
- We are all sinners and it is inevitable that we will sin against one another
- Passages that call us to bear with and forgive one another are virtual guarantees that we will sin against one another
- How we handle that is important
- Bearing with one another means to not retaliate despite every reason to do so
- Forgiving one another means to be gracious and let offenses roll off of our backs
- Gently talking with people that have offended us, the whole while understanding the gravity of our own sin and the grace that God has shown us will go a long way in keeping the love of the house church strong
- We must be deeply committed to not letting anything stand in the way of our love and unity

Assignment:

- Head – Read and study through 1 Corinthians 13 and denote the various aspects of love that are mentioned in this passage
- Heart – Why should we love other believers? The answer might seem simple but it is vital that we are deeply committed to that and understand it well. What Scriptures tell us why we should love God and others rather than the ones that just tell us to do it? Find a few and meditate on them this week.
- Hands – What is one way that you can demonstrate your love and some encouragement to each same-gendered member of your house church? Think of at least one way for each person and do it before the next lesson.

House Church Training – Lesson 11

Being a Unified Family

Introduction

- **Question: What is unity? What does it mean for a house church to be unified?**
- Read the following quote from Charles Swindoll and ask the house church to discuss what it means for them as a house church:

Union has an affiliation with others but no common bond that makes them one in heart.

Uniformity has everyone looking and thinking alike.

Unanimity is complete agreement across the board.

Unity, however, refers to a oneness of heart, a similarity of purpose, and an agreement on major points of doctrine.

Unified

Philippians 1:27

- **Question: What does it mean for a group of believers to be completely unified and have no divisions?**
- **Question: What are the dangers for a house church of not being unified?**
- Completely unity in the biblical world was a characteristic that was urged upon families, not religious groups typically so the Christian call for unity was not only unique it cemented the fact that they were a new family
- Unity between all members of the house church is vital
- We must be unified in our selfless love for God and each other
- We must be united in the priority of the house church, in our schedules, our resources, and our hearts
- We must be united in helping each other become complete in the life of Christ
- We must be united in our house church which does not necessitate that we agree with every little thing that is done
- There is incredible power when we are truly united
- The work of the house church becomes great joy, encouragement overflows, and we build on one another's strengths and help each other quickly when we stumble
- When we are unified the only agenda is God's agenda and the only glory is his glory

Here to Give

Matthew 20:26-28

- A prerequisite to unity is that we come to give. If we are not deeply committed to putting the interests of others ahead of our own then unity is impossible (Phil. 2:3-5)
- Division comes as a result of people putting their own will and "good" ahead of others
- Division comes when people come to house church to meet their own needs
- **Question: What problems can arise if we constantly seek to put our own good first?**

Proverbs 11:25

- **Question: What, according to this verse, will happen if we are constantly dedicated to giving to others?**
- **Question: What will happen if members of a house church come dedicated to getting their own needs met?**

- We will have problems if people come to receive rather than to give
- A group has to be trained to give and constantly reminded that this is what we're called to do and be
- It is not wrong to have needs, but if that is our focus we will always feel hurt that people haven't fully met our needs
- On the other hand, he that refreshes others will be refreshed
- If we pour our energy and time into meeting the needs of others, then our own needs will be met but if we go around seeking our own needs then they never will be met nor will anyone else's
- How powerful would a house church be if everyone was focused heart and soul on meeting the needs of others
- When a house church begins to embrace that way of living, you won't be able to keep people away

Love One Another

1 Corinthians 12:26

- We simply must decide to love and give our hearts to all of the other house church members
- This decision is absolutely vital
- Once we make this decision, the ramifications will be staggering
- When one person is going through a trial, the whole group goes through the trial
- When one person rejoices, the whole group rejoices
- This comes as a result of a family identity that shares honor and shame with one another as members of the one family
- When we embrace this mindset, sacrificing for one another becomes second nature just as it is with our physical family
- Each disciple will use his talents for the good of others without expecting anything in return
- This is the type of love that every member of the house church must strive for, not just the leader
- It is in this type of love that Jesus says the world will truly know that we are his disciples. It will not be from holding the right doctrine or anything else (although that is important) but in the way that we genuinely love one another sacrificially (Hn. 13:34-35)

Bearing with One Another

Colossians 3:12-14

- Satan wants to destroy our house churches and he will do it through our own weaknesses if we let him
- We are all sinners and it is inevitable that we will sin against one another
- Passages that call us to bear with and forgive one another are virtual guarantees that we will sin against one another
- Bearing with one another means to not retaliate despite every reason to do so
- Forgiving one another means to be gracious and let offenses roll off of our backs
- Gently talking with people that have offended us, the whole while understanding the gravity of our own sin and the grace that God has shown us will go a long way in keeping the love of the house church strong
- We must be deeply committed to not letting anything stand in the way of our love and unity
- Question: What is the most difficult thing for you personally when it comes to bearing with or forgiving one another?

Action

So what are we going to do about it? At the end of the lesson, split the group into smaller groups of 2-3, if possible, and give them just a few minutes to come up with their own ideas for an action plan for the house church over the next two weeks. Come together and share all of the ideas and then as a group choose the best idea or two as the group's action plan.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 12

A Leader that Trains Others

To be able to fulfill the Lord's great commission, the leaders within God's kingdom must always be training people to rise up and replace themselves. In the short run, training takes more time and it seems as though you not getting as much done as you could if you just did the work yourself. However, that approach will quickly lead to house church leader burn-out as the needs begin to pile up and everyone is looking to you for help. The leader who spends his time and energy training others to do the work will be able to win the world for Christ as well as maintain a healthy family and personal spiritual life.

As we go about the task of training, there are three important components that must be considered:

See What God Sees

Ephesians 2:10; 1 Peter 4:10

- God has given each person, including the person you wish to train, unique gifts and talents, and has prepared them to do specific things in his kingdom
- This is important to recognize so that we listen to God's voice as we train
- Most of the people you train will be more talented than you in certain areas and less in others
- It is important that we not expect them to be just like us or have the same strengths that we do in the areas in which we are gifted
- It is also important to not be threatened by the areas in which they are stronger than us
- We should foster and encourage the gifts that God has given them because each gift is intended to build up the entire body of Christ

The Bigger Picture

1 Corinthians 3:10-14; James 4:13-17

- The reality is that our time here to take part in building up God's kingdom is relatively short
- It is our duty during that time to do the best we can to ensure that the work is done well and will continue long after we are gone
- We are building for the ongoing future of God's kingdom not just for the moment
- Training others can get tedious and frustrating but it is the only way to have the kind of lasting impact that Jesus planned for us to have
- We must persevere for the future thousand and millions that will be impacted through your training

Failure is Your Fuel

John 21:15-17; Luke 22:31-32

- When someone is being trained they can feel, at times, as though they will never "get it" or be ready to lead
- We must understand, and help them to understand that failing is simply an opportunity for growth
- Failing only becomes failure when we fail to learn from our mistakes
- People that you are training must feel your undying belief in them when they have blown it the most
- Failing simply clarifies and identifies the areas that need the most attention

As a house church leader you will be training people for all types of activities; the house church itself, leading others, leading Bible studies, helping an immature Christian grow in their maturity, etc. The following model can be used for any type of activity you choose

Preparing

1 Peter 1:13

1. Pray about the upcoming event
2. Teach the trainee how important it is to really love the people involved, and to make sure that love is communicated clearly in an appropriate way
3. Ask your trainee what they are trying to accomplish in the upcoming event and how they think they should go about it
4. Ask them what questions they think they should ask and why. Then help them develop questions that will help them accomplish their goal
5. Teach them to listen to the Holy Spirit in an appointment or other event. Often the Holy Spirit will take a house church or appointment in a totally different direction than originally planned. Having a plan is good but we cannot be so woodenly beholden to it that we fail to listen to the direction of the Spirit
6. Help them to develop a physical and/or mental file folder of specific Scriptures for various topics. For example, they should eventually have on hand several Scriptures and be ready to explain a biblical approach to topics like purity, baptism, repentance, etc. Teach the trainee to ask a question after reading each Scripture instead of talking
7. It is critical that they learn how to listen effectively and thoroughly (Proverbs 18:13)
8. Empathizing is an important tool in any counseling. People must feel our concern before they will listen (Hebrews 5:1-2)
9. Teaching them how to make a point or to challenge without being judgmental and preachy is a valuable tool
10. Helping people come up with their own solutions is so much more powerful than telling them what to do. Questions to that end may go like this:
 - What do you think you should do?
 - Do you feel that you are prepared to do it?
 - What do you feel you will need to do it?
11. Christianity is about action and transformation. At the end of each appointment we must teach our trainee that a plan of action must be agreed upon. It is far better if that plan of action is conceived by the person he is counseling for themselves
12. Teaching the trainee the power of encouragement and communicating belief in the person they are trying to help will fuel the fires of transformation
13. Teaching them to have a follow up plan is necessary if there is to be any lasting plan

Observing

Luke 10:17-20

1. Jesus had both encouragement and challenge after sending out the 72 to preach
2. As you observe, look not only at what is said but also at what is being communicated in a non-verbal way
3. Also, observe how others relate to the trainee that is leading them
4. If you have to interject, teach the trainee not to just let you take over, but to continue after your comment
5. Make sure that you take notes as to how the trainee is doing

Evaluation

Mark 6:30; 2 Timothy 1:6-8

1. It can be difficult to be trained and make one feel quite vulnerable, so it is vital to be as encouraging as possible
2. Ask them often how they thought they did and why
3. Methodically go through the appointment, lesson, or other event that you are evaluating, stressing the positive points as well as sharing the areas of needed improvement
4. Ask them when they felt there were breakthrough and what caused the breakthroughs
5. Ask them how they feel. Much of training is helping people feel the right way about their successes and failures
6. Ask them what they feel they need to do differently or learn for next time

Assignment:

- Head – What is the plan for your ministry or house church? Who are you training? Where is your group heading in the future and how have you prepared for that? Take some time to think and pray through those types of things and develop a specific plan for your group as you move into the future if you haven't already done.
- Heart – Are you deeply committed to the value of training others in the kingdom of God whether it be to lead their own house church, lead Bible studies, or something else? Which biblical passage most motivates you to see the need to train others or motivates you to train others?
- Hands – Continue training or get busy training others. If you don't already have a specific and comprehensive training plan within your house church, create one. Consider: What training do you need to do to train others; what training can members of your group do to train others; can the church or church leader assist in some way or is there church-wide training that needs to be done at that level to assist your house church?

House Church Training – Lesson 12

The Value of Training

Introduction

- **Question: Have you ever been trained hard for something in your life? Share your experience? What did you learn from your training? What did you accomplish with training that you could never have done without being trained well?**
- Read Ephesians 4:11-13
 - Question: What is the role of church leadership according to this passage?
 - Question: What is the role of the church family that are not in leadership roles according to this passage?
- Every single member of the church family should be involved in training and learning at one level or another. It is God's plan to help us grow into maturity (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Today we will talk about three important elements that go into being a community that is committed to training one another

See What God Sees

Ephesians 2:10; 1 Peter 4:10

- **Question: What is it that God has given every disciple?**
 - God has given us all work to do
 - He has also given each person unique gifts and talents, and has prepared them to do specific things in his kingdom
- **Question: Why is it important to recognize both of these truths?**
- **Question: Why is it important that to know that every single person has strengths and gifts that need to be used**
- **Question: How can we as a house church become more fertile ground for people to be able to use their gifts and strengths?**

The Bigger Picture

1 Corinthians 3:10-14; James 4:13-17

- Question: How does the concept of building the church family carefully relate to our training and learning from one another?
- Question: Why is it important to remember that our time in this present age serving in God's kingdom is **relatively short?**
- The reality is that our time here to take part in building up God's kingdom is relatively short
- It is our duty during that time to do the best we can to ensure that the work is done well and will continue long after we are gone
- We are building for the ongoing future of God's kingdom not just for the moment
- Training others can get tedious and frustrating but it is the only way to have the kind of lasting impact that Jesus planned for us to have
- We must persevere for the future thousand and millions that will be impacted through your training

Failure is Your Fuel

John 21:15-17; Luke 22:31-32

- **Question: Does anyone want to share of a time when they experienced failing but learned greatly through that time?**
- **Question: What can be the positive fruit of failing or making mistakes?**
- When someone is being trained they can feel, at times, as though they will never “get it” or be ready to lead
- We must understand, and help them to understand that failing is simply an opportunity for growth
- Failing only becomes failure when we fail to learn from our mistakes
- **Question: How did Jesus help Peter through his failing?**
- People that you are training must feel your undying belief in them when they have blown it the most
- Failing simply clarifies and identifies the areas that need the most attention

Action

Ask each person in your house church to spend the next two weeks praying and determining one area in which they would like to be trained to effect growth in their life. Have them create a realistic plan to secure that training including who would help them with it. Take some time at the beginning of the next house church gathering to let everyone share their plan. Continue to follow up in the future to ensure that people have stayed faithful to their plan.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 13

Setting Goals

When you think of what you would like to do within the kingdom and what you would like for your house church to accomplish in the next five years, what comes to mind? Your mind could be filled with visions and dreams of all kinds of different needs being met, neighborhoods being won, new ministries beginning, and new churches being planted. The only way that great things are accomplished is by being in someone's mind first. This vision becomes a goal when a decision is made and specifics are laid out. Without goals we will flounder in our work for the Lord. Goals inspire us, focus and direct our work, and reset our priorities.

Setting Goals **Proverbs 16:3**

- This verse presumes that we will be making spiritual plans as part of God's people
- Spiritual plans are goals
- What are the goals that you have for yourself and your house church?
- Setting our plans and goals before the Lord includes praying over them
 - It is important that we pray over what our goals should be as well as praying to God to accomplish our goals
- Goals should not be made rashly, rather we need to consider what we are trying to accomplish in the big picture, and consider the strengths of those in our house church
- A simple, well-conceived goal is a powerful tool in God's hands
- Do not have too many goals or your energies will be fragmented
- Have no goals or too few goals and your energies will be idle and wasted

Buy In **Nehemiah 2:17-18**

- The leader may be very excited about his goals for the house church, but if the people aren't just as fired up, the goals won't be accomplished
- One important role of a house church leader is to learn how to communicate your vision in such a way as to persuade people to follow
- It is just as important to listen to the people in the house church
 - They may have a better plan or even improve the one you have laid before them
- Don't begin your plans until your group has made a decision that they are with you heart and soul
 - The time it takes to do this will pay off in the end

Set a Course of Action in Keeping With Your Goals **Isaiah 32:8**

- Isaiah tells us that our goals must be followed by corresponding actions
- If we set goals but don't act on them, they are simply fantasies and dreams
- Just as the armor bearer followed Jonathon's plan (1 Sam. 14:6-7), so will people follow your lead if you lay out your vision in an understandable goal
- You must be the first to act and call them confidently to follow
- Our action proves our faith and ignites God's power

What if we don't make our Goals?

