

Unit Five: THE TEST OF A LEADER

Lesson One: Testing is Necessary

1. King David wrote these words in Psalm 26:2, "Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind." A good leader will welcome a test of his leadership. We cannot know if we are a capable leader until problems arrive. The way in which we handle problems and successfully overcome them will determine the level of our leadership ability. Problems help us to grow and mature in our leadership skills. Read James 3:1-2.

Do you know anyone who is perfect other than Jesus? _____

2. No one is perfect. We all have weaknesses. We all stumble at one time or another. It is when we stumble that we learn where our weakness is. Then we can focus on overcoming our weakness so that we can become a better leader. It is only through testing that we discover our weakness so that we can improve ourselves. Testing is not a one-time event. It is a process that leaders continue to face.

If we are going to become a better leader then we need to be _____.

3. Things that test our leadership skills will enable us to become a better leader. Testing is an opportunity to learn. We gain experience, and we discover our weakness. God will allow us to be tested so that we can become a better leader. The way in which we respond to these tests will determine the future level of our leadership ability.

Dr. John Maxwell has defined leadership tests as "an opportunity which challenges leaders to demonstrate their potential and their maturity." Our leadership maturity will be determined by how well we pass through the test. The word *potential* refers to our ability to do something we have never done before, the ability to develop new skills. Our potential will be determined by how well we deal with new circumstances that we have never had to face before.

Leadership tests determine our _____ when we are faced with new circumstances we have never faced before.

Leadership tests determine our _____ by how well we overcome them.

4. Sometimes, leadership problems and challenges are a test of our potential to deal with new circumstances and develop new skills. Problems and challenges are always a test of our leadership maturity to see how well we can overcome them.

Leadership tests will reveal one of three truths about our leadership growth. (1) The test may reveal that we are doing poorly in our leadership development because we keep making the same mistakes. (2) The test may reveal that we are doing OK in our leadership because we made it through the test. However, if we did not do any better in handling the problem than we did the last time, then we are not making progress. (3) Our hope and our goal is that the test will reveal that we are making progress because this time we overcame the problem quicker, with less stress and fewer difficulties than the last time we had a similar problem.

If we keep making the same mistakes in dealing with leadership challenges, then we are doing _____.

If we do as well as we did the last time we had the same challenge, then we are doing _____.

If we handle the problem quicker with less stress and fewer difficulties, then we are making _____ in our leadership development.

5. People who keep making the same mistake are poor leaders. Often they blame others for their failures rather than admit they have a problem. Because of their prideful attitude they will never overcome their weakness. Some leaders are satisfied with themselves and think their leadership ability is OK because they manage to overcome problems even though they continue to experience a lot of stress and difficulties. Such leaders will not mature nor develop their potential in leadership. The person who is always looking for a better way to deal with challenges and solve problems will make progress in leadership development. As a leader, we will always have to face challenges and problems. Our attitude as well as our abilities will determine how well we deal with them.

As a Christian leader, the test will often involve our obedience and commitment to God. We remember the time that God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac (read Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13). This was a very tough test of obedience for Abraham. His strong faith enabled him to demonstrate his commitment to God even though he did not understand how the sacrifice of Isaac would fulfill God's plan. The Bible says that God accepted his faith as a substitute for righteousness. God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son at the last second. God provided the sacrifice for Abraham. Through this test, Abraham's faith became stronger and his relationship with God became closer. Abraham became a stronger leader.

Many times, the challenges that come our way will be a test of our _____ and our _____ to God.

6. The leadership test will often challenge our obedience and our commitment to God. The first responsibility of a Christian leader is to fulfill God's will. Often that involves a decision between obeying God or following our personal desires. Dr. John Maxwell has identified ten things that can be a test of our Christian leadership skills. Let us look at these ten types of test one at a time.

The first one he mentions is called the test of **small things**. This usually happens at the beginning level of leadership. Jesus said, "*Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much*" (Luke 16:10). God will never give us a big job to do until we show him we are serious about the small ones. Every day we have small decisions to make and small responsibilities to fulfill. The person who gives little concern for making these small decisions or fulfilling these small responsibilities in a godly way, will never be given a place of leadership in God's kingdom. One example of this is tithing. If you do not tithe the small income you have today, God will never bless you with a big income to tithe tomorrow. Every small detail of your life can be used to bring glory to God.

If we fail to honor and obey God in _____, he will never give us the opportunity to honor him in big things.

