

Unit Four: THE CHARACTER OF A LEADER

Lesson One: You Never Stop Growing

1. If we stop growing, we become unhealthy and we may die. This is true with our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual life. The things we do today determine the kind of person we will be tomorrow. Oscar Wilde, a poet and a writer, wrote these words of regret in his old age. "I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or breaks my character; . . . I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and didn't know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace." Oscar Wilde learned too late that successful leaders make the right decision early in life and follow those decisions daily.

If you do not continually work on your personal growth, you are only responding to outside forces. You are not living for a purpose. If you do not invest time **preparing** to live a better life, you will spend your time **repairing** your present life.

Having a better life tomorrow will depend on how we P_____ today.

2. Leaders must prepare themselves for tomorrow. The way you prepare for tomorrow is to work on your personal development today. If you wait until a problem comes before you prepare, the problem may overwhelm you and you may never overcome it.

Remember how Martha and Mary approached Jesus. Martha wanted to impress Jesus today so she put on a performance. Mary listened to Jesus to find out the things that Jesus wanted her to be doing tomorrow. Mary chose the better approach to pleasing Jesus. Martha's actions did not please Jesus and she had to rethink (repair) the way she had been done things.

Look at this comparison between preparing for tomorrow and living for today:

Preparing	Repairing
1. Allows you to focus on tomorrow.	1. Makes you focus on the past.
2. Increases your output tomorrow.	2. Wastes your time today.
3. Increases your self-confidence.	3. Discourages you.
4. Saves money over time.	4. Costs you more money over time.
5. Invests resources for tomorrow.	5. Wastes resources on the past.
6. Takes you to a higher level.	6. Keeps you on the same level.

If we prepare for tomorrow, then we will be on a _____ level tomorrow. If we live only for today, then tomorrow we will be on the _____ level that we are on today.

3. Preparing for tomorrow will put us on a higher level tomorrow. However, living only for today will keep us on the same level day after day after day. And, we will be solving the same problems over and over and over every day. We have to make good decisions about the future and we have to discipline ourselves to follow those decisions daily. The minute we stop preparing for tomorrow, we start living like yesterday.

Let us look at twelve (12) areas of our life where we need to continually grow. The first area of concern should be our **attitude**. Our attitude needs to be positive. Our attitude at the beginning of a project will determine its outcome. Our attitude towards others determines their attitude toward us. Our attitude, not our circumstances, determines our happiness. Our attitude influences others. A good attitude will have a good influence on others. A bad attitude will have a bad influence on others.

A good leader will work on having a _____ -- attitude.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Where do you find it difficult to have a positive attitude? _____

What action can you take to improve your attitude? _____

4. One of the first things that people notice and respond to is our attitude. A leader must have a positive attitude.

The second area of concern should be our **priorities**. Priorities are the most important goals in our life. Our priorities determine the things we will focus on today. Time is valuable. We cannot schedule every minute of our day, but we can look for opportunities to work on our priorities. If we do not attempt to schedule our time and control how we use it, we will lose it. Focusing on our priorities helps us to use our time wisely. Someone has said, you can always get more money, but you cannot get more time.

We cannot schedule every minute, but we can use our time wisely by focusing on our _____
_____.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

What are your three top priorities?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Do you stay focused on these priorities? _____

5. You will grow in your leadership influence when you focus on your priorities. We will learn to set the right priorities in a later lesson.

Your body is the vehicle that enables you to carry out your purpose. You need to keep your body **healthy**. You need to eat things that are good for your body and to exercise your body to keep it physically strong. Good health will enable you to endure stress and to think well. Normally we do not concern ourselves about health issues until our body has a problem. Then we may discover that it is too late to correct the problem. We may spend time and resources the rest of our life struggling with the problem. If we had taken time to prepare our body, we would not be wasting our time and resources repairing it.

If we do not prepare our body to have good _____, we may end up wasting time and resources _____ our body.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Do you eat the right kinds of food, exercise enough and get enough rest and relaxation?

What should you be doing right now to protect your health for the future? _____

6. Keeping our body in good health through exercise and the right foods now will avoid loss of time and resources on repairs in the future.

One of your top priorities should be your **family**. Some leaders are so focused on fulfilling their purpose in the church or the community that they neglect their family. However, if we are going to be successful leaders, we must first succeed within the family. Our family members must be the first ones to support us with respect and love. The home should be a place we can always go for rest, peace and encouragement. The family should be a team that is committed to God, committed to each other, and committed to the same goals. This will happen only if we spend time preparing our family members to fulfill these commitments.

We need to spend time preparing our _____ to fulfill its _____.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

How are you preparing your family to become a team? _____

7. Your family should be a team that fulfills commitments. This will not happen if you do not prepare them. You cannot be a successful leader if your family does not support you.

Creative thinking is a key to a successful tomorrow. Often, we accept the way things have always been done. We take the easy way by copying the things others have done. We do not question nor analyze why things were done in a certain way. We do not analyze the results to determine if all needs were met. We do not evaluate the thing that was done to determine if it pleased God or if it offended God. We just do it in order to say that we have done it.

Creative thinking involves the following:

1. Fulfilling a long-term goal.
2. Making sure every action moves us toward that goal.
3. Exploring new ways of doing the same thing.
4. Comparing the things that people expect to the things that are really needed.
5. Discovering the facts and making wise decisions based on those facts.
6. Looking at the past to determine which things worked and which things did not work.
7. Determining which step to take first and which step to take second, etc.
8. Imagining the possible results of this new approach (vision).
9. Asking others for their suggestions.
10. Asking others to evaluate your ideas and to join you in the project.
11. Setting a detailed goal for each project that moves you toward the long-term goal.

Good leaders spend time in _____ thinking that will help prepare for a better tomorrow.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Do you spend time in creative thinking? Where and when do you do it? _____

8. Creative thinking is necessary for a better tomorrow. If we do things the way they have always been done or the way that others do it, it may not work best for us or meet our needs. We prepare for tomorrow through creative thinking.

Commitment is a strong desire to keep a promise or to meet a goal. Commitment is a willingness to sacrifice personal needs if necessary in order to succeed. Commitment gives us patience and endurance to overcome problems that are blocking success.

Commitment is a decision, not a skill. It is an attitude of the heart. When others are convinced that you are committed, they will follow, but not until they see your commitment in action. God will not bless us until he sees our commitment in action. James says, "Faith without works is dead." Leaders need a strong commitment because our commitment will be challenged every day we lead others.

Good leaders develop a strong _____ to succeed.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

List three things that you are committed to in your life:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

How can you put into action your commitment to these three things? _____

9. A leader will not succeed without a strong commitment. When things become difficult, it is commitment from the heart that will keep you going.

Money can be a blessing or a curse depending on how you manage it. Wise use of money and resources is called **stewardship**. First we recognize that God is the owner of all money and all resources under our control. Second we recognize that we are managers (stewards), not owners of His resources. Third, we understand that money is not the source of happiness, but debt can be the source of unhappiness.