Proverbs 24:16

- In Christ we have the freedom to try to achieve great things and to sometimes fail
- Failing is one of the greatest tools that God has in arsenal to make us grow
- Without failing we would be overwhelmingly prideful
- Without failing we would learn very little
- Without failing we would be very un-relatable to a failing world
- Almost every great success was preceded by more than one failing
- It is the process of setting the goal, striving with all of our energy and seeing what God gives us that will, in the end, accomplish great things—if we do not give up
- When we fail we must evaluate what went wrong, learn and recommit ourselves

Assignment:

- Head – What are your goals for your house church and for the individuals in it? Spend some time thinking about your goals
- Heart – Commit yourself to fervent prayer over the next week or two concerning the goals that you wish to develop for your house church. Once you begin to create your goals, continue to bring them before God in prayer
- Hands – Complete your goals and plans, share them with your house church, get their feedback, and then implement your goals

House Church Training – Lesson 13

Having Goals

Introduction

- **Question: Why do we set goals? What is the purpose of setting goals?**
- **Question: What are some of the most humorous or unrealistic goals or resolutions that you have set for yourself in the past and not come close to achieving? Why do you think that was?**
- **Question: Can you think of a time when you set a goal and then achieved it with great success?**
- Goals are important because they are what turns dreams into action; visions into visible results; hopes into reality
- Goals are how we turn our good intentions for God's Kingdom into actions and results

Setting Goals

Proverbs 16:3

- This verse presumes that we will be making spiritual plans as part of God's people
- Spiritual plans are goals
- **Question: What are the goals that you have for yourself spiritually?**
- **Question: What are some goals that you would like to see for our house church?**
- Setting our plans and goals before the Lord includes praying over them
 - It is important that we pray over what our goals should be as well as praying to God to accomplish our goals
- Goals should not be made rashly, rather we need to consider what we are trying to accomplish in the big picture, and consider the strengths of those in our house church

Buy In

1 Samuel 14:6-7; Nehemiah 2:17-18

- Goals can be set by leaders but they won't go anywhere without the heartfelt support of those following him
- **Question: Why do you think that the people in these examples were so willing to follow?**
- **Question: Why do people want to follow some goals but not follow other leaders and their goals?**
- We can set goals within our house church but they won't go anywhere if we're not all committed to them

Set a Course of Action in Keeping With Your Goals

Isaiah 32:8

- Isaiah tells us that our goals must be followed by corresponding actions
- If we set goals but don't act on them, they are simply fantasies and dreams
- Our action proves our faith and ignites God's power

What if we don't make our Goals?

Proverbs 24:16

- **Question: What is your typical response when you set goals for yourself and don't fulfill them?**

- In Christ we have the freedom to try to achieve great things and to sometimes fail
- Failing is one of the greatest tools that God has in arsenal to make us grow
- Without failing we would be overwhelmingly prideful
- Without failing we would learn very little
- Without failing we would be very un-relatable to a failing world
- Almost every great success was preceded by more than one failing
- It is the process of setting the goal, striving with all of our energy and seeing what God gives us that will, in the end, accomplish great things—if we do not give up
- When we fail we must evaluate what went wrong, learn and recommit ourselves

Action

Lay out the goals and plans that you have made for your house church and get their feedback. Ask them to pray about the goals between now and the next gathering. Ask them to be prepared to commit to beginning the goals for your group and the specific actions that will achieve them at the next house church gathering.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 14

Accountability

It would be ideal if everyone was motivated completely by the love of Christ 100% of the time and stayed motivated no matter what happened in their lives. It would be awesome if no matter how busy or distracted we were with life's situations and distractions we were able to keep our priorities straight and always make the best decisions. It would be wonderful if we were to set goals according to our convictions, and no matter how discouraging life became we did not waiver from them until our goals were accomplished. It would be fantastic if we made a decision to repent of our ingrained habitual sins and we simply never were tempted to waiver from that decision. However, as anyone who has tried to live the Christian life knows, these scenarios are not realities. No matter how strong we are, without help from others we will get discouraged, distracted, worn down, and weak. We must love each other enough to hold one another accountable to God's standards and the decisions we make along the way to obey his word. God knows us well and called us to hold one another accountable to keep us true to our convictions.

Their Own Convictions

Luke 19:5-10

- Following his conversation with Jesus, Zacchaeus was so motivated that he decided to completely repent of his greed by giving ½ of his possessions to the poor and pay back everyone he cheated four times the amount that he cheated them
- We don't know precisely what they talked about, but we do get a glimpse of how Jesus ministered to people
- Jesus knew that it would be useless to hold someone accountable to be righteous unless they came to their own deep convictions
- Accountability is only effective if it is based on the convictions that someone already has. Accountability will not create convictions, it will only call someone to live up to convictions that they already have
- Once someone has deep convictions we are able to use their own convictions as a foundation upon which to build
- Then we are able to come up with a plan and a way to help them stay on course
- As leaders we must learn how to help people come to deep convictions about their sin and their work in the Lord

Questions

Matthew 16:13, 15; Luke 10:25-26; 36-37

- Asking the right questions can help people process spiritual truths
- They can help people realize what they are feeling
- They can help people come to deep convictions
- The right question can probe into someone's soul to expose their sin
- When we tell people what to do we short circuit the conviction process
- Reading a passage and then asking questions is the best way to help people come to convictions about the word of God
- Questions keep their heart, mind, and soul engaged and on the examining block
- However, we must be careful. We can ask a question but really just be telling people what to do
 - For example: "Don't you think it would be best to quit that job so you could be more involved with the church?"

- Better would be a series of questions such as these:
 - “What do you value most in life?”
 - “In the long haul what do you want to accomplish in your life?”
 - What decisions do you think you should make today to be able to accomplish those goals?”
 - “What do you think you can do to keep Satan from winning that battle?”
- People’s convictions will be so much deeper and long lasting if we get them to think and process, and delve into their own thinking and the recesses of their soul, than if we simply tell them what is right and wrong in our opinion

Decision

Joshua 24:15

- Helping people decide what action they need to take and when is important in order for there to be a lasting change
- Simply counseling people without a decision to change will be frustrating to everyone involved
- However, decisions have incredible power as a foundation or a starting point for things to be different
- A simple question such as, “What do you plan to do about the things we discussed?” will help people think through a plan of attack
- Most of the time, the follow up question of, “When do you feel you need to do this?” is also important
- Given their answers, there may need to be more discussion about their specific plan of action, however, you giving them the plan of action should be avoided at all cost
- This will only be your conviction projected onto them and will produce short-lived results at best
- If they come up with the plan and the timetable, they will own their repentance and change is much more likely to take place

Follow Through

Hebrews 3:12

- After people have developed convictions of their own based on God’s word, and come up with a plan of attack of their own, they are now ready to be held accountable to that
- Praying for them about the issue and asking them how it is going is critical
- If they have been successful, be very encouraging
- If they have made progress but haven’t totally done everything, be encouraging and discuss further action using the above methods
- If they have failed completely, reaffirm your love for them and belief in them
- Figure out exactly what did or did not happen and why
- Find out how they feel about it
- Use the Bible to develop deeper convictions, pray specifically about the situation, and have them come up with another plan
- Then revisit the issue in a timely manner
- This takes faith, love, and patience, but it will produce lasting change in the disciple we are trying to mature

Assignment:

- Head – Being to read a book such as “Golden Rule Leadership” which will help further you skills in this area.
- Heart – Write down or thoroughly recall a time where accountability from other disciples was an indispensable tool in fostering your own spiritual growth. The more vulnerable and open this story is, sprinkled with a little humor, the more effective this story will be

- Hands – Be prepared to share this story with your house church as part of the following house church lesson on this topic

House Church Training – Lesson 14

Being Accountable to One Another

Introduction

- Begin by sharing your own of personal growth through accountability
- Give others a chance to share their own stories (but be mindful of overall time)
- Explain to the group that today's lesson will look at how to be most effective in being accountable to one another and helping one another to be spurred on by effective accountability

Their Own Convictions

Luke 19:5-10

- Following his conversation with Jesus, Zacchaeus was so motivated that he decided to completely repent of his greed by giving ½ of his possessions to the poor and pay back everyone he cheated four times the amount that he cheated them
- We don't know precisely what they talked about, but we do get a glimpse of how Jesus ministered to people
- Jesus knew that it would be useless to hold someone accountable to be righteous unless they came to their own deep convictions
- **Question: Why is it so important that people come to their own convictions based on spiritual truth rather than just being prepared to do what they are told?**
 - Accountability is only effective if it is based on the convictions that someone already has. Accountability will not create convictions, it will only call someone to live up to convictions that they already have
 - Once someone has deep convictions we are able to use their own convictions as a foundation upon which to build
 - Then we are able to come up with a plan and a way to help them stay on course
- As fellow disciples we must learn how to help one another come to deep convictions about their sin and their work in the Lord

Questions

Matthew 16:13, 15; Luke 10:25-26; 36-37

- **Question: Why do you think that Jesus asked questions so often?**
- **Question: Why can questioning someone effectively be more productive than simply telling them something?**
- Asking the right questions can help people process spiritual truths
- They can help people realize what they are feeling
- They can help people come to deep convictions
- The right question can probe into someone's soul to expose their sin
- When we tell people what to do we short circuit the conviction process
- Reading a passage and then asking questions is the best way to help people come to convictions about the word of God
- **Questions keep their heart, mind, and soul engaged and on the examining block**
- However, we must be careful. We can ask a question but really just be telling people what to do

- For example: “Don’t you think it would be best to quit that job so you could be more involved with the church?”
- Better would be a series of questions such as these:
 - “What do you value most in life?”
 - “In the long haul what do you want to accomplish in your life?”
 - What decisions do you think you should make today to be able to accomplish those goals?”
 - “What do you think you can do to keep Satan from winning that battle?”
- Our convictions will be so much deeper and long lasting if we encourage others to think and process, and delve into their own thinking and the recesses of their soul, than if we simply tell them what is right and wrong in our opinion

Decision

Joshua 24:15

- **Question: Why is it important to help one another truly come to a decision point?**
 - Helping people decide what action they need to take and when is important in order for there to be a lasting change
- Simply counseling people without a decision to change will be frustrating to everyone involved
- However, decisions have incredible power as a foundation or a starting point for things to be different
- A simple question such as, “What do you plan to do about the things we discussed?” will help people think through a plan of attack
- Most of the time, the follow up question of, “When do you feel you need to do this?” is also important
- Given their answers, there may need to be more discussion about their specific plan of action, however, you giving them the plan of action should be avoided at all cost
- This will only be your conviction projected onto them and will produce short-lived results at best
- If they come up with the plan and the timetable, they will own their repentance and change is much more likely to take place

Follow Through

Hebrews 3:12

- **Question: What does this passage mean for us?**
- **Question: Why is it important to follow up and follow through with someone if we want to truly motivate through accountability?**
- After people have developed convictions of their own based on God’s word, and come up with a plan of attack of their own, they are now ready to be held accountable to that
- Praying for them about the issue and asking them how it is going is critical
- If they have been successful, be very encouraging
- If they have made progress but haven’t totally done everything, be encouraging and discuss further action using the above methods
- If they have failed completely, reaffirm your love for them and belief in them
- Figure out exactly what did or did not happen and why
- Find out how they feel about it
- Use the Bible to develop deeper convictions, pray specifically about the situation, and have them come up with another plan
- Then revisit the issue in a timely manner
- This takes faith, love, and patience, but it will produce lasting change in the disciple we are trying to mature

Action

Go back through the notes of this lesson and study through the Scriptures that we read. Identify at least one area of effective accountability in which you need to improve and work on. Develop a plan that will help you to grow in that area and share the plan with at least one other person. Ask them to hold you accountable in your plan.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 15

Expectations

Groups that have low expectations usually meet them and go no higher. Groups that have no expectations for them will probably go nowhere. But groups that have high expectations usually meet them or come close. If we are to accomplish great things in our house churches then there must be expectations that we have for the members of the house church. Clear expectations that everyone agrees to and are followed up on are powerful and help keep us focused on where we want to go.

Clear Expectations

Numbers 13:17-20; Luke 10:3-12

- Moses was extremely clear and detailed in his directions for the spies
- Jesus was extremely clear in his expectations for his disciples
- What do you expect of the people in your house church in terms of their personal relationships with God, with one another, with their family, their discipling times, evangelism, etc.?
- Have you clearly communicated those expectations to the point that each person in your house church could give a pretty good idea of what they are?

Commit

1 Samuel 23:1-5

- Sometimes as leaders we don't have high expectations for fear that people will not meet those expectations or that they will think we are lording our leadership over them
- In order for this not to happen it is important to get your people to enthusiastically agree to expectations from the outset
- This is where you have to explain why you think your expectations are right and godly and then to persuade them to take on the expectations as their own
- It is important to really get a healthy discussion going concerning the expectations
- This can take place in a group or individually
- If you feel that your expectations may meet with opposition you may first want to talk it through with a few people in the group individually
- David at first did not get his men to commit, but as he continued to pray and talk with his men they got behind him
- We must listen to the Lord first and foremost but also be willing to realistically change our expectations as we receive input from others
- It is important to find a healthy balance between being realistic and still having high expectations

Follow Up

Luke 10:17-20

- Without follow up there is really no expectation
- A teacher who gives assignments but never collects them really does not have genuine expectations for the students to complete the assignments
- We must see how our people are doing with the expectations that they have committed to
- This does not have to be a heavy time at all

- It can be simple questions like:
 - “Hey, how did your weekly family devotional go last week?”
 - “I have been praying for your neighbor that you wanted to invite to house church, how did it go?”
- Part of following up is to give additional discipling or instruction to re-focus people on their original expectations
- This is important in order for people to make spiritual progress in their lives
- Imagine at your job if there was no follow up on any of your tasks
- How are you doing with following up with the people in your house church?

Resistance

Numbers 13:31-33

- Don't be surprised if people occasionally resist when you expect them to follow through on what they have committed to
- We must patiently keep the expectations while we help people work through their issues
- We cannot back off simply because people resist
- This is a test of our resolve and leadership

Sorrow

2 Corinthians 7:8-11

- It is natural for us not to want to feel guilt, pressure, or sorrow at falling short
- Avoiding these things, however, would be a mistake
- Many want to avoid expectations because they foresee that after expectations come nothing but guilt, pressure, and sorrow
- Yet these things can be instrumental in our spiritual growth if used in a wise and godly manner
- Where appropriate, we must not avoid these things, rather we need to help them process these correctly

Grace and Mercy

James 2:12-13; Matthew 5:7

- In all of our expectations few will perform perfectly
- It is important that we show much grace in failure
- We should share our own failures
- We need to help people to get back on the horse and try again if they have fallen short
- Perseverance will be a great lesson learned if we handle expectations correctly

Assignment:

- Head – Before considering expectations for those that you lead, you must have expectations for yourself. What are the expectations that you have for yourself as disciple, a house church leader, a husband, father, etc.?
- Heart – How does 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 help us to understand the importance of high expectations that are clearly expressed when it comes to ministry work? Do you feel that having clearly expressed expectations are important? Why or why not?
- Hands – Write out the expectations that you have for the members of your house church as a whole and as individuals. Run them by a few others and get their feedback.

House Church Training – Lesson 15

Having & Meeting Expectations

Introduction

- Respond to the following quote by Charles Kettering:
 - “High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation.”
- Ask the group to respond to the following quote by Ralph Marston:
 - “Don't lower your expectations to meet your performance. Raise your level of performance to meet your expectations. Expect the best of yourself, and then do what is necessary to make it a reality.”

Clear Expectations

Numbers 13:17-20; Luke 10:3-12

- Moses was extremely clear and detailed in his directions for the spies
- Jesus was extremely clear in his expectations for his disciples
- **Question: Do you think that having expectations are important? Why or why not?**
- **Question: Do you feel that this house church has clearly defined expectations that help each other grow spiritually?**

Commit

1 Samuel 23:1-5

- **Question: What are some of the things that keep us from having or wanting to have expectations for ourselves or others?**
- **Question: In the house church setting, why is it important that we all understand and agree to the expectations of our group?**

Follow Up

Luke 10:17-20

- **Question: Why is following up with others in the group important for expectations?**
- Without follow up there is really no expectation
- A teacher who gives assignments but never collects them really does not have genuine expectations for the students to complete the assignments
- **Question: What are some ways that expectations can be done incorrectly and be unhelpful?**
- **Question: How can expectations be helpful if done wisely?**

Resistance

Numbers 13:31-33

- **Question: What are some reasons that people resist expectations?**
- **Question: What are some things that a group can do so that resistance is limited?**

Grace and Mercy

James 2:12-13; Matthew 5:7

- In all of our expectations few will perform perfectly
- It is important that we show much grace in failure
- We need to help one another to get back on the horse and try again if we have fallen short of our own expectations
- Perseverance will be a great lesson learned if we handle expectations correctly

Action

Explain what you think the agreed upon expectations for your house church should be. Give people a little time to respond and give feedback. If all goes well, make an agreement with one another to accept and hold one another to these expectations. If there are still some questions or concerns, call it a night after some good prayer and then talk to individuals during the course of the week to work out any remaining issues.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 16

Effective Encouragement

Everyone will undergo periods of struggle and difficulty. One of the greatest tools that we have as Christians to help each other through those times and to foster environments of great spiritual growth is encouragement. As we allow the Spirit to work through us and inspire us to encourage and build up one another, we create powerful atmospheres for the Spirit to continue to bring us into maturity and growth.