7. Christian leadership starts with faithfulness in small things. We prove ourselves worthy of responsibility by the way we handle small things. The story is told of a wealthy business man who asked his future son-in-law to build him a house. The future son-in-law cheated his future father-in-law by building the house poorly with cheap materials, but

charged him full price for a quality house. At the marriage ceremony the father-in-law gave the house to his son-in-law as a wedding gift. Now the son-in-law had to live in the poorly built house or admit that he had cheated his father-in-law. His wife soon realized that her husband had cheated her father. That greatly affected their marriage relationship. The father-in-law also knew that his son-in-law had cheated him and he never gave the son-in-law employment in his prosperous business. If we fail to pass the test of small things, we need to ask for forgiveness and beg for a second chance (1 John 1:8-10).

Another test is called **motive**. Motive refers to the reason we do things. Some people do the right things for the wrong reasons. Jesus said that hypocrites offer their private prayers in public so that people will think they are righteous (Matthew 6:5-6).

Satan likes to test our motives. Satan said to God, "*Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face*" (Job 1:9-11). Satan tested Job by taking away everything he had and then tortured his body with boils. Job's wife advised him to curse God and die so he would no longer have to suffer. Job proved that his motives were righteous when he said, "*Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?*" (Read Job 2:10).

God allows us to be tested with hardships to prove that our _____ for following him is pure.

8. Some people hide their wrong motive for following God. They may be seeking self-glory or wealth or other worldly benefits by pretending to love God. When the worldly benefits are removed, their real motive will be discovered. Your motives for being a Christian leader will be tested by personal hardships.

Another test of our leadership skills is **stewardship**. God will give you a valuable resource or a valuable opportunity to see how you will use it. Jesus told the story of a farmer whom God blessed with a good crop. Instead of sharing the abundance of his crop with those in need, he built bigger barns so he could keep all of it for himself. He failed the test - Read Luke 12:16-21.

Jesus told the parable of talents to explain how this test works (Matthew 25:13-30). The servant who was given five talents invested it wisely and brought ten talents back to his master. The servant who was given two talents invested it wisely and brought four talents back to his master. The servant who was given one talent failed the test. He wasted the opportunity. He could have at least loaned it out for interest, but he hid it in the ground where it accomplished nothing. Those who use their opportunities and resources wisely will be given greater opportunities to lead God's people.

God will put opportunities and resources into our hands to see if we can be good _____ of his Kingdom.

9. Opportunities and resources are a test of our stewardship for God's Kingdom. If we keep them totally for ourselves or fail to use them wisely, we fail the test. God wants us to use his resources to bless others.

There is a test that can be called **wilderness**. A wilderness is an area where people cannot live because the resources for food and water are not enough to supply human needs. It is possible to travel through such an area, but it is difficult to remain there very long. The leadership test of wilderness is an emotional test of spiritual dryness. During this test, a leader feels weak in his spiritual zeal for God's Kingdom. He feel as if God is far away. He does not experience the normal spiritual encouragement from Bible Study and

prayer. He may be searching for direction from God for his life, but he does not seem to be getting any answers. He may need to spend some time in fasting just as Jesus did in his wilderness experience. The leader knows that God is still there and that God still cares for him, but somehow he does not feel it emotionally.

The key to passing this test is to be patient, to keep close to God's word and to be careful that Satan does not deceive you into using a wrong method to fulfill your emotional needs. Eventually, you will feel God's guidance in your life again. You can read about Jesus' wilderness experience in Matthew 4:1-11. You can read about King David's wilderness experience in Psalm chapter 42.

When we do not feel God's guidance in our life it is a test of spiritual _____.

10. The test of spiritual wilderness can be difficult. Just remember that God is still in control. He may not be speaking to you now because he is preparing the way for your next big step in leadership. Jesus was led to the wilderness immediately after he was baptized at the age of 30. The next step of Jesus after his wilderness experience was a successful three-year ministry that changed the world. If you are patient and faithful to God's teachings, you will pass the test. Be careful that you are not deceived by Satan during the test of wilderness.

There is the test of respect for **God-given authority**. A few years after the church was first established in Jerusalem, Jesus called Paul to be an Apostle. During his conversion, Paul learned that salvation was also for the Gentiles (non-Jews) and that he was being called to take the Good News to the Gentiles.