Wise leaders prepare today for expenses they know they will have tomorrow. Wise leaders manage money so that they will have enough saved to meet serious emergencies. Those who do not prepare financially for tomorrow will be in debt tomorrow and perhaps the rest of their life.

A good leader will avoid debt tomorrow by practicing good _____ of the money and resources that God gives to him today.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

How does the way you spend your money show what's in your heart? _____

What changes do you need to make in the way you spend your money? _____

10. Good stewardship will prepare you to avoid debt tomorrow. Debts that are difficult to overcome may be a sign of poor stewardship.

Hebrews 11:1 says, "*faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*" Our **faith** is not in ourselves, but in God. Faith gives us peace for today knowing that God will make all things work together for good tomorrow (Romans 8:28). Faith gives us courage to do God's will today knowing that he will protect and provide for us tomorrow. Tomorrow's success depends on living by faith today. If we do not live by faith, then we live by fear. Our fears may lead us to do wrong things that will need repairs tomorrow.

We can have a successful tomorrow if we live by _____ today.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Does your life demonstrate a good example of faith to those you are leading? _____

How can you demonstrate your faith today? _____

11. Our success tomorrow depends on our faith in God today. We do all we possibly can to fulfill God's will today knowing that God will complete the things we cannot do in order to make things successful tomorrow.

Good **relationships** are necessary for effective leadership. The relationships we are building today will return to bless us tomorrow. It makes no difference who we meet, we should try to develop a good relationship with them. We may never see them again, but they may tell someone else about us. That someone else may bring the answer to our prayers or they may need our help. Our success tomorrow may depend on whom we get to know today.

Tomorrow's opportunities may depend on _____ that we build today.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Do you try to build good relationships with new people you meet or do you try to avoid involvement with other people? _____

12. New relationships today may be tomorrow's opportunities. We never know whom God is going to use to bless us or whom God is going to call us to serve.

Proverbs 11:24 says, "*One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.*" Jesus said, "*Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you*"(Luke 6:38). We need to grow in our **giving** to others. Giving to others turns our focus away from ourselves. It adds value to others. It brings glory to God, and we become a better person. We need to become generous with our time and our resources to help others.

A good leader will grow to be a _____ giver.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Do others see you as a generous person? How can you increase your generosity? _____

13. God is a generous giver. As a leader in his Kingdom, we must become a generous giver. This is an area where our faith plays a part. We give to others trusting that somehow God will bring it back to us to meet our needs when we need it.

One word of caution. We cannot give away that which does not belong to us. Sometimes we have control of resources that belong to someone else. We have no right to give away or to loan those resources unless the real owner gives us permission to do so. Those resources may belong to a church, to an organization or to a customer.

Moral values are the guide lines for the decisions that we make. Our values enable us to remain faithful to the things we know are true. They keep us faithful to God and honest with ourselves. They keep us focused and steadfast when our leadership decisions are challenged. They are solid foundations where we can stand firm when the storms of life try to blow us away.

Our concern is to be sure these values are based on God's Word and not on man's wisdom. *When, where and how* we do things will change, but the *reason* we do them must always go back to our values which never change. The challenge is to apply these values in a changing world and to convince others that this is God's way in today's world.

We can prepare for a better tomorrow by applying Christian M_____ to the decisions we make today.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Do you have one set of values that you apply to all decisions you make, or do you use different values for yourself, for your family and for the church? _____

14. A successful leader must learn to apply Christian moral values today, if he wants a better tomorrow. He must apply the same set of moral values to himself, to his family members, to the church and to all decisions that he makes. We cannot show favoritism in applying moral values. We call this integrity, a value that every leader must have.

Personal growth is not automatic. We must make a daily effort to grow. Growth will not come from reading books unless we take action on the things we learn from the books. The action gives us experiences that can teach us. We evaluate these experiences to determine the things we have learned. We make changes based on the things we learned from our experience. We grow only when we make changes that will bring improvements for tomorrow.

If we make changes that will improve tomorrow, then we will have _____.

PERSON NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Do you often make changes that will improve tomorrow? If you do not like to make changes, explain why? _____

15. We cannot claim personal growth unless we make changes that improve tomorrow. Knowledge is not personal growth until we apply it today and put it into action for a better tomorrow.

We will have a better tomorrow if we plan for it today. Personal growth comes only when we make _____ today that will _____ tomorrow.

Review this lesson and then complete this list of areas where personal growth is needed:

We will have a better tomorrow if we:

1. Work on having a _____ attitude today.
2. Focus on our _____ today.
3. Keep our bodies _____ today.
4. Teach our _____ members to be committed today.
5. Spend time in _____ thinking today.
6. Make a strong _____ today.
7. Practice good _____ with our resources today.
8. Live by _____ today.
9. Build good _____ today.
10. Generously _____ today.
11. Apply good _____ to our decisions today.
12. Make changes for our _____ today.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

List at least three areas of your life where you want to grow. After each area, write the action you will take so that you will grow. This is your personal plan and does not need to be shared with anyone else except God. You can write more in the empty space below if you wish.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Unit Four: THE CHARACTER OF A LEADER

Lesson Two: A Leader's Heart

1. The Bible compares leaders in God's Kingdom to shepherds. Shepherds are men who care for sheep. Sheep need special care and protection, otherwise they will get themselves into trouble and they will be eaten by wild animals. The writer of Psalm 78 says this about the leadership of King David. "*And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them*"(Psalm 78:72).

One of the good things about David's leadership was that he had _____ in his heart.

2. It takes more than skills to be a leader. King David was known for his integrity. **Integrity** comes from the heart or the will of man. We are going to think about the heart or the will of a leader. You cannot be a good leader unless your heart desires to be a blessing to others.

There are always things that need to be done. They will not get done unless someone takes leadership to meet the need. The sad thing is that there are times when no one comes forward to meet a need. The reason no one comes forward is because potential leaders have not prepared their hearts to lead.

The first thing you must do to prepare your heart is to discover God's great purpose for your life. You need to pray and to search your heart to find that which is most important to both you and God. The answer will involve your skills, your burdens, your visions, your resources and your opportunities which match God's will and the needs in His Kingdom. God will show you his purpose if you seek him in prayer.

We prepare our heart to lead by joining our heart with God's P _____ for our life.

3. We cannot lead well if our heart is not in **agreement with God's purpose** for our life. The sooner we discover that purpose and agree with it, the sooner we can begin to lead effectively.

Godly moral values develop character. Character is self-leadership, the ability to control yourself. If you have integrity and live by godly moral values, people will respect you, trust you and they will want to follow you. They know you will not disappoint them. Read the advice that is given in Hebrews 12:1-2.

In order to prepare our heart to lead, we must _____ that will hinder (keep) us from having a good moral character.