Training Our Hearts and Minds Proverbs 31:10-31; Philippians 4:8

- Most people tend to reflect the expectations and things that others think of them
- If people constantly hear negative things about themselves, they will begin to believe it and feel defeated
- If people hear positive and encouraging things, they will begin to believe that and gravitate towards furthering that behavior
- Rather than finding faults, the writer of Proverbs 31 focused on the positive
 - Although the passage is probably about ideal wisdom personified, it still makes that point of focusing on the positive and building others up
- When we focus on the positive aspects of people, it is much less likely that we focus on the negative
- We are much more effective as leaders if we motivate people towards furthering positive behavior and characteristics rather than beating them away from negative behavior and characteristics
- When we attempt to focus on the aspects of Philippians 4:8 we will perceive people in a whole different light than we will if we are constantly on the prowl for their mistakes

Think and Choose Words Carefully Ephesians 4:29-31; Proverbs 12:18; Proverbs 13:3

- Our words should be well thought through before they leave our mouths
- Every word that we speak will have some effect
- Will the words we speak, in the end, have the desired result?
- One way to help with this is to work in our minds from the end of the conversation to the beginning before it even happens
 - We do this by determining the primary point that we want people to walk away with and then work backwards to determine what words we need to arrive at that end
- When we are frustrated with people, we can vent our frustration on them with the justification that it is true
- However, when they leave, we have to consider whether we have prepared them to conquer the world for Christ or whether we are sending them away discouraged
- Our words must be carefully chosen to build up our people, and help them see beyond themselves to what God sees, and we must always fill our people's hearts with hope
- We can have very challenging conversations and still leave people with an incredible amount of hope and vision

Getting to the Bottom of It Romans 8:5-9

- Most of the issues that Christians have, if not all of them, come from having our minds set on our own fleshly desires rather than things of the Spirit. This is almost always the core issue
- When we seek to encourage someone towards positive behavior or away from negative behavior it is always the most effective thing to get to the heart of the matter
 - What are their minds and hearts set on?
 - We can help encourage people by helping them to ensure that their minds are truly set on the things of God rather than the desires of their flesh
 - Then we can appeal to their spiritual natures and guide them towards that
- For example: Imagine that your child is being lazy:
 - You could berate him for his laziness and he would walk away feeling sinful and hopeless
 - Or you could realize that his laziness is probably a result of him having his mind set on being comfortable
 - Realizing this you could encourage him by appealing to his desire to please God
 - You could say something like, “I know you want to be great for God, so the way to do that is to fight against the desire to be comfortable and develop a strong work ethic, and I can help you because I’ve been there myself”
- If we get to the heart of the matter and give people the right vision of what they can be, the results can be very encouraging

What Encourages Acts 20:1-2

- It is obvious that as Paul traveled, he thought through how he could encourage the saints in every city that he had been to
- We have to spend some time thinking about how to encourage others
- Satan spends his time figuring out how to discourage them, and we must counterattack his efforts
- Whatever encourages you will typically encourage other people as well
- People are encouraged by many things such as
 - Good news
 - The greatness of God
 - A special time together
 - Telling them positive things about them or their growth spiritually
 - Telling them positive things about their family
 - The promises of God
 - Gifts
 - Sharing victories
 - People having vision for them
 - Someone really listening to what they felt
 - Praying together
 - Someone visiting them out of the blue
 - Being around someone that is happy
 - Being helped to overcome a sin
 - Sharing how they have made a difference
 - Being around others that call them higher in their love and faith
 - Empathizing with what they are going through
 - Calling them regularly to see how they are doing
 - Meeting a specific need
 - Believing in them, especially after they have stumbled
 - Etc.

Deeper Issues Exodus 6:8-9

- There are times when a person's inner struggles outweigh their ability to be encouraged
- When that happens it's likely because there are still things going on in their heart that haven't been exposed or dealt with
- It may be sin that has not been confessed, a hurt that has not been dealt with, anger that has not been resolved, etc.
- These things must be explored and talked through thoroughly so that people can be freed to be encouraged in the Lord

Assignment:

- Head – Do a word study on the various words that are translated “encourage” in the New Testament? How does seeing the definitions and uses help you to better understand the biblical concept of encouragement?
- Heart – Spend some time thinking about or jotting down the ways that you are encouraged and the things that most encourage you. How will doing this help you to be more effective at encouraging others?
- Hands – Make a plan to encourage every same-gendered member of your house church. Encourage your spouse or co-leader to do the same with those of their gender.

House Church Training – Lesson 16

Encouraging One Another

Introduction

- Read Proverbs 15:23 and ask people to respond as to what they think it means
- Read Proverbs 15:30 and ask people to respond as to what they think it means
- **Question: What role does encouraging one another play within a Christian family?**
- **Question: Why can discouragement be such a dangerous thing to a community?**

Training Our Hearts and Minds Proverbs 31:10-31; Philippians 4:8

- Most people tend to reflect the expectations and things that others think of them
- If people constantly hear negative things about themselves, they will begin to believe it and feel defeated
- If people hear positive and encouraging things, they will begin to believe that and gravitate towards furthering that behavior
- Rather than finding faults, the writer of Proverbs 31 focused on the positive
 - Although the passage is probably about ideal wisdom personified, it still makes that point of focusing on the positive and building others up
- When we focus on the positive aspects of people, it is much less likely that we focus on the negative
- **Question: What part does encouragement play in spiritual growth?**
- When we attempt to focus on the aspects of Philippians 4:8 we will perceive people in a whole different light than we will if we are constantly on the prowl for their mistakes

Think and Choose Words Carefully Ephesians 4:29-31; Proverbs 12:18; Proverbs 13:3

- Our words should be well thought through before they leave our mouths
- Every word that we speak will have some effect
- Will the words we speak, in the end, have the desired result?
- One way to help with this is to work in our minds from the end of the conversation to the beginning before it even happens
 - We do this by determining the primary point that we want people to walk away with and then work backwards to determine what words we need to arrive at that end
- When we are frustrated with people, we can vent our frustration on them with the justification that it is true
- However, when they leave, we have to consider whether we have prepared them to conquer the world for Christ or whether we are sending them away discouraged
- Our words must be carefully chosen to build up our people, and help them see beyond themselves to what God sees, and we must always fill our people's hearts with hope
- We can have very challenging conversations and still leave people with an incredible amount of hope and vision
- **Question: What does Proverbs 18:21 when it comes to the way we speak to one another in encouragement or otherwise?**

Getting to the Bottom of It Romans 8:5-9

- Most of the issues that Christians have, if not all of them, come from having our minds set on our own fleshly desires rather than things of the Spirit. This is almost always the core issue
- When we seek to encourage someone towards positive behavior or away from negative behavior it is always the most effective thing to get to the heart of the matter
 - What are their minds and hearts set on?
 - We can help encourage people by helping them to ensure that their minds are truly set on the things of God rather than the desires of their flesh
 - Then we can appeal to their spiritual natures and guide them towards that
- For example: Imagine that your child is being lazy:
 - You could berate him for his laziness and he would walk away feeling sinful and hopeless
 - Or you could realize that his laziness is probably a result of him having his mind set on being comfortable
 - Realizing this you could encourage him by appealing to his desire to please God
 - You could say something like, “I know you want to be great for God, so the way to do that is to fight against the desire to be comfortable and develop a strong work ethic, and I can help you because I’ve been there myself”
- If we get to the heart of the matter and give people the right vision of what they can be, the results can be very encouraging
- **Question: What are some of the things that we can have our minds set on that are not godly values?**

What Encourages Acts 20:1-2

- It is obvious that as Paul traveled, he thought through how he could encourage the saints in every city that he had been to
- We have to spend some time thinking about how to encourage others
- Satan spends his time figuring out how to discourage them, and we must counterattack his efforts
- Whatever encourages you will typically encourage other people as well
 - **Question: Let’s brainstorm a bit. What are some of the things that we can do to encourage others? What are things that we as a house church could do to encourage one another?**

Deeper Issues Exodus 6:8-9

- There are times when a person’s inner struggles outweigh their ability to be encouraged
- When that happens it’s likely because there are still things going on in their heart that haven’t been exposed or dealt with
- It may be sin that has not been confessed, a hurt that has not been dealt with, anger that has not been resolved, etc.
- These things must be explored and talked through thoroughly so that people can be freed to be encouraged in the Lord

Action

Ask each person to come up with a plan of how they can encourage at least three other disciples within their family group over the next week or two. Of course they can always exceed that number.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 17

Developing an Evangelistic Plan

One of the most fundamental charges that Jesus gave his disciples is to go show the world how to be his disciple and call them to that life. We call this evangelism. All disciples want to be effective in evangelism both as individuals and as house church and church but many of us don't have a plan to do that. The house church that does not have an evangelistic plan is probably not going to be very successful in evangelism. God calls us to have well thought-out and prayed-through plans that we lay before him for his glory and then go about executing. God works through our plans and helps us to achieve the things that he desires for us as children in his family.

Inspiration **Acts 14:21-28**

- Inspiring people to do the work of evangelism and to have faith that they will be successful is half of the battle
- God has always used inspirational stories to give his people confidence
- Giving people the vision of what will happen after they do the work is inspirational
- Telling people the stories of others that have done what they are doing and been successful is inspirational
- A story of someone that shares their same weakness but that has overcome it is inspirational
- Getting our people to pray with faith is inspirational
- Rallying your house church around a promise of God is inspirational
- Without inspiration the motivation of your house church will dry up but it is important to ensure that their motivation continues to come from God's Word and the work of the Holy Spirit working through God's people rather than the feats and strength of men
- As leaders we must provide a constant source of inspiration and encouragement to our house churches

Specific Direction **Matthew 10:1-8**

- It is difficult to be inspired towards a specific goal if people aren't clear on what they are trying to accomplish
- Expectations are important
- If they are too high it will discourage people, if they are too low people won't be inspired and little will be accomplished
- Once expectations have been set together and people are clear on what the plan is, everyone can begin praying about it and embracing it together

Specific Plans **Acts 1:8; Romans 1:16**

- The early church had specific broad evangelistic plans such as that seen in Acts 1:8
- They would first evangelize Judea, then Samaria, and then expand out to the ends of the earth

- This pattern was continued in each town as they spread out as Paul would first go to the synagogues and preach to the Jews first to establish a base from which to work and then he would expand out to the Gentiles
- Each time Paul sent out on a journey, he had a plan (although sometimes that plan would change based on the leading of the Holy Spirit); Every time Paul got to a new town, he had a plan; Once new churches were established Paul would have a plan for that church and to continue to expand the gospel into new areas (see Rom. 16:22-24)

Leading the Way

Judges 7:17-21

- Leaders must lead, not just coach others
- You must be the most determined and lead from the front
- When you fail, you must rebound quickly
- There must be stories of your exploits and your weaknesses and how you have overcome and are still working to overcome current weaknesses
- This inspires people to keep going

Accountability

Mark 6:30; 1 Samuel 15:13-19

- Finding out how people are doing with the task that they have undertaken and redirecting them if necessary is critical
- Without accountability you have no idea if your plan is working or not
- However, accountability must always be done in a spirit of love, gentleness, encouragement and concern for the lost and for your people
- Accountability motivated by love will produce happy productive disciples

Evaluation

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

- After a set time you need to evaluate whether your plan is producing what you expected
- If it is, you may want to tweak it to be even more effective
- If it is not, you need to ask why not and make the necessary changes
- Nothing is more discouraging to your people than a leader who keeps doing the same thing over and over again even though it is not working
- Nothing is more encouraging than for your people to see you humbly admit your mistakes, fix your mistakes, and then experience success because the Spirit has blessed your humility and willingness to be led

Strength in Number

Luke 10:1

- Don't ever underestimate the power of having a partner in evangelism
- The encouragement of another disciple can be vital
- Going out together is encouraging and fun
- Being evangelistic with others and even in groups can help us to be more prepared to be evangelistic when we find ourselves alone
- It will require both evangelism together and on our own in order to realize the evangelistic plans for our house church

Assignment:

- Head – Other than Matthew 28:18-20, what Scriptures (both directly stated and as a whole theme) call us to be evangelistic people
- Heart – Which passage of Scripture most motivates you to engage in and stay focused on evangelism
- Hands – Choose the passage from above that most motivates you in evangelism and find a creative way to share that passage with other disciples in your house church (for example: you might write it out on attractive cards that can be kept permanently and give it to others while asking them to not just take it but to memorize it and think about how it might motivate them). Plan to do this as a supplementary portion of the next house church lesson which is intentionally shorter so that you have plenty of time for this as well as time for good discussion about your evangelistic plans as a house church.

House Church Training – Lesson 17

Planning to Evangelize

Introduction

- Read Proverbs 15:23 and ask people to respond as to what they think it means
- Read Proverbs 15:30 and ask people to respond as to what they think it means
- **Question: What role does encouraging one another play within a Christian family?**
- **Question: Why can discouragement be such a dangerous thing to a community?**

Why are We Evangelistic?

Matthew 28:18-20

- **Question: What does this passage call us to do as disciples of Jesus?**
- **Question: Why did Jesus call his people to evangelism rather than just living holy lives? After all, many religions don't "evangelize" at all? Why was Jesus' plan so different than that?**
- **Question: Why is it important to note that this is a command from Jesus and not just a suggestion or a nice idea?**

What Motivates Us to Evangelism?

Romans 1:16

- **Question: How can this passage motivate us to evangelism?**
- **Question: What motivates you to evangelism?**
- Share the passage from the "Hands" section of the previous house church leader lesson that motivates you to evangelism

Their Plan, Our Plan

Acts 1:8; Romans 1:16

- **Question: What was the general evangelistic plan of the early church?**
- **Question: Why is it important to have a plan when it comes to evangelism?**
- **Question: What is our plan as a house church to bring visitors?**
- **Question: What is our plan as a house church to be evangelistic?**
- **Question: What is our plan as individual members of our house church to be evangelistic?**

Action

Make a long-term evangelistic plan and goals for your house church and seek to carry it out together. In the short term ask everyone to set some time where you get together in small groups and go sharing your faith with others.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 18

Multiplication

God's plan for his family is to work through individuals to create a people. This requires multiplication. Once we have been brought into Christ, we are given the task of the ministry of reconciliation where we both seek to allow God to use us to multiply our communities of discipleship as well as expand the kingdom of God into ever-increasing areas. Thus, we need to understand and embrace the principles of multiplication within our house churches so that we are available and ready for God to use us.

Multiplying is at the Core of Christianity **Mark 4:20; John 14:12-13; Matthew 13:31-33**

- Jesus' desire is that the rule and reign of God made manifest in the hearts of humans will multiply within the lives of individuals, within Christian communities, and that those communities will then multiply
- When God's word falls on a good heart it will multiply 30, 60, or even 100 times what was sown
- This vision is at the core of every house church
- Even though we may love the dynamic of our house church and the fellowship that we have, the goal is to multiply continuously so that more and more might be added to God's family
- We can see this principle at play when Jesus sends out the 12 in Luke 9 and then sends out 72 in Luke 10
- Imagine if our house churches were expanding like that
- It takes faith for us to be able to believe that our group can become larger and larger but Jesus did say that his disciples would do greater things than he when it comes to bringing people into the kingdom of God
- We need, however, to remember that our job is not multiplication that is God's. Our job is to preach the word, share the gospel, and make ourselves available to be used by God. We must never forget that it is his job to make things grow.