The Apostle Paul devoted his life to mission work among the Gentiles in areas that were far from Jerusalem. Several years later a disagreement developed because some Jews felt that Gentile converts should follow Jewish customs including the custom of male circumcision. They went too far and said that Gentiles could not be saved unless they were circumcised (Acts 15:1). They criticized Paul for not teaching their false doctrine. Paul could have ignored their criticism, but instead he went to Jerusalem and consulted with the recognized leaders of the Church (Acts 15:1-35). Paul refers to this important meeting in his letter to the Christians in Galatia. Read Galatians 2:1-9 and then complete the statements below.

The Apostle Paul showed respect for the God-given authority of the leaders in Jerusalem when he asked them to judge the way he was setting for the _____ to the _____ (verse 2). Those leaders agreed that Paul correctly preached the Good News and they did not require Titus, a Greek (Gentile) Christian, to be _____.

11. Even if we are right before God and innocent of the criticism against us, we must respect those whom God has chosen to be leaders in his Kingdom. The Apostle Paul spent time and resources to travel all the way to Jerusalem to consult with the leaders who had the God-given authority to judge his work. The church authorities supported Paul and did not require Titus, a Gentile Christian leader, to be circumcised. Their decision weakened those who criticized Paul.

Integrity is another word for honesty. It means that we do the things we preach. As a Christian leader, we will follow Christian principles. The test of **integrity** will come when we are put under pressure to compromise God's teachings and God's will.

Peter was the oldest Apostle and he was the main leader of the church. He was the first Apostle to learn from God that salvation is also for the Gentiles. He learned this important truth through his experience with Cornelius (Read Acts 11:15-18).

Peter was among the leaders who accepted and supported the way Paul was presenting the Good News to the Gentiles. However, a few years later, the Apostle Paul had to challenge Peter about his failure to fulfill God's will concerning the Gentiles. Read Galatians 2:11-13.

The Apostle Peter compromised his _____ so that he could please those belonging to the circumcision group. Barnabas was led to do the wrong thing because of the _____ of Peter.

12. It was an old Jewish custom that Jews would not eat with uncircumcised Gentiles. Some Jewish Christians continued to cause division in the church by insisting that Gentile Christians be circumcised. These Jewish Christians refused to eat with Gentile Christians who were uncircumcised. They put political pressure on Peter to join them in their crusade to change Gentile Christians to be like Jews. Peter gave in to their political pressure and became a hypocrite by agreeing to something that he knew was wrong (Galatians 2:14). His example led others like Barnabas to also do the wrong thing. Although Peter had God-given authority, he failed the test of integrity and he lost credibility as a Christian leader. He lost his right to be respected as a Christian leader. These words are sad, but true; a Christian leader who does not have integrity is a hypocrite.

It is dangerous when our hypocrisy leads others to do the wrong thing (James 3:1). Compromising God's will and God's teachings is a serious mistake for a leader. When we do this, we fail the test of integrity. Such a person is not credible. This means that we cannot trust them to be honest in the things they say. They will lie or twist the truth to avoid conflict and political pressure.

Forgiveness is another test of leadership. People will criticize you and wrongly accuse you as a leader. Leaders receive more criticism than anyone else in the Kingdom. This is one of the burdens of leadership. Criticism comes about because people have high expectations from you. They expect you to be perfect and to meet all of their needs. Some people expect you to do things their way or to please them. The truth is that we cannot please everybody because every person has a different idea about the same topic. The problem comes when these criticisms become aggressive and take action.

Three things are involved in dealing with this test. First, we must not be easily offended by criticism. The writer of Proverbs 19:11 says, "*A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.*" Secondly, we must make reasonable attempts to resolve any serious disagreements we have with someone who is aggressive with their criticism. We must try to develop an understanding and a friendship with them. Thirdly, we must easily forgive them for any serious wrong they may have done against us. We pray that they will realize the wrong they have done against us and that they will ask for forgiveness. However, even if they do not ask for forgiveness, we must forgive them in our heart.

Criticism and wrong accusations will test a leader's willingness to _____. A wise leader will _____ a small criticism. He will attempt to resolve the disagreement with anyone who is _____ in their criticism. He will always forgive even when the offender does not ask for _____.

13. A Christian leader must always forgive those who offend him even if they do not ask for his forgiveness. The small offense should be overlooked. The aggressive offence will require efforts to resolve the disagreement.

The person who refuses to make peace with you and continues to act as your enemy will be the most difficult test of all. You may have to take steps to protect yourself from his actions, but in your heart you must forgive him. When we fail to forgive someone, then bitterness and hatred increase in our heart. They destroy our happiness and affect our ability to lead well.