4. We must **remove from our life** everything that prevents us from having good moral character. If **sin and ungodly attitudes** remain in our heart, we will find it difficult to fulfill God's purpose for our life.

Every part of our life must show that we have submitted to God's will. Everything that we say and do must be for the purpose of serving God. The Bible even talks about doing ordinary daily work in such a way that it brings glory to God. We do not serve God by trying to prove to other people that we are a great person. It is not about us, it is about God. We do not serve God if we refuse to do some things for God because we feel it will make us unpopular. We do not serve God when we pretend to be something that we are not. Read Romans 12:1-2.

Our heart must be transformed in such a way that every part of our life is S_____ to God's will.

5. The will or desires of our heart must be **submitted to God's will**. The Apostle Paul calls this a living sacrifice.

We must be prayerful at all times. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "*pray continually*." We need to spend regular daily time in private prayer sessions with God, but we cannot spend all of our time in prayer. However, our heart should be only a second away from prayer at any time. We should be so close to God that at any moment we can share with him our thoughts, our concerns and our thankfulness for his blessings. Prayer should not be a formal ritual. Prayers should be a personal conversation with God that can take place at any time.

The story is told of a man who was inside of a vehicle that went off the road and into a river full of water. Someone asked, "What did you do?" He replied, "The first thing I did was pray to God. And I am glad I didn't have to waste time reminding him who I was."

A leader's heart must be P_____ at all times.

6. A **prayerful heart** is a heart that is always in touch with God's will and is quick to call on him at any moment of need or feeling of gratefulness.

The focus of Psalm 119, the longest psalm in the Bible, is the value of God's Word. Verse 36 says, "*Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain*." Verse 11 says, "*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you*." The Apostle Paul reminds us that God's Word "*is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that*" we might be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Paul also reminds us to study God's Word to show ourselves approved unto God as a workman who rightly divides the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

We need to study and understand God's word so well that it is a permanent part of our heart. When we are making a decision, discussing a problem, teaching someone or thinking about a blessing, God's very words on the topic should come from our heart into our mind. We should find ourselves quoting Scriptures and Bible references in order to help others.

Our heart can be free from sin and be profitable to do good works when we fill it with God's _____.

7. We must daily fill our heart with a **thorough understanding of God's Word**. It needs to be a part of our daily thoughts.

Every good leader wants to change the world. They see a better way of doing things and they want to make it happen. Christian leaders know that change for the good comes through following God's Word. They are Christ's ambassadors who have the most important message on earth to share (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). Read Romans 1:14-16.

Our heart should feel obligated and eager to _____ the world through God's Word.

8. When we understand the value of God's Word for living life, we will feel obligated and **eager to share God's Word** with others. We will use God's Word to change others.

Our faith is based on our understanding and our trust in God's word. It is also based on our personal experience with God as he answers our prayers and keep his promises. Our faith gives us confidence to fulfill God's purpose for our life. Our faith gives us God's vision for a better tomorrow. Our faith enables us to sacrifice today so we may lay up treasures in heaven for tomorrow. Our faith enables us to endure hard times. Read about Moses' faith in Hebrews 11:24-29.

We will be able to fulfill God's purpose in our life during hard times if we have a strong _____ in our heart.

9. The heart of a servant-leader needs **a strong faith**. This faith will enable us to remain faithful to God and faithful to his purpose for us.

You cannot love others nor serve others if your heart is proud. A humble heart is one that is willing to serve others. A humble heart sees the needs of others. A humble heart sacrifices so that others may be blessed. Read Philippians 2:5-8.

We cannot be a servant-leader unless we have a _____ heart.

10. Jesus could never have come to the earth, lived as a man and given his life on the cross if he had not first humbled himself before both God and man. A true servant has a **humble heart**.

We cannot serve God if we do not develop the gifts that God has given us. It is not enough to have gifts. We must discover all of them and we must develop all of them to their highest level. Development comes through evaluation of past experiences, through learning from others who have the same gift, and through practice. A heart that is not concerned about quality is a lazy heart. Read Paul's advice to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:13-16.

Our heart should have a desire to develop the _____ that God has given us.

11. It is good stewardship to develop the gifts that God has given us. We want to develop these gifts so that we can serve others in the best way possible.

A Christian leader does not humble himself because he is less important or less valuable to God than others. Instead, he is satisfied with who God has made him to be and with the work God has called him to do. He is able to humble himself to be a blessing to others because he knows that both God and righteous men respect him and love him. He feels satisfied and secure in his relationship with both God and men. He knows he will not lose anything by giving of himself to others and empowering others to also do great things. It is not a competition, it is a team building effort.

Our heart should feel _____ in its relationship with God and with other.

12. We are not interested in titles. We are not interested in popularity. We are not interested in honors. We are not seeking personal gain. Our heart is **satisfied and secure knowing that we are pleasing God and blessing others**.

The Holy Spirit will be working in the heart of a Christian Leader. The fruit of the Spirit will be seen in his life. The Holy Spirit will enable him to apply God's Word to his personal life and use it to guide and encourage others. The Holy Spirit will comfort him in difficult times and encourage him in successful times.

The Apostle Paul tells us to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-20). This filling starts at baptism and continues day by day as we fill our heart with God's Word and submit to God's will. The closer we move toward God, the more his Spirit works in our heart. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit as long as we give him a welcome place in our heart (2 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Our heart should reflect the filling of the _____.

13. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength and the power to please God and to fulfill his purpose in our life (Romans 8:12-17). We must **let the Holy Spirit direct our heart** in the right direction. We drive him away when our heart insists on following our sinful nature. Those who resist the guidance of the Holy Spirit drive him out of their heart and lose his blessings (Ephesians 4:29-32).

Leaders influence others. James warns us that not many of us should become teachers because God will hold us accountable if we teach poorly and cause others to do a wrong thing (James 3:1). The influence of a leader is so strong that people willingly follow their example. Jesus warns us that if our example causes a child to sin, we have seriously sinned because of the example we set (Matthew 16:8).

The heart of a Christian leader wants to set the right E_____ for others to follow.

14. The **example we set** should be important to our heart. We should grieve and ask forgiveness when we know that our example has caused someone else to sin.

The attitudes in our heart are important. In this lesson, we are using the word *heart* to symbolize our will and our desires. The heart is the force that guides our actions and determines our decisions. The heart of a Christian leader must be well prepared. It does not develop automatically. It is something that we develop over time through prayer, Bible study and self-discipline with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Do you have a leader's heart? Review this lesson and complete the statements below.

My heart should be:

- (1) in agreement with God's _____ for my life.
- (2) free from _____ that will keep me from having a good moral character.
- (3) _____ to God's will.
- (4) _____ at all times.
- (5) filled with God's _____.
- (6) eager to _____ the world.
- (7) strong in _____.
- (8) _____ like Jesus' heart.
- (9) developing the _____ God has given to me.
- (10) _____ in its relationship with God and man.
- (11) filled with the _____.
- (12) setting the right _____ for others to follow.