Faith is Critical **Isaiah 60:21-22; Romans 4:16-17**

- The prophecy in Isaiah 60 concerns the time of the kingdom
- Isaiah says that through the power of the Messiah, the least can become a thousand and the smallest a mighty nation
- It is the Lord who will do this
- It is easy to look at some house churches and not logically see how God could use it to grow and multiply
- We might see people with many spiritual issues or weaknesses that have rendered them seemingly powerless but we must see them as God does
- There is a reason that God said the least will become a thousand
- God wants us to see people as they will be and not as they are
- If leaders have this kind of faith it will translate to the rest of the house church
- The spiritual issues still must be dealt with, however, when there is the faith in people's ability to change and be used, it makes doing so much easier
- God specializes in creating families where there is no logical visible way to do so; it is his work

Dream, Think, and Plan to Multiply **1 Chronicles 28:11-12, 19**

- David passed on his dream for the Temple to his son
- In a similar way, it is wise for us to pass on our dreams to all of those in our lives that we lead
- David had thoroughly thought through how to build the different parts of the Temple and he had plan draw up
- In order for our dreams to multiply to become a reality, we must thoroughly think through how we are going to get it done
- We must think about who will be the next leaders and start training them
- We must think through where it makes sense to put a new group
- We must look ahead 5-10 years and think through where we feel that God is calling our group to be and how we are going to get there
- It is obvious from this passage that God had put the dream on David's heart, and God gave him the understanding of how to accomplish all of the details of the plan
- We have to pray for God to give us similar wisdom and insight of how to multiply our house churches

Everyone's Work **Matthew 28:18-20**

- Jesus called every single disciple into his plan of multiplication
- We must do our best to make sure that each member of the house church shares in the dream and the work of multiplying
- God will use each person differently but he can use a group mightily to multiply incredibly fast if everyone is committed to it

Assignment:

- Head – What would you like for your house church to look like in one year? Five years? Ten years? Spend some time considering that in detail.
- Heart – What convictions are necessary for you and for your group to have in order to allow the Spirit to work through you to fulfill those dreams
- Hands – Develop a specific plan for growth and multiplication for your house church over the next year, keeping mind your overall dreams for five and ten year growth. Pray at every step along the way so that you do your best to ensure that God's plans are your plans.

House Church Training – Lesson 18

A Multiplying House Church

Introduction

- Read Proverbs 15:23 and ask people to respond as to what they think it means

Multiplying is at the Core of Christianity

Mark 4:20; Matthew 13:31-33

- **Question: What happens when the word of God finds the soil of a good heart?**
- **Question: What happens when the kingdom of God is let loose in our communities?**
- **Question: Do you see a pattern?**
- Jesus' desire is that the rule and reign of God made manifest in the hearts of humans will multiply within the lives of individuals, within Christian communities, and that those communities will then multiply
- Even though we may love the dynamic of our house church and the fellowship that we have, the goal is to multiply continuously so that more and more might be added to God's family
- We can see this principle at play when Jesus sends out the 12 in Luke 9 and then sends out 72 in Luke 10
- Imagine if our house churches were expanding like that

Greater Things?

John 14:12-13

- It takes faith for us to be able to believe that our group can become larger and larger but Jesus did say that his disciples would do greater things than he when it comes to bringing people into the kingdom of God
- We need, however, to remember that our job is not multiplication that is God's. Our job is to preach the word, share the gospel, and make ourselves available to be used by God. We must never forget that it is his job to make things grow.

Faith is Critical

Isaiah 60:21-22; Romans 4:16-17

- The prophecy in Isaiah 60 concerns the time of the kingdom
- Isaiah says that through the power of the Messiah, the least can become a thousand and the smallest a mighty nation
- It is the Lord who will do this
- **Question: How can this verse in Isaiah inspire us? Challenge us?**
 - We might see people with many spiritual issues or weaknesses that have rendered them seemingly powerless but we must see them as God does
 - There is a reason that God said the least will become a thousand
 - God wants us to see people as they will be and not as they are

Dream, Think, and Plan to Multiply

1 Chronicles 28:11-12, 19

- David passed on his dream for the Temple to his son
- In a similar way, it is wise for us to pass on our dreams to all of those in our lives that we lead
- David had thoroughly thought through how to build the different parts of the Temple and he had plan draw up
- In order for our dreams to multiply to become a reality, we must thoroughly think through how we are going to get it done
- Question: What would we like this house church to look like a year from now? Five years from now? Ten **years from now?**
- We have to pray for God to give us similar wisdom and insight of how to multiply our house churches

Everyone's Work

Matthew 28:18-20

- Jesus called every single disciple into his plan of multiplication
- We must do our best to make sure that each member of the house church shares in the dream and the work of multiplying
- God will use each person differently but he can use a group mightily to multiply incredibly fast if everyone is committed to it
- **Question: What specifically is your part in this?**

Action

Present and/or develop a plan for your house church to multiply. Once you have agreed to it, begin immediately to put it into action as a house church. This plan should be as specific as possible in the future but particularly specific in the immediate here and now.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 19

Winning Souls as a House Church

Winning souls and adding to the kingdom of God is different from reaching out or sharing our faith. These are elements but separate elements of evangelism. Once we have reached out to or connected with people, they don't just automatically become disciples. That takes time, effort, a plan, and guidance from the Holy Spirit at every step of the way.

Developing an “*Oikos*” **Luke 5:29-32; Luke 19:5-7**

- *Oikos* is a Greek word referring to your sphere of influence through your relationships
- As disciples it is important to have people that are not disciples that we have made friends with that we are trying to move towards becoming disciples
- The more people that we are friends with the greater chance we have to help them become disciples
- This can be people that we have met through cold-contact evangelism, co-workers, or our neighbors
- The point is that each of us has a group of people that we are working with to become a person in their life that has influence because of our genuine relationship with them
- There are many ways to develop our own *oikos*, but one group of disciples developed a new home ministry where they visited all of the people that bought a new home in their area
 - People moving in tend to know few people and have few friends in the area and they often have needs and no church home yet
 - This is a great way to meet new people and develop an *oikos*
- Developing these types of influencing friendships can take a while but they can be very fruitful in the long run

Getting Involved **1 Thessalonians 2:8; John 1:38-39**

- We must find a way to share our lives with the people in our *oikos*
- This is where the other members of our house church come in
- Having a family devotional with a family of disciples and a family that is part of your *oikos* is a powerful way to show them your love, the power of Christian relationships, great parenting, and the power of the Bible
- Sports, hospitality, and running errands together are just a few of the ways we can open our lives to the people that are part of our *oikos*
- As they see our lives and our love they will begin to be more and more open about what is really going on in their lives
- Think about what really drew you to God and his kingdom; it was probably that you came into the *oikos* of a disciple

Meeting Needs **John 8:7-11; 1 Peter 4:8**

- Jesus met people's physical needs and then used this as an avenue to open them up to the saving of their souls

- This woman's need was to be saved from the men that were ready to kill her
- Jesus saved her and then preached to her
- In John 9 he does the same with a blind man
- Jesus fed people and cured people, but these acts were not the end of themselves
- Jesus wanted to announce the kingdom of God through these acts and eventually bring them into it
- People have perceived needs and real needs
- Every person's real need is to be saved from their sin and be reconciled with God
- However, few people feel this need very acutely
- Once people see that we are willing to help them meet their perceived needs they are usually more open to us helping them with their real need as well
- Troubled marriages, out of control children, grief over a family death, needing help with a home project, needing a babysitter, moving furniture, the list is endless
- As a house church we can help each other meet the needs of people in our *oikos* and open their hearts to the gospel

Sharing Your Faith **Mark 5:19-20; Acts 1:8**

- Often Jesus would tell people to share what God had done for them after he had helped them
- Thinking through why we love God so much, why we love his kingdom so much and what God has done for us will help us develop our testimony
- Our personal testimony is one of the most powerful tools we have in converting our friends (just as the apostles were called to be witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, we are called to be witnesses to the power of the resurrection of Jesus in our lives)
- As people from our *oikos* open up to us, we can open up them about how God has changed our lives so completely and why he means so much to us
- It is important to let people know right away about your involvement in God's kingdom for two reasons
 - First, this will help you figure out if a person is completely not open so that we are able to wisely invest our time into the most open people
 - Second, it is important in every way to be transparent about our motives and hearts

Many Hands Make the Work Light **1 Corinthians 3:6-9**

- Helping people from your *oikos* become disciples is a group activity
- If we try to win souls alone, we will be very frustrated and fruitless
- Bringing people to the house church will help all the disciples get involved with them
- Getting as many people involved on as many levels as possible will help your visitor become a disciple

Your Routine **Acts 17:2; Acts 5:42**

- The apostles had certain routines that helped them in their effectiveness
- Whatever we do routinely will tell us who we will become and what we will accomplish
- Each disciple should have some kind of evangelistic routine
- Maybe you share at the gym daily
- Maybe every Saturday you meet new neighbors
- Whatever it is, each disciple should think through their lives and come up with an evangelistic routine that works well for them
- Share this routine with others so that you can learn from one another as well as help one another stay on track

Assignment:

- Head – What is your *oikos* look like right now? Spend some time and either list out or map out your *oikos*
- Heart – What are the needs of each person on your list? Do you know what they are? If not, how can you go about finding out?
- Hands – Create a plan to either work effectively with the people within your *oikos* or if the list is a little sparse right now, create a plan to work towards expanding your *oikos*

House Church Training – Lesson 19

Having an *Oikos*

Introduction

- **Question: Can you tell us about someone who had a profound influence on your life? How were they able to do that?**
- **Question: Who are some of the most influential people in your life in regards to your spiritual life (not including your parents)? How were they able to influence you spiritually?**
- Having influence in the lives of others can be a powerful way to not just build friendships and have influence, but to bring them into the kingdom of God

Developing an “*Oikos*” Luke 5:29-32; Luke 19:5-7

- *Oikos* is a Greek word referring to your sphere of influence through your relationships
- As disciples it is important to have people that are not disciples that we have made friends with that we are trying to move towards becoming disciples
- The more people that we are friends with the greater chance we have to help them become disciples
- This can be people that we have met through cold-contact evangelism, co-workers, or our neighbors
- The point is that each of us has a group of people that we are working with to become a person in their life that has influence because of our genuine relationship with them
- **Question: What are some of the ways that we can develop an influence with others**
- Developing these types of influencing friendships can take a while but they can be very fruitful in the long run

Getting Involved 1 Thessalonians 2:8; John 1:38-39

- We must find a way to share our lives with the people in our *oikos*
- This is where the other members of our house church come in
- Having a family devotional with a family of disciples and a family that is part of your *oikos* is a powerful way to show them your love, the power of Christian relationships, great parenting, and the power of the Bible
- Sports, hospitality, and running errands together are just a few of the ways we can open our lives to the people that are part of our *oikos*
- As they see our lives and our love they will begin to be more and more open about what is really going on in their lives
- Think about what really drew you to God and his kingdom; it was probably that you came into the *oikos* of a disciple
- **Question: What are some ways that we, as a house church, can help one another within our own *oikos***

Meeting Needs John 8:7-11; 1 Peter 4:8

- Jesus met people’s physical needs and then used this as an avenue to open them up to the saving of their souls

- This woman's need was to be saved from the men that were ready to kill her
- Jesus saved her and then preached to her
- In John 9 he does the same with a blind man
- Jesus fed people and cured people, but these acts were not the end of themselves
- Jesus wanted to announce the kingdom of God through these acts and eventually bring them into it
- People have perceived needs and real needs
- Every person's real need is to be saved from their sin and be reconciled with God
- However, few people feel this need very acutely
- Once people see that we are willing to help them meet their perceived needs they are usually more open to us helping them with their real need as well
- Troubled marriages, out of control children, grief over a family death, needing help with a home project, needing a babysitter, moving furniture, the list is endless
- As a house church we can help each other meet the needs of people in our *oikos* and open their hearts to the gospel

Sharing Your Faith

Mark 5:19-20; Acts 1:8

- Often Jesus would tell people to share what God had done for them after he had helped them
- Thinking through why we love God so much, why we love his kingdom so much and what God has done for us will help us develop our testimony
- Our personal testimony is one of the most powerful tools we have in converting our friends (just as the apostles were called to be witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, we are called to be witnesses to the power of the resurrection of Jesus in our lives)
- As people from our *oikos* open up to us, we can open up them about how God has changed our lives so completely and why he means so much to us
- It is important to let people know right away about your involvement in God's kingdom for two reasons
 - First, this will help you figure out if a person is completely not open so that we are able to wisely invest our time into the most open people
 - Second, it is important in every way to be transparent about our motives and hearts
- **Question: How can we share our testimony with others? What would you tell them?**

Many Hands Make the Work Light

1 Corinthians 3:6-9

- Helping people from your *oikos* become disciples is a group activity
- If we try to win souls alone, we will be very frustrated and fruitless
- Bringing people to the house church will help all the disciples get involved with them
- Getting as many people involved on as many levels as possible will help your visitor become a disciple

Your Routine

Acts 17:2; Acts 5:42

- The apostles had certain routines that helped them in their effectiveness
- Whatever we do routinely will tell us who we will become and what we will accomplish
- Each disciple should have some kind of evangelistic routine
- Maybe you share at the gym daily
- Maybe every Saturday you meet new neighbors
- Whatever it is, each disciple should think through their lives and come up with an evangelistic routine that works well for them

- Share this routine with others so that you can learn from one another as well as help one another stay on track
- **Question: Do you have an evangelistic routine? What is it?**

Action

Create a list of those that you are trying to help and bring into your oikos. Make specific notation of ways that you can help meet their needs. If you have a small oikos or none at all, what is your plan to expand it?

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 20

Urgent to Study the Bible with People

It has become somewhat trendy for Christians to say that they just want to love people without any agenda of helping them become a Christian, and then hope that they do. This might sound good but it is really not related to anything that Jesus did during his life. Jesus had an absolute agenda with everyone he encountered. He said clearly that he came to seek and save the lost and every encounter he had with people was aimed at showing them and ushering them towards the kingdom of God. That is how we really love people. We definitely want to be genuine in our love for people and not have that love contingent on whether or not they are following our timetable in them becoming a Christian but at the same time it is important to have a sense of urgency in wanting to study the Bible with those in our sphere of influence and helping them along as best we can.