We destroy ourselves when we allow bitterness and hatred to continually stir the emotions of our heart. We must remember the teaching of the Apostle Paul: "*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice*"(Ephes. 4:31). With God's help, we can learn to forgive some people almost daily as they continue to offend us.

The best attitude toward such a person is to have sympathy toward him. If the person refuses to make peace then the problem lies with him and not with you. He can only blame himself that the problem continues. He is the one who is losing the spiritual battle, not you. The writer of Hebrews says, *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many* (Hebrews 12:14-15). The person is holding on to hatred and bitterness that can destroy him. You need to pray for his salvation.

What should be our attitude toward the person who refuses to make peace and continues to offend us? _____

14. We must forgive and have sympathy toward the person who refuses to make peace with us. His continued offenses against us are only destroying him. We must not let his bad attitude destroy our leadership skills. We must protect ourselves, but we must not waste our time fighting back. We have better things to do in God's Kingdom.

Dr. John Maxwell says that hurting people hurt people. If we know of a person who is unforgiving, we must not give them a position of leadership. These people are hurting with bitterness and hatred. They will hurt other people and do destruction to the Kingdom of God.

Christian leaders are in a spiritual battle. The Apostle Paul warns us that *our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms* (Ephes. 6:12). Christian leaders will be tested by **spiritual warfare**.

Satan is the prince of this world (John 14:30). Satan is not happy with those who work against his control of this world. Satan has limited power to control people and circumstances in order to discourage us. A Christian leader must view many of his challenges and problems as the work of Satan. When someone is opposing his biblical decision he must view it as the work of Satan and not that of the individual person (flesh and blood). Someone has said, "Hate the sin, but love the sinner." When unexpected circumstances destroy or stop a good plan we must realize that Satan may have caused this to happen in order to discourage us. Instead of becoming angry, upset or discouraged, we should pray that Satan's plans will fail and that God's plans will prevail. The only way that Satan can win is if he discourages us from continuing to do our work.

Christian leaders must be aware that they are in a _____ war with Satan. The only way he can win this war is if we become _____.

15. Satan is involved in a spiritual war against Christian leaders. He will use people and circumstances to discourage us so that we will stop trying to get God's work done. We must remember that opposition and failures are not the end, they are only delays in fulfilling God's will. Someone has said, "We may have lost the battle, but we have not lost the war." We know that in the end, God will win the war (John 12:31 & 16:11). We want to be one of his faithful soldiers (2 Timothy 2:1-4).

When opposition and failures come, first, we must be sure we are doing God's will. Then we must keep on working to fulfill God's will. The greater the impact that our plan will have on Satan's control, the harder he will fight to stop us. That is the reason we must take time to plan well. A poor plan will give Satan more opportunities to cause failure. You will learn in a later lesson that good planning anticipates possible reasons for failure and takes steps to avoid them.

There is also the **test of time**. The Apostle Paul wrote, *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up* (Galatians 6:9). We may find ourselves in an area of leadership where the rewards of success seem to be few or none at all. God seems to want us to continue working where we are. We know we are doing the right thing. Yet we see no signs of progress.

We may not realize the good we are doing (Mt 5:14-16; 1 Tim 5:24-25; 2 Pt 2:12). People are watching us to see if we are sincere in the things we teach or if we are hypocrites in following the things we are teaching. People are watching to see if the Christian way of life can meet the every day problems they have to face in life. If we remain faithful over a long period of time, they will eventually join us in the battle. When they join us, they will join for the right reason and they will be serious in their faithfulness to the battle. In the end we will have a strong army with which to fight Satan.

People are watching us to see if we can pass the test of _____.

16. Sometimes God calls us to a place of leadership where it will take faithfulness over a long period of time before others will be convinced to follow. Someone has said, "Talk is cheap." They are waiting to see if we can follow the things we teach. They are waiting to see how we handle hardships. Will we be faithful to the things we teach when we are under pressure to do something different.

Then there is the test of **lordship**. This test usually occurs in an area of our life where we feel the most confident. It occurs in an area where we have the greatest skill and the most experience. God will ask us to do something in this area that we feel is not reasonable or practical. We will be tempted to follow our feelings rather than his leading. Read in Luke 5:1-11 how Simon Peter passed this test.

Simon Peter felt he knew more about fishing than Jesus, but in the end he acknowledged that Jesus is _____.