The writers of the Psalms tell us many important things about how our heart should be. Turn to the book of Psalms in your Bible, read these passages and complete the statements.

- (1) Psalms 9:1 - I should _____ the Lord with all my heart.
- (2) Psalm 13:5-6 - My heart will _____ in the salvation that God provides.
- (3) Psalm 15:2 - I must speak the _____ from my heart.
- (4) Psalm 16:8-9 - My heart should be _____ because of God's protection.
- (5) Psalm 19:8 - God's precepts should give _____ to my heart.
- (6) Psalm 24:3-4 - A _____ heart will give me access to God's holy place.
- (7) Psalm 26:2 - I must ask God to _____ my heart.
- (8) Psalm 27:1-3 - When my relationship with God is strong, my heart will not _____.
- (9) Psalm 28:6-7 - My heart _____ in God no matter what may happen.
- (10) Psalm 33:20-22 - My hope in the Lord causes my heart to _____.
- (11) Psalm 37:31 - My feet will not slip when God's _____ is in my heart.
- (12) Psalm 40:10 - I must not _____ the things I know in my heart about God.
- (13) Psalm 44:21 - God knows the _____ of my heart.
- (14) Psalm 49:3 - Words of _____ should come from my heart.
- (15) Psalm 51:10 - God can create a _____ heart within me.
- (16) Psalm 51:17 - God will not despise my _____ (repentant) heart.
- (17) Psalm 57:7 - My heart must be _____.
- (18) Psalm 62:10 - My heart must not be set on _____.
- (19) Psalm 66:18 - God will NOT listen to my prayers if I cherish _____ in my heart.
- (20) Psalm 73:26 - God is the _____ of my heart.
- (21) Psalm 78:72 - I must lead with _____ in my heart.
- (22) Psalm 86:11 - The loyalty in my heart to God must be _____.
- (23) Psalm 101:2-3 - My heart must be _____ in my house.
- (24) Psalm 119:2 - I must seek God with _____ of my heart.
- (25) Psalm 131:1 - My heart must not be _____.

PERSON NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

What are some areas of your heart that you need to improve for better leadership? _____

Unit Four: THE CHARACTER OF A LEADER

Lesson Three: A Leader's Attitude

1. Proverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so he is." Our attitude, the way we view life, determines who we are and the things we can accomplish. Skills are useful, but they can be useless if they are not guided by the right attitudes. When I seek the help of someone, I am more interested in his attitude than in his skills. Psychology has discovered that we can change our life by changing our attitude. Jesus taught that the attitudes of our heart determine the kind of things that come out of our life (Luke 6:45).

Write the name of someone you highly respect. _____
What causes you to respect this person? _____

2. Most likely the reason you respect this person has much to do with his or her attitude. Skills are useful, but good attitudes are necessary.

Success comes more from attitude than from skills. Faith, hope and a positive attitude will always succeed over doubts and a negative attitude. Think about the time when Moses sent twelve men to check out the land that God promised to the nation of Israel? Their mission was to research the land and its people and to bring back information that would help them conquer the land. All twelve men saw the same thing, but their response was not the same. Joshua and Caleb were full of faith and hope. The other men had a different attitude. Read Numbers 13:30-33; 14:6-11. Look at this comparison by Dr. John Maxwell of their responses:

Joshua and Caleb

- a. Saw the fruit in the land.
- b. Saw themselves in God's hands.
- c. Were positive about the future.
- d. Encouraged action based on faith.

The other Men

- a. Saw problems in the land.
- b. Saw themselves as small and weak.
- c. Were negative about the future.
- d. Prevented progress based on fear.

My attitude, more than my skills, will determine my _____.

3. **Success** starts with our attitudes and then is carried out using our skills. Highly skilled people can become failures because of bad attitudes.

My attitude towards other people will determine their attitude toward me. Jesus said, "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). Respect others and they will respect you. Love others and they will love you. Remember their name. Recognize their good points. Ask for their help. Reward them for their help. Hate others and they will hate you.

Successful relationships will depend on my attitude toward _____.

4. Others will treat us the way we treat them. Our attitude determines how we treat **others**.

Proverbs 6:16-19 says, "There are six things the Lord hates. There are seven things he cannot stand: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that kill innocent people, a mind that thinks up evil plans, feet that are quick to do evil, a witness who lies, and someone who

starts arguments among families." [NCV] None of these actions happen by accident. All of them are planned actions that come from bad attitudes in the heart.

Sinful action comes from _____ attitudes in my heart.

5. We cannot blame others for our bad actions. All of our bad actions start out with a **bad** attitude in our heart (James 1:13-15).

Successfully overcoming problems will depend on the attitudes in our heart. We can become discouraged and give up, or we can use our creative skills and our faith to develop a plan to overcome. We can blame others, or we can examine our own actions to see where we are a part of the problem. We can get angry, or we can get busy on the solution. We can quit or we can conquer. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 8:28, "*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*" If we believe this, then we know that God will use problems to bring good into our life. We can accept our bad circumstances and do nothing, or we can determine to overcome our bad circumstances with God's help.

My attitudes will determine if I overcome or if I continue to live with my bad _____.

6. Problems are an opportunity to discover good things (James 1:2-12). If our attitude keeps us from going through this process, we miss some wonderful blessings (James 1:2-4). We continue to suffer in our bad **circumstances**.

The story is told of a shoe salesman who went to a bush area. He sent a message back to his boss. "Do not send any shoes. No one here wears shoes." Another shoe salesman went to the same area. He sent this message to his boss. "Send more shoes. No one here wears shoes." The facts did not change, but the application of those facts was understood differently because of a difference in attitude.

A Christian leader sees opportunities that others miss because he has faith and hope in Jesus Christ. This allows him to have a visionary attitude that sees possibilities others cannot see. Jesus said, "*Everything is possible for him who believes*"(Mark 9:23). The Apostle Paul wrote, *I can do everything through him [Jesus Christ] who gives me strength*(Philippians 4:13).

My faith and my hope in Jesus Christ will give me a V _____ attitude.

7. We will talk about visionary leadership in a later lesson. Just understand here that vision comes from an attitude in the heart. If the attitude is not right, the vision will not come.

Attitudes can make us successful or destroy us. When a business man interviews a potential employee, the evaluation is based 5% on when the person will be available to work, 5% on the persons ability to adjust to the working place, 10% on his skills, 10% on his appearance and 70% on his attitude. When business men evaluate an employee for promotion to a higher position, they consider five things: (1) ambition [which is an attitude], (2) attitude toward company policy, (3) attitude towards coworkers, (4) leadership skills and (5) attitude during stress on the job. Four of the five areas of consideration are attitudes.

A survey was taken to determine why people stopped buying from certain stores. The survey revealed that 68% stopped buying because an employee showed no concern for the needs of the customer. Bad attitudes of employees destroyed the future of their employer's business. This also destroyed the future of the employees. If the business of

the employer fails, the employees will fail to have a job.