People are Open John 4:34-35

- When we listen to the conversion stories of other Christians we realize that people really are out there that are open although there times when it doesn't seem that way
 - Many people that became Christians took awhile before they ever came to church
 - Many were praying for god to act in their lives
 - Many had a rough exterior only to have a soft and tender heart for God's word
- We must believe that many, many people will respond if we pursue them
- This verse tells us to open our eyes
- People that could become Christians are in our daytimers, they are people that have come to house church and church in the past, they are all around us
- God is pleading with us to be faithful and to open our eyes to see what he is doing behind the scenes

A Sense of Urgency Luke 19:5-10; Ephesians 5:14-16

- Jesus had a sense or urgency knowing that there were many lost people and knowing that once someone's heart is open, it will not stay open long
- Satan wants to close every open heart, and if we don't act quickly and allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit, he will do it
- God will provide the open door, and when he does we must be ready for the opportunity
- It is important that our ultimate desire is that everyone we have contact with would study the Bible
- This has to be and remain our focus

Ask John 5:6

- Often the only thing standing between someone studying the Bible with us and not is that we don't ask them
- One great way to ask is to get some one-on-one time with a person, such as a lunch or a coffee and share your life with them and ask them what they feel is their greatest spiritual need
- Whatever they say the answer can always be, "Why don't we get together and study the Bible about that"

Expect

Acts 18:10; Acts 14:1; Acts 14:21

- In each of these cases a large number of people were open to the gospel and became disciples
- That is not a guarantee that a large number will also become disciples in our city, but there is no reason not to pray for that and expect many people to respond positively to the gospel if we would only share it consistently
- We must not be satisfied with just a few
- There are many people all around us waiting for us to ask them to study the Bible and we must come through for them

Persevere

Galatians 6:9

- We must keep patiently pursuing people that have expressed an openness and not give up
- We simply cannot be discouraged because people don't have the sort of urgency, understanding, or discipline in studying the Bible with us or by themselves that we might desire
- They do need to show a thirst on their own but it usually demands perseverance and patience on our part to help them get where God wants them to be
- We are in a fight for souls and we must continue to rely on God's power and perseverance

Let's Do It

Colossians 4:17

- God has given us ministry opportunities wherever we look
- It is up to us to complete the work and do our part as well, as leaders, to inspire those in our house churches to do the same

Assignment:

- Head – Write out a list of all the people that you could study the bible with over the next two weeks
- Heart – Spend some time each day praying about each situation and asking God for boldness, confidence and the stick-to-it-ness to ask everyone on the list
- Hands – Make sure that you ask everyone on your list as soon as possible and be prepared to boast in what the Lord has done with those in your house church (you will challenge them to do the same thing so they will have some boasting in the Lord to do as well)

House Church Training – Lesson 20

Urgency and Perseverance

Introduction

- **Question: What does it mean to persevere?**
- **Question: Can you think of a time in your life when you persevered and the payoff was great because of your perseverance?**
- **Question: Can anyone share a story of some Christian showing great perseverance with you or someone else that became instrumental in helping you or that person become a disciple?**
- It is easy to grow weary and not have a sustained urgency in helping people to study the Bible and become Christians but it is vitally important that we do so

People are Open John 4:34-35

- When we listen to the conversion stories of other Christians we realize that people really are out there that are open although there times when it doesn't seem that way
 - Many people that became Christians took awhile before they ever came to church
 - Many were praying for god to act in their lives
 - Many had a rough exterior only to have a soft and tender heart for God's word
- We must believe that many, many people will respond if we pursue them
- This verse tells us to open our eyes
- People that could become Christians are in our daytimers, they are people that have come to house church and church in the past, they are all around us
- God is pleading with us to be faithful and to open our eyes to see what he is doing behind the scenes
- **Question: Why is it important to understand that there are many people open to the gospel that are out there in our community?**

A Sense of Urgency Luke 19:5-10; Ephesians 5:14-16

- Jesus had a sense or urgency knowing that there were many lost people and knowing that once someone's heart is open, it will not stay open long
- Satan wants to close every open heart, and if we don't act quickly and allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit, he will do it
- God will provide the open door, and when he does we must be ready for the opportunity
- It is important that our ultimate desire is that everyone we have contact with would study the Bible
- This has to be and remain our focus
- **Question: Do we have a sense of urgency to study the Bible with people?**
- **Question: What are some important pitfalls to avoid so that we are urgent but not overbearing?**

Ask John 5:6

- Often the only thing standing between someone studying the Bible with us and not is that we don't ask them

- One great way to ask is to get some one-on-one time with a person, such as a lunch or a coffee and share your life with them and ask them what they feel is their greatest spiritual need
- Whatever they say the answer can always be, “Why don’t we get together and study the Bible about that”
- **Question: What are some of the things that keep us from asking others to study the Bible?**
- **Question: What is the biblical response to those obstacles?**

Expect

Acts 18:10; Acts 14:1; Acts 14:21

- In each of these cases a large number of people were open to the gospel and became disciples
- That is not a guarantee that a large number will also become disciples in our city, but there is no reason not to pray for that and expect many people to respond positively to the gospel if we would only share it consistently
- We must not be satisfied with just a few
- There are many people all around us waiting for us to ask them to study the Bible and we must come through for them

Persevere

Galatians 6:9

- We must keep patiently pursuing people that have expressed an openness and not give up
- We simply cannot be discouraged because people don’t the sort of urgency, understanding, or discipline in studying the Bible with us or by themselves that we might desire
- They do need to show a thirst on their own but it usually demands perseverance and patience on our part to help them get where God wants them to be
- We are in a fight for souls and we must continue to rely on God’s power and perseverance
- **Question: What are some of the things that keep us from persevering with others as we seek to help them become Christians?**
- **Question: How do we overcome that?**

Let’s Do It

Colossians 4:17

- God has given us ministry opportunities wherever we look
- It is up to us to complete the work and do our part as well, as leaders, to inspire those in our house churches to do the same

Action

Write out a list of people that you could ask to study the Bible within the next two weeks and make sure that you go out and ask. Be prepared to come back for the next house church to boast in the Lord in what he has done in your own heart and the hearts and lives of others as you ask them to study the Bible.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 21

Winning Hearts

People are emotional beings. What we feel is our reality. We must understand this as leaders. No matter how much truth we are saying to people, if we have not made an emotional connection they will not follow. We must win people's hearts before we can take them to victory.

Expressive **John 14:3; 17:24**

- Jesus expressed his genuine love (and other feelings) to others often
- We can see from John 17 that this wasn't just some ploy but it was what he really felt
- We never outgrow the need to win each other over
- As soon as you take a relationship for granted, you begin to lose it

Giving Your Heart Away **2 Corinthians 6:11-13; 1 Peter 4:8**

- It is the leader's responsibility to win over the hearts of the people
- As a disciple, however, we should try to win over the hearts of the people who lead us as well as the people we lead
- We can never sit back and wait for someone to win over our heart
- We must target the most difficult people and win them over with love (and work to not be difficult ourselves)
- Paul made a decision to give the Corinthians his heart
- We must make a decision to give our hearts to others
- It was a sign of Paul's maturity to give his heart to people who had not yet given their heart to him

Personal Touch **Luke 8:40-56**

- As leaders in God's kingdom we must never lose touch with those we lead
- Jesus was always among the people including the sick, the demon possessed, the poor, the blind, and so on
- Many times we don't want to be with others because the needs are great and we can get overwhelmed
- Perhaps at times we can feel that if we stay with people who are loyal, mature, and predictable that they won't rock our boats or bring us challenges
- Whatever the reason we must fight to be around our people as much as possible and to touch them and love them
- Jesus' personal touch often took the form of serving people and meeting their felt needs
- When someone meets your needs you become bonded with them
- Napoleon made it a practice to know every one of his officers by name and to remember where they lived and which battles they had fought with him
- Robert E. Lee was known to visit the men in their campsites the night before any major battle. Often he met the next day's challenge without having slept

- Norman Schwarzkopf, on Christmas day, went from camp to camp to shake hands with his soldiers. In that one day he greeted over 4,000 soldiers
- Nelson Mandela made a practice of asking and remembering personal details about everyone who worked for him while he was President, including body guards
- Great leaders take the time to know the people they lead and keep in touch with them

Emotional Relatability **Hebrews 5:1-2; John 11:33-36**

- When we speak publicly or one-on-one we must first strive to connect emotionally with people before we can take them anywhere spiritually
- We must:
 - Let people know that we have felt the way they have felt before, even if it is sinful
 - We must let people know that despite their sin, we know that in their hearts they want to do right
 - Through the eyes of grace we must let people know how God feels about them
 - We must allow ourselves to get emotionally involved and feel what they are feeling at the moment so that we can help to lead them well
 - We must fight the feeling to “fix them” right away and first let them know that we are with them emotionally

Move Their Hearts **Acts 20:19-21; 26; 37**

- Paul did not just serve them and relate to them, he also was able to get them to repent, grow, and change because of the love that he had displayed
- Without expecting our people to repent, grow, and do great things for God, our emotional bonding will simply be sentimentality

Assignment:

- Head – Find at least five Scriptural passages of Paul sharing his heart with someone and study them out
- Heart – Spend some time considering what your emotional strengths and weaknesses are when it comes to building relationships. Are there any individuals within your group that you need to improve your emotional connection with?
- Hands – Make a plan to improve your relationship and emotional connection with anyone in your group that you identified that needs growth

House Church Training – Lesson 21

Giving Our Hearts

Introduction

- **Question: What does it mean to persevere?**
- **Question: Can you think of a time in your life when you persevered and the payoff was great because of your perseverance?**
- **Question: Can anyone share a story of some Christian showing great perseverance with you or someone else that became instrumental in helping you or that person become a disciple?**
- It is easy to grow weary and not have a sustained urgency in helping people to study the Bible and become Christians but it is vitally important that we do so

Expressive

John 14:3; 17:24

- Jesus expressed his genuine love (and other feelings) to others often
- We can see from John 17 that this wasn't just some ploy but it was what he really felt
- We never outgrow the need to win each other over
- **React to this statement: "As soon as you take a relationship for granted, you begin to lose it"**

Giving Your Heart Away

2 Corinthians 6:11-13; 1 Peter 4:8

- **Question: Why is it so important to give our hearts to one another**
- We can never sit back and wait for someone to win over our heart
- We must target the most difficult people and win them over with love (and work to not be difficult ourselves)
- Paul made a decision to give the Corinthians his heart
- We must make a decision to give our hearts to others
- It was a sign of Paul's maturity to give his heart to people who had not yet given their heart to him
- **Question: What is your normal reaction or response to someone who is difficult for you to connect with?**
- **Question: How do you go about moving past your natural response to a more biblical one?**

Emotional Relatability

Hebrews 5:1-2; John 11:33-36

- When we speak publicly or one-on-one we must first strive to connect emotionally with people before we can take them anywhere spiritually
- **Question: Why is it so important to relate to one another emotionally**
- **Question: What are some ways that we can help one another grow as a group in relating to one another emotionally?**
- **Question: Why are patience and grace so vital in the area of connecting with one another emotionally?**

Move Their Hearts
Acts 20:19-21; 26; 37

- Paul did not just serve them and relate to them, he also was able to get them to repent, grow, and change because of the love that he had displayed
- Without expecting one another to repent, grow, and do great things for God, our emotional bonding will simply be sentimentality

Action

Let's create our action item together this week. What can we do as a group to take action in this area?

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 22

Strong Friendships

When every member of your house church feels as though their closest friends are in the house church, the group will be incredibly strong and Satan will have a very difficult time pulling anyone away. In addition, the people of the world will be drawn to this type of atmosphere.

Decision **1 Samuel 20:42**

- Jonathon and David had sworn friendship. They had made a decision and targeted each other to be close friends
- Many people can be stunted in their friendships because they think they are something that must just happen naturally. But friendships can be a choice. We can make a decision to have a friendship with someone
- We need to decide to give our hearts to the people we are in discipling relationships with
- We need to be close friends
- This is powerful because it is not based on random relationship chemistry, but a will directed by God's love
- This is also powerful because the friendship becomes a priority

Thick and Thin **Proverbs 18:24**

- We must commit to be there for each other when they are lovable and when they are not; when they are needy and when they are giving
- This type of love will produce great gratitude for each other and deepen our friendships
- Brothers (sibling relationships) were considered to be the closest and most loyalty-demanding relationships in the ancient world (more so even than spouse) so this is referring to a friendship even closer than that; In Christ we can have these kinds of relationships with one another

Kindness **Proverbs 22:11**

- Being kind in all of our interactions provides an inviting atmosphere where people want to be with you and want to be open
- When we have an edge or we are rushed people are pushed away

Spiritual **Psalm 119:63**

- The foundation of our friendship must be our relationship to God
- This foundation will allow God to use the friendship to help us grow closer to him and to conquer our sin

Giving

Proverbs 19:6

- Giving little gifts to one another is not so much about the gift as the feeling that someone is always thinking of me
- This type of constant thoughtfulness shows a deep love
- This type of love is not out of sight, out of mind, but out of sight in mind

Speak the Truth Proverbs 27:6

- Paul did not just serve them and relate to them, he also was able to get them to repent, grow, and change because of the love that he had displayed

Openness John 15:15

- A real openness about what we are feeling is critical for a great friendship
- We must be open about the good, the bad, and the ugly
- However, once we are open we must also be willing to be helped with our emotions and feelings
- When someone is vulnerable with us we must treat that as a treasure and value the confidentiality and be tender as we deal with our friends feelings

Available Proverbs 17:17

- We must be ready to help our friends when they need our help and not just when it is convenient for us
- Rarely will needs come at a convenient time

Important Reminder

- As we look at lessons like this it is important to be reminded that we need to focus on how we are friends to others, not on how people are not friends to us
- People that focus on how they can be great friends will always have friends
- People that focus on how people need to be friends to them will always feel lacking

Assignment:

- Head – Make a list of your best friends in God’s kingdoms. Do you notice any patterns?
- Heart – How much effort have you made in building friendships within your house church? Are your friendships strong? What does it take on your end to build strong friendships?
- Hands – What can you do specifically to foster stronger friendships with the folks in your house church? What is your plan to grow deeper in your friendships?

House Church Training – Lesson 22

Strong Friendships

Introduction

- **Question: What is friendship? Why do we have close friends?**
- **Question: What are the types of things that people typically build friendships on?**
- **Question: How should Christian friendships look different from those of the world?**
- **Question: What should be the basis for Christian friendships?**
- **React to this little poem:**
 - Oh, the comfort—the inexpressible comfort feeling safe with a person,
Having neither to weigh thoughts,
Nor measure words—but pouring them
All right out—just as they are—
Chaff and grain together—
Certain that a faithful hand will
Take them and sift them—
Keeping what is worth keeping—
And with the breath of kindness
Blow the rest away

Decision

1 Samuel 20:42

- Jonathon and David had sworn friendship. They had made a decision and targeted each other to be close friends
- Many people can be stunted in their friendships because they think they are something that must just happen naturally. But friendships can be a choice. We can make a decision to have a friendship with someone
- This is powerful because it is not based on random relationship chemistry, but a will directed by God's love
- **Question: What is so powerful about understanding that friendships in Christ are based on a decision?**

Thick and Thin

Proverbs 18:24

- We must commit to be there for each other when they are lovable and when they are not; when they are needy and when they are giving
- **Question: What is difficult about this?**
- This type of love will produce great gratitude for each other and deepen our friendships
- Brothers (sibling relationships) were considered to be the closest and most loyalty-demanding relationships in the ancient world (more so even than spouse) so this is referring to a friendship even closer than that; In Christ we can have these kinds of relationships with one another

Kindness

Proverbs 22:11

- Being kind in all of our interactions provides an inviting atmosphere where people want to be with you and want to be open
- When we have an edge or we are rushed people are pushed away
- **Question: What are some ways that you can struggle with being kind?**
- **Question: How do we get past those times in building our friendships?**

Spiritual

Psalm 119:63

- The foundation of our friendship must be our relationship to God
- This foundation will allow God to use the friendship to help us grow closer to him and to conquer our sin
- **Question: How does this concept change the way that we should approach our relationships in Christ?**

Speak the Truth

Proverbs 27:6

- Paul did not just serve them and relate to them, he also was able to get them to repent, grow, and change because of the love that he had displayed

Openness

John 15:15

- A real openness about what we are feeling is critical for a great friendship
- We must be open about the good, the bad, and the ugly
- However, once we are open we must also be willing to be helped with our emotions and feelings
- When someone is vulnerable with us we must treat that as a treasure and value the confidentiality and be tender as we deal with our friends feelings

Available

Proverbs 17:17

- We must be ready to help our friends when they need our help and not just when it is convenient for us
- Rarely will needs come at a convenient time

Important Reminder

- As we look at lessons like this it is important to be reminded that we need to focus on how we are friends to others, not on how people are not friends to us
- People that focus on how they can be great friends will always have friends
- People that focus on how people need to be friends to them will always feel lacking

Action

Choose one friendship within this group that you would like to foster and grow and develop a specific plan to do so.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 23

Helping One Another with Spiritual Breakthroughs

Each of the persons in your house church are at different points spiritually. However, each one is facing some type of block that is keeping them from growing in a significant area. As leaders we need to help people breakthrough these spiritual blockades so that they can grow. Once someone has a significant breakthrough, their excitement and gratitude increases and they want to help others experience what they have experienced.