Bad attitudes will D_____ me.

8. Bad attitudes are **destructive**. This is the reason you should not put someone in a leadership position who has a bad attitude. Added responsibilities do not change attitudes, they only make them worse. We have to change the heart first.

Too often we base our happiness on our worldly achievements. When we compare our achievements with others we become unhappy with our life. We think if we could serve in a different place, or do a different kind of work we would have more happiness. King Solomon had this same problem. He wrote the book of Ecclesiastes to document his search for happiness. He had hundreds of wives and concubines. He obtained great wealth. He developed all kinds of skills and acquired all kinds of knowledge. He experienced all kinds of luxuries. Read the results of his search for happiness in these passages below:

Ecclesiastes 2:11

Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13

I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil--this is the gift of God.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Now, all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

My selfish achievements will not bring me_____

9. **Happiness** comes through fulfilling God's purpose for our life. Selfish achievements are temporary and have no eternal value.

We choose the attitudes that we have. We must choose the right attitudes if we want happiness. It is not the things that happens to us, but how we respond to them in our heart that matters. We need to evaluate our attitudes. We need to focus on faith instead of fear. We need to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our heart. We need to seek out God's purpose for our life. We need to seek the advice of wise, experienced mentors. We need to join hands with others who will help us to be accountable. We need to absorb all the Scriptures that our mind can understand. It is not our circumstances, but our choices in attitude that will bring us happiness.

My happiness will depend on the attitudes that I C_____

10. Attitudes are not a matter of circumstances, but a matter of **choice**. Poor people who work hard can be happy and rich people who enjoy luxury can be unhappy. Also, poor people who work hard can be unhappy and rich people with wealth can be happy. It is not a matter of achievements, but a matter of attitudes.

There will always be room to improve our attitudes. That is the reason the Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:8, "*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.*" We must continue to work on our attitudes. Circumstances will change. New kinds of problems will come. Our attitudes will be challenged in ways we cannot imagine.

There will always be a need to _____ my attitudes.

11. No one is perfect. Tomorrow will bring new and different challenges. I must **improve** my attitudes to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

The attitude of a leader influences the attitude of others. If he has a bad attitude, others will also have the same bad attitude. If he has a good attitude, others will also have the same good attitude. This is another reason our attitude is important. It is not only our life that is affected; our attitude affects the lives of all who follow and respect us.

I must be careful about my attitudes because they _____ the attitudes of others.

12. Our attitudes **influence** the attitudes of others. God will hold us responsible for the bad attitudes we encourage in the life of other people.

Christian leaders face challenges that are greater than we are. These giant challenges reveal the attitudes in our heart. These giant challenges are opportunities to grow closer to God. These giants can be overcome with attitudes that are based on faith and hope in God.

David was a faithful shepherd boy, and the youngest son at home taking care of his father's animals. His father, Jesse, sent him to the battle field to check on his older brothers who were soldiers. David learned that one man, a giant Philistine named Goliath, had put fear into the hearts of all the soldiers and King Saul. The huge Goliath challenged the Israelites to send one man to fight him. They would fight until one of them died. The nation of the man who died would become slaves of the winner. *The Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other."* *On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified* (1 Samuel 17:10-11). *David asked the men standing near him, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"* (Samuel 17:26)? King Saul saw a giant man, David, the shepherd boy, saw God's kingdom.

In my attitude, I must see things through the eyes of _____ not through the eyes of men.

13. We will never overcome giant challenges if we look through the eyes of men. We must always ask, how does **God** see this situation? King Saul and his men could not imagine how any one of them could kill this huge man. David knew that God could kill Goliath.

When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle."

"Now what have I done?" said David. "Can't I even speak?" He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him (1 Samuel 17:28-31).

Although David had the right attitude, those who did not look through God's eyes accused David of wickedness. They criticized his attitude by saying he was too young, he was too prideful, he had no experience and he did not belong there. Those who fear men often see God's giant killers as trouble makers. They falsely accuse men of courage to be men of wickedness. This did not discourage David. He continued speaking from his heart until King Saul called for him.

I must not become _____ from following godly attitudes by those who falsely accuse me.

14. Fear can lead people to do almost anything to avoid confrontation with a giant. They often attack the giant killer and try to **discourage** him rather than face the giant.

King Saul reminded David that David was only a small boy. However, David based his confidence and his courage on past experiences. He told King Saul, *"The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine"*(1 Samuel 17:37). God enabled David to kill a lion and a bear while protecting his fathers sheep in the bush. David knew from past experience that success did not come from his skills, but from God using his skills for God's purposes. He had confidence that God would use him to kill the giant.

My attitude of courage and my confidence in God's ability to use me will grow stronger with each successful Ex_____.

15. We build our attitudes of courage and confidence by trusting God to use us for his purposes in small things. When the giants arrive, we are **experienced** and ready for them. We will never be ready for the giant if we do not start right now getting experience through the smaller challenges that are in front of us.

Giants have a bad reputation. Giants do not go away. Giants continue to confront us until **we** run away. Giants want us to believe that they can win. Giants depend on fear to keep us from fighting.

After convincing the King to support him, David went out to face the giant. The giant tried to scare David. *He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"*

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied"(Samuel 17:43-45).

My attitude of courage comes from facing the giant in the name of _____.

16. We are not fighting our own battle. We are fighting in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not our war, it is God's war. However, we must be sure we are fighting God's war and not pursuing our own desires.

David clearly stated who should receive the honor and the glory for the things he would do that day. David told the giant, *"All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands"*(1 Samuel 17:47).

My attitude must always include giving the honor and the glory of success to _____.

17. We fight the giants because we want to bring glory to **God**. If we fight so that we will bring glory to ourselves, we will fail. It is not our power, our skills, our wisdom nor our plans that bring victory over the giant. All glory and honor for success must go to God. Servant-leaders know that God works through us to fulfill his purposes.

King Saul and the soldiers saw the battle as a struggle for their personal freedom. David saw the battle as a matter of spiritual warfare. It was the Kingdom of God against the forces of Satan. Too often we do not realize that we are in a spiritual battle. We think it is only a matter of worldly concerns. We do not see the moral and the spiritual aspects of the challenge we are facing (Galatians 6:12). The giant we face is often Satan and his demons. We need not fear them if we are fighting in the name of Jesus to fulfill his purposes.

In order to be a giant killer, I must keep my attitude focused on the _____ battle and not become distracted by worldly concerns.

18. Christian leaders are engaged in a **spiritual battle** with Satan and his demons. We must keep our attitudes focused on the spiritual values that are involved with the issues we face.

Our attitudes will make or break us as a Christian leader. Let us review the things we have learned about our attitudes in this lesson.

My attitudes:

- a. My attitudes will determine my _____.
- b. My attitudes toward _____ will determine my relationship with them.
- c. My _____ attitudes will cause sinful actions to come out of my heart.
- d. My attitudes will determine if I will overcome my _____.
- e. Faith and Hope in Jesus Christ will give me a _____ attitude.
- f. My _____ attitudes will destroy me.
- g. Fulfilling selfish attitudes will not bring _____.
- h. The attitudes that I _____ will determine my happiness.
- i. I will always need to _____ my attitudes.
- j. My attitudes _____ the attitudes of others.
- k. We must guide our attitudes to see things as _____ see them.
- l. I must not allow others to _____ me from following godly attitudes.
- m. My courage and my confidence in God to use me will become stronger with each successful _____.
- n. My attitude of courage comes from doing things in the name of _____.
- o. In my attitude, I must always give the honor and glory to _____.
- p. I must always keep my attitudes focused on the _____ battle.

Unit Four: THE CHARACTER OF A LEADER
Lesson Four: Leadership is Stewardship

1. We are not leaders of our own kingdom. We are leaders on behalf of God and his kingdom. The Apostle Paul wrote, *"So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful"*(1 Corinthians 4:1-2). God has entrusted to us his kingdom on earth. He has given us the resources, the guidelines and the authority to manage it for him. We prove our faithfulness to God by the way we manage His resources.

In this lesson we are going to learn about managing God's resources. The way we manage these resources is a reflection of our character as a leader. God is the owner of everything. The way we handle money and other resources affects our relationship with God. It also affects how others will trust us with their life. We must set the example of how to use these resources for God and we must teach others how to use these resources for God. Read Luke 16:11.

If we do not handle God's resources wisely, people will not _____ us with their life.

2. People are watching to see how we manage our money, our possessions and how we manage the resources of the church. If we do not show wisdom and integrity with these things, they will not trust us to tell them how to live their life.

God has given us guidelines on how to handle money. The Bible contains 2,350 verses dealing with money and possessions. Jesus taught more about the use of money and resources than any other subject. Jesus said, *"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:21). Sixteen of his thirty-eight parables deal with this topic. Money and possessions are more than practical issues of daily life. The way we use them reveals our spiritual attitudes. Read Matthew 6:24.

The way we use money and resources is a S_____ issue.

3. The use of money and resources under our care is a spiritual issue. If we think we can use them any how we wish, we offend God, the owner of everything. If we do not use them wisely, it will affect our relationship with God and our leadership influence on others. The way we use money and resources is an important part of our character.

We must clearly understand the difference between ownership and stewardship. Read the scriptures below and complete the sentences.

God's Part:

- a. Psalm 24:1 - God owns _____ in the world.
- b. Psalm 135:6 - God does whatever _____ him in the world.
- c. Philippians 4:18-19 - God will meet all of my _____ when I use his money and his resources to build his kingdom.

4. God owns everything in this world and he does whatever pleases him in this world. He has asked us to manage his world wisely and use its resources to build his kingdom. When we do this, he will use his control over the world to meet all of our needs.

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, lived in England in the eighteenth century. He lived by three financial rules: (1) Earn all you can. (2) Save all you can. (3) Give all you can. There are biblical principles behind these three rules. Let us look at each one.

The Bible teaches us to work hard and to do our work as if we are working for God no matter how bad our circumstances may be (Colossians 3:23-25). The writer of Proverbs gives us an example of good stewardship found in the life of an ant. Read Proverbs 6:6-11.

A sluggard is a lazy person.

- a. The ant has no _____ to tell it the things it should be doing.
- b. The ant _____ its provisions and _____ its food.

5. The ant is our example of a good steward. He does not need a commander, an overseer or a ruler to tell him each day the work he should be doing. Each day he looks for opportunities to store up provisions and gather food. He does not lack anything, because he is a hard worker who seeks out opportunities.

Earning all we can is not about greed or getting wealthy. It is not that we seek money and want the fine luxuries it can buy. The Apostle Paul warns that love of money is a bad attitude that can lead us to sin. We work hard for other reasons that we will discuss later. Just now read 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and complete the sentences below.

- a. The greatest gain is to have _____ with _____.
(verse 6)
- b. All the money and luxuries in the world are only temporary possessions because we take _____ out of this world.
- c. We should be contented (satisfied) if we have _____ and _____.

6. When we learn to be satisfied with the food and clothing we have, will begin to have happiness. If we feel we must have fine food, fine clothes, a fine house, fine education, fine vehicles and more, we will become dissatisfied in life. We may work hard just so we can gain some of these things, but they will not bring us happiness. When we die, we cannot take them with us. The greatest achievement in this world is to develop a godly character, fulfill God's purpose in our life and learn to be satisfied with the things God provides. Earning all you can is about working hard so that we can be a blessing to others. We do not work hard just to enjoy temporary luxuries in this world.

John Wesley said, "**Save all you can.**" Saving is about preparing for the future. You need a plan for saving. Set aside a certain amount for saving every time you receive an income.

Your income today is not about the things that happened yesterday. Your income today is not about the things you will do today. The fact is, your income today can determine the things you will be able to do tomorrow. Put some of your income in a secret place for future use. You may want to secretly invest it where it will gain value such as a bank savings account. Be careful not to foolishly invest it (Proverbs 28:22). Save for unexpected emergencies. Save for expenses you know you will have in the future. Don't buy now on credit, but save up to buy in the future. Those who buy on credit never have extra money. They often fall into problems when they cannot pay the debts they owe. Those who can give generously and cheerfully are those who do not buy on credit because they are contented with the things they have today (Psalm 37:21).

How I manage my money today will determine the things I can do _____.

7. There will be no future for tomorrow if we do not manage our money well today. Develop a budget for your income. A budget will help you to decide where your money will go instead of wondering where it went. Determine how much income you will have for each month or each year. Decide how much you actually need to spend for each part of your daily living, not how much you would like to spend. Some of the things to budget are how much you need for food each week, how much for transportation each week, how much for clothing each year, how much for school fees each year, how much for special occasions and necessary trips each year, how much to put aside for emergencies, how much to save for special purchases. Be sure to include a tithe in your budget.

When the money comes, divide it according to your budget. Keep money in envelopes labeled for each item in the budget. If you get paid once a month, have an envelope for food for each week of the month. Discipline yourself to spend the food money only for the food for that week. If you have yearly budget items such as clothing, special occasions, or school fees, have one envelope for each and let the money accumulate until you have enough for that expense before you spend it.

Avoid buying on credit. Don't borrow from one envelope to use it for another expense. Don't do anything on credit unless it is an absolute serious emergency.

Have an item in your budget for benevolence. Make it as generous as you can, but when it is gone, then you really have no money left to give. Your first obligation is to your immediate family, wife, children and any relatives who may be unable to provide for themselves. Set up a benevolent fund in the church for those outside of your family who need help. (Read 1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:3-4, 8, 16.) God seldom asks us to suffer because someone else did not work hard or did not plan well (Ephesians 4:28, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15).