Identify **Acts 8:18-23**

- Peter was able to help Simon identify what was holding him back and get to the root of the issue
- Peter saw that Simon was bitter and that was leading to all kinds of other problems
- If we don't identify our sin specifically, we will just feel unmotivated and negative but never really know why
- Often we need other people's help to identify our sin because Satan can blind and confuse us

On the Same Page **2 Chronicles 33:10-15; Mark 9:23-24**

- Manasseh was one of the most evil kings of the Jewish people
- God would not produce a spiritual breakthrough in Manasseh until Manasseh really wanted it
- Once he wanted it, the breakthrough came quickly
- We must first help people to really see their need to be helped and then help foster a desire within them to be helped, make changes, and allow the Spirit to guide them
- Once they have the desire then all the direction and help will have an impact

Four Tools:

Help of Others **Galatians 6:1-2**

- The word used in vs. 2, translated "burden," refers to an overwhelming weight that is too heavy for any one person to carry
- The word used in vs. 5 refers to a personal load that is manageable for one person
- There are times when we will all need help with our burdens and with sin in our lives
- However, we are also responsible to do what we need to do to be righteous
- We must understand that people in our groups won't change very often without the help of others and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit
- This help can come in many forms but the role of the leader is to initiate where needed, quarterback this help, lead our house church members constantly to the Holy Spirit, and keep doing these things until people have a breakthrough

Specific Direction 1 Kings 19:14-19

- God gave Elijah very specific direction in this instance
- When people are stuck they need to know exactly what to do in as clear of terms as the situations allows
- When someone is stuck their thinking can become confused and they can't land on a specific direction
- What others can see clearly is so far from clear to the person struggling
- Clear direction will help people pull out of the pit
- Sometimes you will see the situation clearly and be able to offer that clear direction

Let the Holy Spirit Guide Psalm 73:17

- Many times, you will see problem but not be as clear as to the specific directions to help the person breakthrough their problem; this is when leading others to prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit is invaluable
- We should always seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit whether we feel that he has given us the direction or we are at a loss and need to really wrestle with Him and find that direction together with the other person

Make a Decision Job 31:1

- Once we have sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit and others as they are led by others a specific decision has to be made on point of action
- Simply identifying a problem and hoping for change will not do much
- God offers us direction through the Holy Spirit much like a personal trainer will offer us suggestions and tell us what to do, but we must then make a decision and take action to complete the partnership

Consistent Help Luke 11:24-26; 1 Kings 19:3-13

- Truly helping people to change is a long-term commitment not one or two conversations
- If someone makes progress but there is no consistent and immediate follow-up, Satan will immediately come in and steal the progress, dishearten the disciple, and things can become worse than they were in the first place
- Consistent help builds on the previous day's progress and if there are setbacks they will be short-lived and fixed quickly

Assignment:

- Head – In your own words (perhaps with the help of some Scriptures) what do you feel that a spiritual breakthrough is? What does it mean to have a spiritual breakthrough?
- Heart – One of the most difficult tasks in helping others to have spiritual breakthroughs is perseverance. What Scripture(s) most motivate you and help you with the concept of persevering?
- Hands – Pray and think about at least one person in your house church that really needs to have a spiritual breakthrough in a specific area. What is your plan to help them with this?

House Church Training – Lesson 23

Spiritual Breakthroughs

Introduction

- **Question: What is friendship? Why do we have close friends?**
- **Question: What are the types of things that people typically build friendships on?**
- **Question: How should Christian friendships look different from those of the world?**
- **Question: What should be the basis for Christian friendships?**
- **React to this little poem:**
 - Oh, the comfort—the inexpressible comfort feeling safe with a person,
Having neither to weigh thoughts,
Nor measure words—but pouring them
All right out—just as they are—
Chaff and grain together—
Certain that a faithful hand will
Take them and sift them—
Keeping what is worth keeping—
And with the breath of kindness
Blow the rest away

Identify Acts 8:18-23

- Peter was able to help Simon identify what was holding him back and get to the root of the issue
- Peter saw that Simon was bitter and that was leading to all kinds of other problems
- If we don't identify our sin specifically, we will just feel unmotivated and negative but never really know why
- Often we need other people's help to identify our sin because Satan can blind and confuse us
- **Question: What can be difficult or stand in the way of us identifying the problem that someone else might be having?**
- **Question" What roadblocks can we put in the way of someone else seeing our issues clearly?**

On the Same Page 2 Chronicles 33:10-15; Mark 9:23-24

- Manasseh was one of the most evil kings of the Jewish people
- God would not produce a spiritual breakthrough in Manasseh until Manasseh really wanted it
- Once he wanted it, the breakthrough came quickly
- We must first help each other to really see their need to be helped and then help foster a desire within them to be helped, make changes, and allow the Spirit to guide them
- Once they have the desire then all the direction and help will have an impact
- **Question: What keeps us from truly having spiritual breakthroughs?**

Four Tools:

Help of Others Galatians 6:1-2

- The word used in vs. 2, translated “burden,” refers to an overwhelming weight that is too heavy for any one person to carry
- The word used in vs. 5 refers to a personal load that is manageable for one person
- There are times when we will all need help with our burdens and with sin in our lives
- However, we are also responsible to do what we need to do to be righteous
- We must understand that people in our groups won’t change very often without the help of others and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit
- **Question: What are some of the things in which we need to help one another because the load can be too heavy alone?**
- **Question: What are the types of things that we need to take responsibility for and take care of ourselves?**

Specific Direction 1 Kings 19:14-19

- God gave Elijah very specific direction in this instance
- When people are stuck they need to know exactly what to do in as clear of terms as the situations allows
- When someone is stuck their thinking can become confused and they can’t land on a specific direction
- What others can see clearly is so far from clear to the person struggling
- Clear direction will help people pull out of the pit
- Sometimes you will see the situation clearly and be able to offer that clear direction

Let the Holy Spirit Guide Psalm 73:17

- Many times, you will see problem but not be as clear as to the specific directions to help the person breakthrough their problem; this is when leading others to prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in invaluable
- We should always seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit whether we feel that he has given us the direction or we are at a loss and need to really wrestle with Him and find that direction together with the other person
- **Question: What are subtle or not-so-subtle ways that we tend to minimize or ignore the Holy Spirit?**

Make a Decision Job 31:1

- Once we have sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit and others as they are led by others a specific decision has to be made on point of action
- Simply identifying a problem and hoping for change will not do much
- God offers us direction through the Holy Spirit much like a personal trainer will offer us suggestions and tell us what to do, but we must then make a decision and take action to complete the partnership

Consistent Help

Luke 11:24-26; 1 Kings 19:3-13

- Truly helping people to change is a long-term commitment not one or two conversations
- If someone makes progress but there is no consistent and immediate follow-up, Satan will immediately come in and steal the progress, dishearten the disciple, and things can become worse than they were in the first place
- Consistent help builds on the previous day's progress and if there are setbacks they will be short-lived and fixed quickly

Action

Come up with a plan to actively ensure that you are open to the input of others when it comes to seeing the need for and helping you with spiritual breakthroughs in your own life. Get the input of someone else in creating your plan and then implement it in your life.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 24

Being Imitatable

Imitation is a theme that is quite prevalent throughout the New Testament but it is also a topic that is not very popular in our day and age. Imitation is one of the tools that God gave us to be more Christlike but it is a topic that we must first understand in its first-century context so that we can better understand what it means for God's people today. Imitation was a normal concept in the first century as it was strongly related to the concept of family connection. One was expected to imitate the character, honor, and values of the Father of the family by imitating him and imitating the others in the family. The purpose of this wasn't to become like the other members of the family but to embody the "family way" of being and doing things. This is precisely the heart of the biblical concept of imitation. As house church leaders we want to embody the Father's way of doing things so that we are an imitable example of God's family's way of living and being.

Worthy of Imitation

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

- We want to be leaders that are worthy of imitation of our lives
- We also want to create an environment where everyone in the group is worthy of imitation in their walk as Jesus' people
- There are many aspects of this concept of imitation as it carries out in the life of our house churches

One Group Imitates Another

1 Thessalonians 2:14

- We can and should look to other house churches and other churches that are embodying God's family ethic well
- We can learn many things from
- This doesn't mean doing things precisely as they do, because there are differences but it means taking the principles of what they are doing that works and applying them to our situation
- Doing this requires that we have constant contact and cooperation with other groups so that we avoid the easy temptation of becoming isolated

We Imitate the Lives of Others

1 Corinthians 4:14-17; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 6:12

- Imitating others means that we emulate their life in Christ
- We seek to embody the principles that they have embodied in becoming the people of God
- This means that we look for the ways that they embody Christ and apply that to our lives
- As leaders it means that we work to walk as Jesus did and live by his values so that we are imitable

Imitate Carefully

Hebrews 13:7; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 4:11; 3 John 1:11

- We should not just indiscriminately imitate others, but show wisdom and godly discernment in who and what we seek to imitate

- We should carefully consider the lives of those that we seek to imitate
- That doesn't mean that others must be perfect but that we look to find the strengths of their life in Christ and imitate that
- We imitate others as they imitate Christ

We Are Ultimately Imitating the Ethic of God Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6

- When we imitate, we are not seeking to become like others, but like Jesus
- We seek to embody not the lives of others but the values of the Father
- This means that we only imitate others inasmuch as they are like Christ

Worthy of Imitation Hebrews 13:7; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 4:11; 3 John 1:11;

- As leaders, part of our role is to be worthy of respect and worthy of imitation
- Paul created communities where imitation was a valued ethic because he himself was worthy of imitation in his life in Christ
- Are you imitable in these areas of your walk in Christ? Are you seeking to imitate someone else in these areas:
 - Marriage
 - Parenting
 - Relationships
 - Giving and serving
 - Evangelism
 - Prayer
 - Bible Study
 - Spiritual maturity
- This pattern of imitation requires:
 - Humility to look to others
 - Being around others in order to see their way of life
 - Actually taking initiative to go after it
 - Wisdom and discernment
 - Being consistent and open enough so that someone can imitate you

Assignment:

- Head – Choose at least two verses that you find vital for your understanding of imitation and memorize them.
- Heart – Spend some time considering the areas in your life in which you most need to imitate someone who is strong in those areas? In what areas are you most imitable?
- Hands – Create a specific plan for yourself to learn more about someone else in a specific area of their life and go to go about imitating it

House Church Training – Lesson 24

Worth Imitating

Introduction

- Have a little fun to kick off your house church time this week: play a game of Simon Says [the game where a leader does whatever actions he wants and people must copy them but if he doesn't say, for instance, "Simon says" at the beginning, followed by "jump on one leg while patting the top of your head" (or any other action) then whoever copies that action is out. If Simon says, then the action is imitable]. Depending on the amount of time you have, you can play through once or several times with a different "Simon" each time
- **Question: What is the teaching point of this little children's game other than just having fun?**
- **Imitation is a very biblical concept**
- **Question: What lessons can we learn from this game about the concept of imitation of others?**
- The Bible speaks often of imitation but we must understand the first-century concept of imitation before fully understanding the concept in our own time:
 - Imitation was a normal concept in the first century as it was strongly related to the concept of family connection. One was expected to imitate the character, honor, and values of the Father of the family by imitating him and imitating the others in the family. The purpose of this wasn't to become like the other members of the family but to embody the "family way" of being and doing things. This is precisely the heart of the biblical concept of imitation.

Worthy of Imitation

1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

- We want to be Christians that are worthy of imitation in our lives
- We also want to create an environment where everyone in the group is worthy of imitation in their walk as Jesus' people
- **Question: What are the elements necessary to us embracing healthy, biblical imitation as a normal way of life in our house church?**
- There are many aspects of this concept of imitation as it carries out in the life of our house churches

One Group Imitates Another

1 Thessalonians 2:14

- We can and should look to other house churches and other churches that are embodying God's family ethic well
- We can learn many things from
- This doesn't mean doing things precisely as they do, because there are differences but it means taking the principles of what they are doing that works and applying them to our situation
- Doing this requires that we have constant contact and cooperation with other groups so that we avoid the easy temptation of becoming isolated
- **Question: Can you think of other house churches or churches that we could emulate in specific areas?**
- **Question: What elements are necessary in order for us to be able to imitate other groups?**

We Imitate the Lives of Others

1 Corinthians 4:14-17; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 6:12

- Imitating others means that we emulate their life in Christ
- We seek to embody the principles that they have embodied in becoming the people of God
- This means that we look for the ways that they embody Christ and apply that to our lives
- As leaders it means that we work to walk as Jesus did and live by his values so that we are imitable
- **Question: What is a specific area of your life in which you feel that you could imitate others?**

Imitate Carefully

Hebrews 13:7; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 4:11; 3 John 1:11

- We should not just indiscriminately imitate others, but show wisdom and godly discernment in who and what we seek to imitate
- We should carefully consider the lives of those that we seek to imitate
- That doesn't mean that others must be perfect but that we look to find the strengths of their life in Christ and imitate that
- We imitate others as they imitate Christ
- Question: What are some problematic ways to embrace the idea of imitation?
- Question: What are potential problems of imitating those that should not be imitated?

We Are Ultimately Imitating the Ethic of God

Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6

- When we imitate, we are not seeking to become like others, but like Jesus
- We seek to embody not the lives of others but the values of the Father
- This means that we only imitate others inasmuch as they are like Christ

Action

Ask each person to find at least one Christ-like characteristic in another person that they will commit themselves to studying, learning more about, and will go about imitating that in their own life. Ask them to have a specific plan of how they are going to go about this.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 25

Leading Proactively

Leaders have a choice to lead proactively or reactively. Leading proactively is more difficult and demanding up front than is leading reactively but it produces a harvest later on. Like most things in life, the more work you do up front, the less difficulty you have on the back end. Leading reactively is easier in many ways for awhile but it ultimately causes the leader to have to run around and constantly deal with issues that pop up and try to put out fires. Proactive leadership doesn't mean that you never have problems or have a plan for everything, but it does mean that you do your best to prepare for issues before they become big problems.

Reactionary Leadership

1 Samuel 13:5-14

- Saul had plan
- He was in the war but was simply reacting to what his enemy was doing
- This caused his men to have no confidence in his leadership and they were on their way to complete destruction
- You are either a proactive leader or a reactive leader
- Reactive leaders simply put out fires and act on the situations and phone calls put before them
- They simply go to the house church each week hoping something good happens without working a plan on how to make sure it happens

Proactive Leadership

1 Samuel 14:6-15; Isaiah 32:8

- Jonathon came up with a plan
- He inspired those around him with his plan and he acted on his plan
- God honored Jonathon's leadership by working for and with him
- We must be leaders that assess the needs of our group, determine where we want to go, get the people behind us, and act with determination

The Needs

Nehemiah 2:11-16

- What are the needs of your group?
 - Time with God
 - Relationships
 - Unity
 - Dealing with bitterness
 - Dealing with false doctrines
 - Discipling
 - Spiritual Weakness
 - Marriage and family
 - Physical Needs
 - Etc.

- What is the plan to help people with these needs?
- Are you planning on these issues coming up and taking measures to deal with them before they become major problems?
- What are the obstacles in meeting those needs?
- How will deal with them when these issues arise?
- Many house church leaders get stopped because they don't know what to do
- Some House church leaders get stopped because they have tried to implement plan to meet needs in the past and they have failed
- We must believe that God is with us and wants us to meet the needs of our people
- We must be eager to get help whenever we get stuck
- Others have faced the same problems we have faced and broken through

Flexibility

Acts 19:8-10; 2 Corinthians 1:12-20

- Paul always had a plan to win the lost
- Paul's first plan didn't work well so he came up with another one
- In the 2 Corinthians passage Paul faced criticism for being flexible in his plans when he felt the Holy Spirit was leading him to do something else that would benefit the people of Corinth more
- Do you have plans to deal with the needs of your group?
- Are you prepared to be flexible when those plans aren't working and change course?