Don't let anyone convince you that you have money to help them just because you have cash in hand. The money in your budget envelopes is already spent. You owe it to your family (1 Timothy 5:8). Without it, your family has no future. It is not free money to give out to others.

Read Matthew 6:31-34 and Proverbs 27:23-27.

Which is better; (a) to carefully manage and budget the resources we have today or (b) to enjoy everything we have today and let tomorrow take care of itself? Give reasons for your answer. _____

8. Some may quote Matthew 6:31-34 and say we should not plan for food and clothing for tomorrow but just live for today. That is a wrong application of Matthew 6:30-34. Jesus was talking about the attitudes that control the desires of our heart. Our desire must be to live in obedience to God's righteousness. Unbelievers use their skills to build up wealth in this world. Some believers worry because they do not have the things that unbelievers have. Sometimes they go against the teachings of God in order to have the things that the unbelievers have.

If we please God first, God will give us the necessary resources to manage so we can have the things that we need in this life. If God makes us wealthy it will be for the purpose of using the wealth to build his kingdom. We need to plan for tomorrow, but we should not worry nor be anxious about the results. God is in control and he will bless our plans as long as we do his will. Read James 4:13-17

It is not wrong to plan for tomorrow, but I must always be asking God if my plans are within his _____.

9. God expects us to manage his resources well. As long as our plans are fulfilling his will, we need not worry about tomorrow. If our plans are based on selfish desires, then we should be anxious because God will not bless them.

John Wesley said, "**Give all you can.**" Jesus said, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*"(Acts 20:35). There are three areas of life where we need to be giving. **(1)** We must give to build God's Kingdom here on earth. The tithe is the smallest amount we should give to God (Malachi 3:10, Matthew 23:23, Hebrews 7:3-6, Proverbs 3:9-10). **(2)** We need to give to those who are serving God full-time (Matthew 10:40-42). **(3)** We need to give to the poor (Proverbs 19:17). In these three areas of giving, we are giving to God's work. We are laying up treasures in heaven. Read Mark 12:42-44.

The poor widow gave _____ she had to _____ on.

10. Jesus praised the widow because she gave to God all she had to live on. She did not give a tithe (10 percent) of the money she had. She gave 100 percent (all) of her money. She had nothing left to live on. She trusted God to provide for her. This is not a command, but it is an example of generous sacrificial giving to build God's kingdom. How many of us are willing to give all that we have in order to be a blessing to God? If we do not have a family and there is no one who depends on us for food and clothing, we may want to think about doing this.

Here are some attitudes we should have about our giving:

- a. 1 Corinthians 13:3 - I gain nothing if I give generously but do not have _____.
- b. 2 Corinthians 9:7 - I must give _____, not _____ or under _____.
- c. Proverbs 3:9 - I must honor God by giving him the F _____ part of my income.
- d. 2 Corinthians 8:1-4 - I must not let extreme _____ keep me from giving.
- e. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 - When God blesses me with a good income, I must be sure to give _____ Sunday according to my _____.

11. The attitude we have toward giving reveals our character. A Christian leader gives because he loves God and he loves others. The first thing we do with our income is give some to God. Even if we are poor, we will give generously to God. We will give weekly and we will give in proportion to our income. The more God blesses us, the larger the amount we will give to God.

A Christian leader will avoid debt. Debt destroys our influence and becomes a burden that keeps us from giving our best service to God.

Here are some attitudes we should have toward debt:

- a. *Romans 13:8* - I will not allow my debts to remain _____.
- b. *Proverbs 22:7* - I will not allow debt to make me a _____ to the rich.
- c. *James 4:13-16* - I will not borrow based on the money I might make _____.
- d. *Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 12, 15, 43-44* - I will be obedient to God's teachings so that I will be able to _____ to many, but will _____ from none.

e. *Proverbs 17:18* - I will not use my resources to borrow money for a _____.

12. God discourages debt. If a debt is outstanding (unpaid), we need to make every effort to pay it off immediately. Payment of our debts should be a part of our budget. Many people become servants to the wealthy because they borrowed too much and have no workable plan to pay it back. We should never borrow money today because we think we might make money in some project tomorrow. We should first do research into the project to get all the facts we can and then make a plan that we know will be successful before borrowing money.

If we focus on obeying God and fulfilling his purpose for our life, he will bless us so that we can loan to others, but we will never need to borrow from anyone. This is the meaning of Matthew 6:30-34. The most dangerous thing is to borrow money from someone in order to give to a neighbor who says he will pay it back. If the neighbor does not pay it back, he will not suffer, but you will suffer.

Christian leaders must be good stewards of God's resources. Those resources are not just the money and possessions belonging to the church. God's resources include our family, our money and our possessions. Manage them wisely so that God's kingdom will grow. Teach others how to be good stewards so they can enable God's kingdom to grow.

Our money and our resources are a tool to build God's kingdom. They are a test of our character and they demonstrate who we are.

What is the difference between ownership and stewardship? _____

How should the above fact affect the way we manage our money and our resources? _____

PERSON NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Review this lesson and then list the changes you are going to make in your life so that you will be a better steward of God's resources. _____

Unit Four: THE CHARACTER OF A LEADER

Lesson Five: Effective Prayer

1. Most Christians pray on a regular basis. They want God to bless them. They have certain things they pray about and their prayers usually follow the same pattern each time. For some, prayers are more of a religious ritual than a conversation with God. When a serious problem arises they get serious about specific details and needs until the problem is gone. Then they go back to their ritual prayers.

However, for a Christian Leader, prayer is central to all decisions and all daily planning. A Christian leader prays about the details of his day. He takes daily tasks before God asking for guidance and support before and during the tasks. He does not panic when problems arise. He calmly takes the problem before God and together they work out a solution that fulfills God's will. The things we pray about and the attitude with which we pray are very important.

Prayer is not a R_____, prayer is a planning session with _____.

2. A Christian leader is not ritualistic in his prayers. For a leader, daily prayer is a planning session with God. We spend time meditating on God's Word. We let God's Word speak to our personal needs and show us God's will for our life. Then we take our planned activities and our concerns before God in prayer. It is during these personal times in meditation and prayer that God opens our mind to understand his will and to show us how we can fulfill his purpose for our life.

Effective prayer comes when we learn to think and pray in terms of God's will. A good example is Jesus in the Garden of Gethemene, the night before he was crucified. Read John 12:27-28 and Matthew 26:39-44.

Jesus did not want to suffer and die on the cross yet he knew it was God's _____ for him to do it. He knew this was the only way he could bring _____ to God's name and fulfill God's _____ for his life on earth.

3. Our prayers will be effective if we are seeking God's will for our life and asking him to enable us to bring glory to his name. We bring glory to his name by fulfilling his purpose for our life.

Jesus did not ask God to remove him from the suffering. He asked God to give him the strength to endure the suffering. Many times God calls us to suffer for his glory. If we are not willing to suffer, then we are not willing to fulfill his purpose in our life and we are not willing to be a leader in his kingdom.