A Practical Point

Proverbs 21:5; 16:3

- Monthly calendars that are well thought out and clearly communicated are a great tool for proactive leaders
- Activities, group prayer times, d-times, even things like birthdays can be put on a calendar
- You can even take the existing church calendar and incorporate your house church activities on that so that people only need one calendar

Assignment:

- Head – Do a short topical study on the importance of planning and preparing well in the book of Proverbs
- Heart – Spend some time thinking about the needs in your group and potential needs. One of the reasons that we don't act proactively sometimes is that we don't think that anything bad could actually happen. What are some of the worst-case scenarios in your group if those needs are not met with proactively? Allow that to motivate you as you make plans for your group.
- Hands – Create a proactive plan to deal with some of the needs within your group now before they become problems

House Church Training – Lesson 25

The Proactive House Church

Introduction

- **Question: Have you ever had a time when you saw what you thought might be a problem but didn't really think it would be a big deal, did nothing, and it turned out to be a pretty bad situation?**
- **Question: Why is it important to deal with situations as early as possible?**
- Ask the group to respond to these two quotations:
 - “To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace” – George Washington
 - “Trust in God, but keep your powder dry” – Revolutionary War Saying

Proactive or Reactive 1 Samuel 13:5-14

- Saul had plan
- He was in the war but was simply reacting to what his enemy was doing
- This caused his men to have no confidence in his leadership and they were on their way to complete destruction
- **Question: What is the difference between being a proactive group or a reactive group?**
- **Question: What are the potential dangers of being a mostly reactive group?**

Proactive Leadership 1 Samuel 14:6-15; Isaiah 32:8

- Jonathon came up with a plan
- He inspired those around him with his plan and he acted on his plan
- **Question: What does it demand of us to be a group that is proactive in meeting the needs of one another rather than reactive?**
- **Question: What are the potential benefits of putting in the work of being a proactive group?**

The Needs Nehemiah 2:11-16

- Question: What are some of the needs within our group?
 - Time with God
 - Relationships
 - Unity
 - Dealing with bitterness
 - Dealing with false doctrines
 - Discipling
 - Spiritual Weakness
 - Marriage and family
 - Physical Needs
 - Etc.

- **Question: How can we look around see potential needs and deal with them before they become problems?**

Flexibility

Acts 19:8-10; 2 Corinthians 1:12-20

- Paul always had a plan to win the lost
- Paul's first plan didn't work well so he came up with another one
- In the 2 Corinthians passage Paul faced criticism for being flexible in his plans when he felt the Holy Spirit was leading him to do something else that would benefit the people of Corinth more
- **Question: How can this group be flexible and support flexibility with one another and with leadership in general?**

Action

Ask each person to find at least one area in which they can be proactive. Are there any needs that they have seen that they have assumed someone else would take care of, or didn't stop to think through the potential seriousness that the situation could evolve into? What can they do right now to nip a situation in the bud.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 26

Replicating Yourself

As leaders in God's kingdom we must always be training someone to fill our role or be ready to lead in a similar capacity when numerical growth takes place. This is necessary if we are going to multiply in a healthy way. If we remain the center of our group's focus and feel the need to do everything ourselves, we are creating an unhealthy dynamic. Our groups will not be prepared if we ever have to leave and we will not be prepared to multiply. As we develop those around us and train them, they take on an ever-increasing role while we constantly seek to decrease our visibility and overt leadership. This will allow other to take on more responsibility, be better trained, more inspired, and fully prepared for the future.

Catching the Dream

Acts 8:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:1-2; Hebrews 13:7

- Training is not just a matter of actions and responsibilities but is inspiring others to catch the dream, being filled with the Spirit, and helping them to develop their own set of deep convictions
- Training is much more about developing the heart in the one we are training than in teaching actions
- We see in the passage in Acts that the common disciple was no longer just motivated by the Apostles, they had been instilled with their own convictions and motivations that they carried on without the immediate presence of the Apostles
- The fire had been passed and not just a set of teachings
- The beginning of training others and encouraging them to take on bigger roles starts in helping them to be connected with God
- This will give them the confidence and direction they need
- If their motivation comes from God, who they will end up becoming and what they will end up accomplishing will be way beyond any goal we could put before them

Trust the Spirit

John 21:15-17

- Peter had failed in a colossal way but Jesus didn't write him off
- He trusted the Spirit to still be able to use someone with a good heart like Peter despite his shortcomings
- We must find people's gifts and let them use those gifts even when they are struggling with things (although it will take discernment and wisdom to know which struggles can be worked through and which ones people need to focus on before they take on other roles)
- Using the gifts that we have been giving and having a useful role often makes it easier to change the areas in our character that are sinful
- We must remember that God used us when we were not the perfect example of discipleship
- If we wait till everyone is in an ideal place then there would be very few who would ever do anything
- Find the gifts and use them for God's glory

Servant

Mark 9:35

- To be truly great in God's kingdom, Jesus called us to be the servant of all

- To train others well requires decreasing from the role “up front” and increasingly allowing others to do those things
- Our role becomes to prepare, encourage, critique, and train
- We will only fulfill our calling to keep making disciples if we are constantly training others and replacing ourselves
- “They must become greater, I must become less” will become the theme of the leader who understands the importance of this principle
- When the one we are training takes on more and more of the leadership role (lessons, discipling times, etc.) people will begin to look to them for guidance and leadership
- This will boost their confidence and free you to do more and more training
- This in turn will lead the group to multiply more rapidly

No Need to be Threatened

John 14:12-13

- Jesus trained his disciples and enabled them to do greater things than he did when it came to bringing people into the kingdom of God
- Jesus was not threatened but glorified in the success of those that followed him
- His design was for them to accomplish more than he
- We cannot be concerned with who gets the glory, that all belongs to God anyway (Isa. 60:19)
- When we are concerned about our glory we short circuit the ability of God to use us in the most powerful of ways and that is to help those we lead to be great

Assignment:

- Head – Read the book of Titus, paying special attention to leadership and training in the book
- Heart – What can you learn from the book? What challenges, rebukes, motivates, encourages you?
- Hands – What specific principle(s) from either this study or the book of Titus would you like to implement into your leadership?

House Church Training – Lesson 26

Being a Body

Introduction

- The lesson this week will be a very unique one
- Split the house church (if possible) into three groups
- Give them about 20 minutes to prepare what they are going to do
- Give each group one of the following sets of passages
 - Group 1: 1 Corinthians 12:12-20
 - Group 2: 1 Corinthians 12:21-26
 - Groups 3: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; Romans 12:3-8
- Assign each group to prepare a five minute presentation on their passage
- They should choose one person to speak for the group
- That person should work with the group (whether the groups consist of 2 people or 5 or 6) to prepare to teach through their passage to the whole house church (remind them that the best way to do this in this format is to ask several well-thought out questions)
- They should particularly stress the aspect of each member of the church using their gifts to build up the group and prepare it to be able to better glorify God and be prepared to grow
- Each group should also try to come up with an action point to share with the larger group once all three groups have shared

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 27

Routine Leadership

As a general rule, the routines that we develop will determine the outcome of our lives. Routines are something that needs to rule our lives as we slavishly follow them but they can be a great tool to develop consistency and perseverance in our lives in the things that are important to us. This is true for us as individuals but also for our families and house churches as well. Routines provide security and foster productivity. If you tell me what you do every day, I will tell you what you value, where you are heading, and what you will accomplish. The structure of routines provides security in a house church. They can know and depend on the routines and schedule that you put together.

Running Smoothly **Proverbs 15:19**

- Spiritual routines don't solve every difficulty that we might have but they do help things run much more smoothly
- House churches are no exception. Spiritual routines can help things run smoothly (although we still want to be creative and fresh within those routines)
- Routines help us to keep all the plates spinning and help us to keep from dropping balls

Hard Work **Proverbs 14:23**

- Developing routines can be hard work
- The work of getting everyone on the same page and into a routine takes planning and sometimes even persuasion, but it is worth it in the end and will help your group maintain consistency

Routines for a House Church

Weekly Group Quiet Times **Acts 1:14**

- Throughout the New Testament we see the disciples engaged in regular and consistent times of prayer, Bible study, etc.
- Encouraging people to get into regular routines in having quiet times together, whether it be in groups of two or larger, will help people to be consistent in getting with one another

Discipling Times **Hebrews 3:12**

- It is important to encourage others to set up consistent and regular discipling times
- Doing so in the context of routine is very helpful and leads to consistency
 - This might, for example, be done in the form of planning to meet on the first and third week of the month of a specific day of the week

Daily Communication

Acts 2:46; Hebrews 3:13

- Daily communication can easily be forgotten and before you know it days, and even weeks have gone by
- Having a planned routine for talking with the disciples that you want to stay in consistent contact with are important

Evangelism

Acts 5:42; Acts 14:1; Acts 17:2

- Do the people in your house church have a routine for evangelism
 - “Whenever I go to . . . my goal is to. . . “
 - “Every week we . . . “
 - “Every month we . . . “
 - “We have neighbors over for dinner every . . . “

Your Own Routine

- It’s important to have your own routines when it comes to keeping up with the House Church as well
- This could include
 - You own quiet times
 - A few minutes each (maybe during your QT) thinking and planning for the house church
 - Weekly discipling times set up regularly
 - Weekly time with spouse to talk and plan
 - Regular phone calls
 - Regular times to get with people

Assignment:

- Head – Go through and make a list of everything in your own spiritual walk, your spiritual leadership, and your familial leadership that you want to accomplish and keep up with a regular basis. Do you keep up with all of those things consistently? Do you have a set pattern and routine for each of them?
- Heart – As you are making your list, make note of why each item is important and the possible repercussions of not being consistent in those areas
- Hands – If you don’t already have a consistent routine for everything that you would like to accomplish and have time for, then make one now

House Church Training – Lesson 27

A Routine House Church

Introduction

- **Question: What are some of the daily, weekly, or monthly routines that you follow in your life?**
- **Question: What can be helpful and advantageous about keeping routines?**
- **Question: What can be negative about routines if misused or not used carefully?**
- **Question: Why is it important to have and keep spiritual routines?**
- Jesus had many patterns and routines that he regularly followed
 - Can you name just a few (Seclusion, prayer, worship, going to synagogues, using Scripture, asking questions, etc.)
- Routines can be an important and helpful tool to help us stay consistent spiritually and accomplish all that we want to get done for the glory of God

Running Smoothly Proverbs 15:19

- Spiritual routines don't solve every difficulty that we might have but they do help things run much more smoothly
- House churches are no exception. Spiritual routines can help things run smoothly (although we still want to be creative and fresh within those routines)
- Routines help us to keep all the plates spinning and help us to keep from dropping balls

Hard Work Proverbs 14:23

- Developing routines can be hard work
- The work of getting everyone on the same page and into a routine takes planning and sometimes even persuasion, but it is worth it in the end and will help your group maintain consistency
- **Question: What can be difficult about creating, implementing, and sticking to routines?**
- **Question: What helps you stay in a routine?**

Routines for a House Church

Weekly Group Quiet Times Acts 1:14

- Throughout the New Testament we see the disciples engaged in regular and consistent times of prayer, Bible study, etc.
- Encouraging people to get into regular routines in having quiet times together, whether it be in groups of two or larger, will help people to be consistent in getting with one another
- **Question: What routines in this area do you have?**

Discipling Times Hebrews 3:12

- It is important to encourage others to set up consistent and regular discipling times
- Doing so in the context of routine is very helpful and leads to consistency
 - This might, for example, be done in the form of planning to meet on the first and third week of the month of a specific day of the week
- **Question: What are your normal routines in this area?**
- **Question: Do you stick to your routine?**

Daily Communication

Acts 2:46; Hebrews 3:13

- Daily communication can easily be forgotten and before you know it days, and even weeks have gone by
- Having a planned routine for talking with the disciples that you want to stay in consistent contact with are important
- **Question: What are your routines in this area?**

Evangelism

Acts 5:42; Acts 14:1; Acts 17:2

- Do the people in your house church have a routine for evangelism
 - “Whenever I go to . . . my goal is to . . . “
 - “Every week we . . . “
 - “Every month we . . . “
 - “We have neighbors over for dinner every . . . “
- **Question: What are your routines in this area?**

Action

Ask each person to take stock of all the things that they would like to accomplish spiritually on a regular basis. Do they have a regular routine for these things that is set up and followed? If not, encourage them to create a regular routine for their d-times, quiet times with others, phone calls, etc.

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 28

A House Church Leader's Sunday

Sunday is a critical day in the life of a House Church leader. It is a day when you will see the people in your house church at our gathering. It is a day when you will fellowship with the visitors from your house church. It is also a day that he can set up his house church to have a victorious week.

Preparing for the Day

Joshua 3:5; Exodus 19:10-11

- Sunday mornings can be challenging and easy to race through but it is vital to have a great quiet time and time to prepare yourself to worship God and be a leader in his kingdom
- You can either show up on Sunday hurried and rushed (which will happen on occasion despite how much you plan and prepare) or you can show up calm and prepared, ready for the day
- In the Old Testament times they would consecrate themselves before a spiritual event
- In your quiet time on Sunday morning it is a great idea to pray for all of the Christians and visitors that might come out in your house church
- As you pray, the Holy Spirit will put different things on your heart to do that day, but they will be things on his agenda rather than yours. The key is to make God's agenda our agenda
 - Write out a list of the things you want to accomplish while service
 - Talk to certain people
 - Give special gifts or cards
 - Set up certain times
 - etc.
- It is also vital that in your morning quiet time you specifically appeal to God and prepare yourself to be ready to give to others

Be Early

Luke 12:35-36

- This passage is obviously pointed a different context, but the principle here is be ready and be on time
- A leader, if possible, should get to the church's building about 10-15 minutes before the worship gathering begins
- Remember that our time of fellowship worship begins at 9:30 AM on Sundays and the worship service itself begins at 10:00 AM
- Arriving early allows you to get settled and ready to love and give to those that come to join the worship gathering

On the Way

1 Kings 8:44-45

- The Jewish people prayed when they went to war and when they went to the Temple, and God heard their prayer and upheld their cause
- When we go to church we are going to war against Satan so that God can work miracles at our gathering and in the fellowship
- We need to pray on the way to church with our families

- This will put everyone in the right frame of mind and heart and keep Satan away from causing trouble

At the Gathering **Proverbs 27:23**

- It is important to be a spiritual shepherd for your house church at the service
- Look for weaker Christians sitting alone, not talking to anyone, or cutting out early
- Look for visitors to be talked to
- Look for studies that need to be set up
- Look for disciples who need gentle encouragement to set up discipling or quiet times with one another

After Service **Ephesians 5:15-16**

- Sunday lunches can be some of the most impacting spiritual times that you can have whether it be disciples with other disciples or with guests
- People have just hear a lesson from God's word and are ready to make decisions and come to new convictions
- If we wait too long, opportunities can be lost
- A great tradition is for everyone to try to have lunch with their visitors and pull in others from the house church that are available
- This will unify the house church and afford an opportunity to help your visitors become Christians
- To make this effective and consistent will require that you train your house church to be prepared to always have Sunday lunch with someone else and to be ready to be as flexible as possible

Sunday Night **Ephesians 4:11-13**

- This is a critical time to get in to the routine of assessing needs and setting the week up for victory
- First, it is a great idea to have a talk with your spouse and/or your assistant house church leader to talk through the week
- Making calls on Sunday night to set up the week can make the difference between losing several opportunities throughout the week or many great things happening
- This is a great time to make sure d-times are set up, studies are taking place, people's needs are being met, etc.
- This can all be set up with a chain reaction of calls on Sunday night

Assignment:

- Head – Make a list of the general categories of items that you generally want to consider to accomplish on the average Sunday before or after the worship gathering with those in your house church
- Heart – Why is it important for you to be well prepared for Sunday and for the week ahead
- Hands – Create a plan that you can implement on Sunday night to make sure that you cover everything that you want and prepare your house church for victory throughout the week

House Church Training – Lesson 28

Preparing for the Day

Introduction

- **Question: Why do athletes always get to an event early and warm up?**
- **Question: What are the benefits of being properly warmed-up and prepared for an event?**
- **Question: What are the potential dangers of not being properly warmed-up?**
- Today we will take a look at the importance of being spiritually warmed-up and prepared for our Sunday worship gatherings

Preparing for the Day

Joshua 3:5; Exodus 19:10-11

- Sunday mornings can be challenging and easy to race through but it is vital to have a great quiet time and time to prepare yourself to worship God
- You can either show up on Sunday hurried and rushed (which will happen on occasion despite how much you plan and prepare) or you can show up calm and prepared, ready for the day
- In the Old Testament times they would consecrate themselves before a spiritual event
- In your quiet time on Sunday morning it is a great idea to pray for all of the Christians and visitors that might come out in your house church
- As you pray, the Holy Spirit will put different things on your heart to do that day, but they will be things on his agenda rather than yours. The key is to make God's agenda our agenda
 - Write out a list of the things you want to accomplish while service
 - Talk to certain people
 - Give special gifts or cards
 - Set up certain times
 - etc.
- It is also vital that in your morning quiet time you specifically appeal to God and prepare yourself to be ready to give to others
- **Question: Why is it that we often get to work much earlier than our worship gatherings and yet can find it very difficult to get to the church building on time and prepared to give?**
- **Question: How can we go about setting ourselves up for continued success on Sunday mornings?**

Be Early

Luke 12:35-36

- This passage is obviously pointed a different context, but the principle here is be ready and be on time
- A leader, if possible, should get to the church's building about 10-15 minutes before the worship gathering begins
- Remember that our time of fellowship worship begins at 9:30 AM on Sundays and the worship service itself begins at 10:00 AM
- Arriving early allows you to get settled and ready to love and give to those that come to join the worship gathering
- **Question: Why is it important to be present at 9:30 and ready to give and fellowship with others?**

On the Way

1 Kings 8:44-45

- The Jewish people prayed when they went to war and when they went to the Temple, and God heard their prayer and upheld their cause
- When we go to church we are going to war against Satan so that God can work miracles at our gathering and in the fellowship
- We need to pray on the way to church with our families
- This will put everyone in the right frame of mind and heart and keep Satan away from causing trouble
- **Question: What do you do on the way to worship gatherings to get you and your family prepared?**
- **Question: What are ways that we can give to others during worship gatherings?**

After Service

Ephesians 5:15-16

- Sunday lunches can be some of the most impacting spiritual times that you can have whether it be disciples with other disciples or with guests
- People have just hear a lesson from God's word and are ready to make decisions and come to new convictions
- Take time to help everyone come to a conviction of the importance of setting aside the Lord's Day after worship gatherings for continued fellowship, lunches, etc.

Action

What are some specific action points that we can create to put the concepts of this lesson into practice immediately?

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 29

The Cost of Leadership

Leadership in the kingdom of God is an act of service not one of advancement. If someone desires to be in leadership because they are trying to satisfy needs of wanting to be more important or have more responsibility or power then they are in the wrong field. Leaders in God's church are called to sacrifice for others even beyond the basics of Christian sacrifice. It is something that we are willing to do because of our gratitude and love for God. Leadership is not something to be desired for personal benefits. The reality is that there is a cost to leadership. There are great and rewarding joys that come along with it but there are costs of which we need to be aware.

Self Sacrifice

Mark 10:43-45; 1 John 3:16

- As house church leaders we are always called to model the Christian principle of putting the interests of others ahead of our own
- We will sacrifice time and energy
- We need to be willing to be wronged and misunderstood occasionally and should always be prepared to be the first to apologize
- In the process, however, we will grow and the people around us will grow
- God will be brought glory and his kingdom will expand in many ways through our willingness to lay our selves down
- Satan wants us to save and protect ourselves but God wants us to give ourselves up to him
- Satan wants us to draw lines and in the end he wants us to be selfish
- Although healthy boundaries can be necessary (but should be used at a bare minimum), we must use the cross as our standard as we die so that others might live

Loneliness

2 Timothy 1:15

- AW Tozer once wrote that "Most of the world's greatest souls have been lonely."
- To live always thinking and being one step ahead
- To call people higher when their flesh likes where they are
- To take stands that puts friendships on the line
- To be willing to leave an appointment without being resolved and let God do the work
- All of these things are necessary for strong spiritual leadership but can lead to feelings of loneliness
- We must be willing to drink from that cup
- If we are willing to stand alone for God then those with godly hearts will soon crowd around us
- This doesn't imply that we must be lonely as leaders, only that we will occasionally, if not often, feel that way
- That is why it can be necessary to keep close relationships with those who can identify with our responsibilities and roles and encourage us regularly

Fatigue

Philippians 2:17; John 4:6; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Isaiah 43:22; Matthew 11:28-30

- Working hard for God will make us tired at times, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually
- This doesn't mean that something is necessarily wrong; this is part of God's plan
- When we are fatigued we will either look for rest as the world gives rest or we will look for rest in God
- The world's rest is a temporary escape that can make us long for the escape and resent God's work
- God's rest rejuvenates our hearts, makes us more dependent on God and ready for the next battle

Criticism

2 Corinthians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 8:21; 1 Corinthians 4:3-4

- As we lead things will go wrong in the lives of the people we serve
- There is a tendency to blame the leader for whatever problems we face
- As we lead, our faults also become amplified
- As time goes by a leader must become more and more humble or he will become more and more bitter
- Leadership is one of the greatest tools God has to humble us
- We will face criticism and it will be a distinct choice to not become defensive

Rejection

1 Peter 2:20-25; Galatians 6:9

- "He came unto his own and his own did not receive him"
- People have a tendency to reject anything new and different; anew conviction, a new direction, etc.
- As leaders we are always introducing new convictions and direction
- We must be willing to gracefully be rejected without retaliating or retreating
- As we persevere in godly things people will be led
- We must also be willing to lose people in order to maintain the purity of the church
- This is a gut wrenching process but will inspire those who long for holiness

Pressure and Perplexity

2 Corinthians 4:8-11; 2 Corinthians 11:28-29

- Leaders feel the pressure of people depending on them and yet not always being completely sure of what we are doing ourselves
- We are constantly faced with situations where we have no idea of what direction to take but we know that we have to take some direction
- The man that is the lone ranger leader will be crushed under this pressure
- But the spiritually and relationally plugged in leader will grow and flourish

Assignment:

- Head – Memorize 2 Corinthians 4:8-11
- Heart & Hands – Set up some time with another leader and plan to talk about the struggles in leadership that have and are experiencing. Listen to one another, pray, and see if you can help each other out, although sometimes just talking and listening is all that is necessary without having to have the perfect solution

House Church Training – Lesson 29

Leaders & Leading

Introduction

- **Question: Have you ever had a really good boss or leader? Describe that briefly?**
- **Question: Have you ever had a really bad boss or leader? Respectfully describe that briefly?**
- Read Mark 10:42-45
- **Question: How does leadership and attitudes about leadership differ in the kingdom of God than in the normal world?**

Self Sacrifice

Mark 10:43-45; 1 John 3:16; Philippians 2:1-11

- As disciples we are always called to model the Christian principle of putting the interests of others ahead of our own
- We all have some level of leadership in God's kingdom so it is vital that we understand this principle of leadership in God's kingdom
- We will sacrifice time and energy
- We need to be willing to be wronged and misunderstood occasionally and should always be prepared to be the first to apologize
- God will be brought glory and his kingdom will expand in many ways through our willingness to lay our selves down
- Satan wants us to save and protect ourselves but God wants us to give ourselves up to him
- Satan wants us to draw lines and in the end he wants us to be selfish
- Although healthy boundaries can be necessary (but should be used at a bare minimum), we must use the cross as our standard as we die so that others might live
- **Question: Why do you think God chose to call us to a self-sacrificial style of living? What are the benefits of that?**
- **Question: How do we balance being a community that both lays down our lives for one another but also understands that everyone should be expected to live at that standard?**

Consider Your Leaders

Hebrews 13:7

- The word translated "remember" refers to being mindful of someone; considering them; thinking of them in the emotional sense of feeling for them and understanding the position that they are in
- **Question: What does it mean when it says that we should carefully observe their lives? What is a healthy biblical way to do that? What are unhealthy and unbiblical ways?**
- **Question: What does it mean when it says that we should imitate the faith of leaders? What is a healthy and biblical way to do that? What are unhealthy and unbiblical ways?**

Be Influenced by Others

Hebrews 13:17

- The word rendered "obey" here is one of two primary Greek words that can be translated "obey"
- One means to dutifully adhere to

- The other means quite firmly to allow yourself to be persuaded by
- It is the second term that the writer of Hebrews used here
- The meaning of this passage then is "Allow yourself to be persuaded by your leaders"
- Question: Why do you think the writer used this term for "obey" and not the other more authoritarian based term?
- Question: What does it mean to submit to leaders? Why is Ephesians 5:21 important to being able to fully understand this passage?
- Question: What is important about understanding that leaders "keep watch over your souls" and that they must give an account? What do you think that means for those being led?
- Question: How can we be a joy to leaders?
- Question: Why would not being a joy be unprofitable?

Action

What are some specific action points that we can create to put the concepts of this lesson into practice immediately?

Spiritual Leadership Training – Lesson 30

Potential Pitfalls of Leadership

Being a leader in God's kingdom is a wonderful thing. It is an opportunity to serve God's kingdom in a rewarding and fulfilling way and to be quite useful and have a great impact in the life of others. There are many good things about leadership and last time we looked at some of the potential tougher parts of leadership. This week we will look at the potential dangers of being leader. Most of these stem from grafting in worldly attitudes or practices into leadership in God's kingdom, a formula that never works.

Pride

Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 16:18; Proverbs 22:4

- As Christians we all know that pride is something that we should seek to expunge from our life
- As leaders, though, pride can be a particularly sneaky foe
- We must be constantly on the watch for pride lurking around in our hearts, in our actions, in the ways that we interact with others, or the way we talk
- We need to get input from others whose perspective we can trust and respect since people can often perceive pride in a leader when you don't realize that you are exhibiting pride (or you may genuinely not be acting proud at all but it just comes across that way to others)
- What do you do to keep your heart from being proud?

Harshness

Philippians 4:5; Matthew 5:5

- In the world, powerful and abrupt leaders can often be very successful
- But in God's kingdom, we do not seek to get ahead or just get things done
- The role of the leader is to serve others, act in their best interests, lay our lives down for them, and help them to grow into their life in Christ
- There is simply no room for being harsh and impatient
- Being harsh usually are by-products of pride or frustration and we must constantly be on guard against them
- We don't want to become paralyzed in our conversations with others, but we must be very careful with our words and go to great lengths to not be harsh
- This can be helped a great deal by thoroughly explaining what we are saying and doing and explaining our motivations behind what we are saying or doing as well as asking people what they heard us say. This will give an opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings right away
- If we do speak harshly or unkindly to someone then we need to be humble and apologize for our behavior without trying to put any blame on them for what they might have done (that can be brought up separately but should never be painted as an excuse for being harsh, unkind, or abrupt)
- The biblical call to being meek and gentle is not a call to be soft or a doormat; biblical gentleness and meekness meant power under control; the word referred to a strong stallion that had been restrained and trained but that was still a powerful and effective animal

Seeking to be First

Matthew 23:1-12

- The desire to be important or treated as an important person can be a particularly dangerous temptation for the leader
- We must constantly check our hearts and motivations to make sure that we are not becoming the type of leaders described here
- Ask yourself constantly: “why do I want to be in leadership,” “why do I want to serve in that way,” “why do I want to give a lesson”
 - Whatever the questions is, just ensure that your motives are pure and that you desire to bring glory to God and not yourself

Power Hungry **3 John 1:10**

- Diotrophes fell into error because he was power hungry
- He wanted to be the first and most important and this is what can happen when that motivation is left unchecked
- Diotrophes began to view his group as his little kingdom rather than just a small part of God’s kingdom
- It can be easy to start from genuine motivations to care for our group and protect them and then slowly slip into viewing the group as yours and being territorial, not wanting anyone else to have influence
- Some, though, are power hungry from the start
- As leaders we must watch out for that in our own heart, but just as importantly we must be on the lookout for other leaders who seem to be personally ambitious. When we feel that we see that then we must lovingly confront that and nip it in the bud before it flowers out of control

Unapproachable **Galatians 2:11-14**

- Some leaders are so busy that they are unavailable to those in their group
 - That is not good and steps need to be taken to be available
- Some leaders become unavailable because they get proud and full of themselves and get to a point where they feel inconvenienced with some of the day-to-day aspects of leading; they don’t want to be bothered with some people or issues while they are fully available for other leaders or “important” things
- Other leaders feel that they are available for everyone and open to input, advice, etc., from others
- As leaders, however, we must be aware that being available and being approachable are two very different things
- One thing that is easily missed in Galatians 2 is that Peter, despite his impressive credentials in the kingdom of God, must have been very approachable
- We can think that we are approachable, but do others truly feel that way?
- People can easily be intimidated by leadership, and if we have occasionally been harsh, impatient, or proud in the past then it is far more likely that people view us as unapproachable
- We must work hard towards being approachable so that others feel that can ask appropriate questions or even disagree with us
- This often requires asking others often how they feel about our leadership and if we are truly approachable

Assignment:

- Head – Evaluate yourself honestly in each of these areas
- Heart – Ask several others (both fellow leaders and those that you lead) to evaluate you in each of these areas and then honestly reflect on what you hear
- Hands – Create a tangible plan to improve in any of the areas that you may have detected a weakness

House Church Training – Lesson 30

Be on the Lookout

Introduction

- **Question: Have you ever had a really good boss or leader? Describe that briefly?**
- **Question: Have you ever had a really bad boss or leader? Respectfully describe that briefly?**
- Read Mark 10:42-45
- **Question: How does leadership and attitudes about leadership differ in the kingdom of God than in the normal world?**

Pride

Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 16:18; Proverbs 22:4

- As Christians we all know that pride is something that we should seek to expunge from our life
- We must be constantly on the watch for pride lurking around in our hearts, in our actions, in the ways that we interact with others, or the way we talk
- We need to get input from others whose perspective we can trust and respect since people can often perceive pride in a leader when you don't realize that you are exhibiting pride (or you may genuinely not be acting proud at all but it just comes across that way to others)
- **Question: What are some of the ways that pride can manifest as it specifically relates to our life within a house church?**
- **Question: What do you do to keep your heart from being proud?**

Harshness

Philippians 4:5; Matthew 5:5

- **Question: What are some ways that we can be harsh or ungentle with one another?**
- **Question: What problems can that cause?**
- There is simply no room for being harsh and impatient
- Being harsh usually are by-products of pride or frustration and we must constantly be on guard against them
- We don't want to become paralyzed in our conversations with others, but we must be very careful with our words and go to great lengths to not be harsh
- This can be helped a great deal by thoroughly explaining what we are saying and doing and explaining our motivations behind what we are saying or doing as well as asking people what they heard us say. This will give an opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings right away
- If we do speak harshly or unkindly to someone then we need to be humble and apologize for our behavior without trying to put any blame on them for what they might have done (that can be brought up separately but should never be painted as an excuse for being harsh, unkind, or abrupt)
- The biblical call to being meek and gentle is not a call to be soft or a doormat; biblical gentleness and meekness meant power under control; the word referred to a strong stallion that had been restrained and trained but that was still a powerful and effective animal

Seeking to be First

Matthew 23:1-12

- The desire to be important or treated as an important person can be a particularly dangerous temptation for the leader but it can also be a temptation in the heart of someone who would like to lead or “advance”
- We must constantly check our hearts and motivations to make sure that we are not becoming the type of person described here
- **Question: What are some of the motivations in wanting to be viewed as important or special**
- **Question: Why is this attitude so at odds with being part of God’s kingdom**

Unapproachable Galatians 2:11-14

- As disciples we must be aware that being available and being approachable are two very different things
- One thing that is easily missed in Galatians 2 is that Peter, despite his impressive credentials in the kingdom of God, must have been very approachable
- We can think that we are approachable, but do others truly feel that way?
- We can easily intimidate others or send signals that we are not approachable, and if we have occasionally been harsh, impatient, or proud in the past then it is far more likely that people view us as unapproachable
- We must work hard towards being approachable so that others feel that can ask appropriate questions or even disagree with us
- This often requires asking others often how they feel about our approachability

Action

Take some time this week to genuinely evaluate yourself in each of these areas. Ask several others that are close to you to evaluate you as well. Then take stock and determine whether you need to take specific action to grow in any of these areas.