A Christian leader will: (mark the best answer, only one)

- _____ a. Ask God to remove him from suffering.
- _____ b. ask God to take away the suffering.
- _____ c. ask God to enable him to endure the suffering.
- _____ d. ask that God's name be glorified through the suffering.

4. A Christian leader will ask that God's name be glorified through any suffering that may come his way. God may glorify his name by taking the suffering away from us or he may glorify his name by enabling us to endure the suffering. We may not know the things God is accomplishing through our suffering. The important thing is that we remain faithful to God and allow him to use us for his purpose.

For these reasons, our prayers, both public and private, must be more than rituals and memorized phrases. They must come from our heart. They must reflect the things that are in our heart and they must be specific to the needs of the hour. It is not how much we say, but how we say it that is important. Effective prayers do not require fancy words or big words, but they do require sincere words.

Effective prayer requires:

- a. words that come from our _____.
- b. words that are _____ to the needs of the hour.
- c. words that are _____.

5. Our prayers must come from our hearts, not from our memory. They must deal with specific needs and be sincere. The temptation is to become ritualistic in our prayers.

Mature prayer is accepting God's will no matter what it may be. One example of this is seen when three missionaries with *New Tribes Mission* were kidnapped in 1993 in the country of Columbia, South America by political rebels. The leaders of New Tribes Mission first prayed that God would bring them out safely. Several months passed and no one knew where they were or if they were still alive. Then they began to pray that God would bring the missionaries home if they were still alive or let them know if they were dead. After eight months the leaders were praying. "God, if we never know what happened to them, we will still glorify your name." Eventually they learned that the missionaries were dead. This was a welcome news although it was not the answer they would have wanted. They accepted God's will in the matter.

We show maturity in prayer when we pray that God's name will be _____ even when our desires are not being fulfilled.

6. God's ways are higher than our ways and past finding out (Romans 11:33-36). We cannot understand why God sometimes answers our prayers in ways that we think are not good. We cannot understand how his name can be glorified by some of the answers we observe. However, we show maturity when we continue to trust him and continue to give glory to his name.

Mature prayers focus on the future as well as the present. Mature prayers go beyond our personal concerns and reflect God's will and God's concerns. Dr. John Maxwell says that our prayers can be on one of three levels. The lowest level is when we pray about temporary matters. The second level is when we pray for others and the third level is when we pray from God's view point. Below is an example of prayers on these three levels for the same worship service.

Temporary matters: Lord help us to lead the worship service well this morning. Keep the microphones and the musical equipment working properly.

Concern for others: Lord, be with those who attend the worship service today. I pray that they will be encouraged by the things that happen here today.

God's will be done: Lord, even though we are weak and imperfect, use us to bring glory to your name. Use this service for your purpose to build your kingdom.

A Christian leader does not pray for his own glory nor for others to be happy. He prays that God's _____ will be built and that God's name will be _____.

7. The highest level of mature prayer is when we pray for God's kingdom to be built and his name to be glorified. Often our prayers are selfish and our expectations are too small. We may pray for the worship service to go well so that we, the leaders, will look good. We may pray that the worship service will make others happy so that they will be happy with us. We forget that God's will is accomplished and his kingdom grows when people are challenged to change their life. We forget that God's name is glorified when people decide to make sacrifices and to take action in order to fulfill God's purpose. Life is not totally about joy and happiness. Christian life involves getting right with God and fulfilling his purposes.

Here is an example from Old Testament history where the leaders focused on the temporary rather than God's will. The Israelites and two allies went to battle against their enemy, the Moabites. After a week of marching towards the battle field, they ran out of drinking water. They went to the prophet Elisha and asked for water. Read the response that God gave through the prophet Elisha - 2 Kings 3:15-19.

What did the kings ask from God? _____
What did the kings fail to ask from God that God was willing to give? _____

8. The kings were focused on their temporary problem with water. They did not look to the future and ask for God's help to win the battle against their enemy. They are fortunate that God enabled them to have victory even though they did not ask for it.

A survey taken among 2,000 people who attended church found that the top three subjects of their prayers were meals, safety for their family and personal blessings. The average time spent in prayer was seven minutes a day.

How would you describe the prayer life of these Christians: concern for **temporary matters**, concern for **others** or concern that **God's will** be accomplished? _____

9. The prayers of most people deal with selfish matters that are temporary. We need to get serious about the things we pray for. Many of us spend much time in prayer, but are we praying about the right things?

Often, our prayers do not connect with the will of God. Read about the prayer of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:10-14.

The prayer of the Pharisee did not connect with God's will because in his prayer he glorified _____.

10. The Pharisee glorified himself. His prayer was selfish and proud. He did not seek God's will for his life. His heart was not right with God.

James says, *The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective* (James 5:16). We can pray in secret or in public. We can pray loudly, quietly or in our mind without making a sound. We can stand with our hands raised high or we can get down on the ground with our face in the dirt. We can pray for two hours or for two minutes. We can use fancy words or common words. None of these things guarantees that our prayers will be effective.

It is the attitude of our heart that makes our prayers effective. Our heart must be righteous and it must be connected with God's will.

A good example of this is found in the life of Elijah - a story we are all familiar with. He challenged the prophets of Baal to prove that their god was alive. The prophets of Baal started early in the morning. They prepared their sacrifice. They shouted and danced.

When their god did not come for the sacrifice, they cried louder and they cut themselves with knives. Nothing happened. At the end of the day, Elijah prepared his sacrifice and poured much water on it to make it difficult to burn. Then he prayed. Read his prayer in 1 Kings 18:36-39.

Did Elijah pray a long prayer? _____

Did Elijah shout when he prayed? _____

Did Elijah claim he was a better prophet than the prophets of Baal? _____

Whose will did Elijah want to fulfill? _____

For what purpose did Elijah want God to burn up the sacrifice? _____

Who did Elijah ask God to glorify? _____

11. Elijah's prayer was not long nor loud. It was very simple and clear. He asked God to burn the sacrifice to show that he, Elijah, was following God's will and to let the people know that Jehovah is the true God. Elijah wanted God to be glorified.

We must pray for a purpose and that purpose must focus on two things. Those two things are clearly stated in the prayer outline that Jesus gave to his disciples. Read Matthew 6:9-13. Note: The word *hollowed* in this scripture means to be honored or respected.

The first two points in the prayer outline given by Jesus are:

1. That God's name be _____.

2. That God's _____ be done.

12. Our prayers will be effective when we pray that God will be glorified, honored and respected because of the things we do. Our prayers will be effective when we ask that God will enable us to fulfill his will for our life.

How mature are your prayers? Are they focused on God's glory and God's will? Think of a recent difficulty in your life. How did you pray about it to God? On what level did you pray: temporary matters, concern for others or that God's will be fulfilled?

List the two things that are most important for the effective prayer of a Christian leader:

1. _____

2. _____