17. Simon Peter was an expert fisherman. He had done this all of his life. From his experience he felt it was useless to go fishing in the middle of the day in the deep waters. Even though it was against his better judgment, he did as Jesus asked. The results was a catch of fish larger than anyone could have imagined possible. We must remember that Jesus is Lord of this universe. Although we may be an expert, he is the creator of everything. We must be careful that our pride does not stand in our way of obeying Jesus. No matter what we may think, Jesus knows the best thing to do. Our first obligation is to obey Jesus.

We have discussed ten common tests of our leadership. They can occur in our life at any time. They occur to help us develop better leadership skills and they may also occur so that we can give witness to how a Christian handles problems. Here is a list of the tests:

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| a. | small things | f. | integrity |
| b. | motive | g. | forgiveness |
| c. | stewardship | h. | spiritual warfare |
| d. | wilderness | i. | time |
| e. | God-given authority | j. | lordship |

Review the tests of leadership and then fill in the ten statements below:

1. God will never give us big things to do if we are unfaithful in _____.
2. God will allow us to suffer hardships so we can discover our _____ for following him.
3. God will give us resources or opportunities to test our _____.
4. Whenever God seems to be far away from us, we are facing the test called _____.
5. We are not independent leaders. We must always respect _____ authority.
6. We can lose our credibility as a leader if we fail the test of _____.
7. Criticism and opposition will test our ability to _____.
8. Satan will use people and circumstances to discourage us in the test of _____.
9. Sometimes God calls us to pass the test of faithfulness over _____ in order to fulfill his purpose for our life.
10. Although we may feel we are an expert in a certain area of life, God will use the test of _____ to see if we trust him more than we believe in our own abilities.

PERSONAL NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

- A. Which of these tests are you facing now? _____

- B. What action do you need to take in order to pass the test? _____

Unit Five: THE TEST OF A LEADER

Lesson Two: The Test of Conflict

1. Not one of us is perfect and each one of us is different. We each have a different skill, a different idea about what is most important, a different way of solving problems and a different weakness. Conflicts come when we try to join our differences together to accomplish one goal.

It takes time for people to work through their differences so they can learn how to work together. As a leader, we must help a group of people deal with their differences so they can work together as a team. During this process of learning to work together there will be conflicts. Some of these conflicts will be between team members. Some of these conflicts will be between you, the leader, and certain members of the team. Sometimes the conflicts will be between you, the leader, and other leaders on the team. How you deal with these differences and resolve these conflicts will be a test of your leadership skills. If you are successful in enabling a group of people to work together as a team, everyone on the team will become a better person including you, the leader.

Conflicts come because everybody is _____.

2. Conflicts are natural and should be expected because everybody is different. We have different personalities. There are four basic types of personality. The sanguine type wants everything to be fun. The melancholy type wants everything to be done perfectly. The choleric type wants to be in charge and he wants to see results quickly. The phlegmatic type is relaxed and wants to avoid conflict. We will study these in detail in a later lesson. The thing we need to understand for this lesson is that each personality type has a different way of doing their work and a different way of solving problems.

A leader must realize that people have different types of _____ which affects their approach to problem solving.

3. Differences in personalities result in different approaches to solving the same problem. This can be a source of conflict. It can also be a good resource. A combination of all approaches may be needed to reach a goal or to solve a problem. We must help people to understand these differences and see the value of each. A later lesson will help us to do this. When people learn to respect each other's differences, there will be less conflict.

Another source of conflict is a difference in expectations. Expectations are the things that a person wants to achieve or gain from a project. Each person approaches the same project with a different expectation. This is the reason that goals have to be discussed and agreed upon. This helps to minimize the conflict of expectations.

Agreeing on the goals for a project will minimize the problem of differences in _____.

4. When we all agree on the goal of a certain project, there will be less conflict from unfulfilled expectations by some members of the team. Occasionally a team member will hold onto a secret expectation that goes beyond the goal. However, if that secret goal is not met, the person can only blame himself.

The first two sources of conflict, personalities and expectations, can easily be overcome with wise planning and teaching the members how to respect each other. However, the following sources of conflict mentioned in this lesson are more difficult to deal

with because they involve individual problems with emotional, spiritual and moral development.

Some members of your group may suffer from emotional insecurity and identity problems. The source of these problems may be due to their family background, emotionally traumatic experiences in their life or emotional and physical abuse either past or present. These people are struggling to live a normal life. They want to live like everyone else, but they do not feel worthy or equal in value to everyone else. Some will withdraw and try to become unnoticed. These people need your personal, gentle and loving attention. They need to know that you value them and that you are personally concerned about them. Others will try to compensate for their feelings by being too aggressive. These people also need your personal love and attention. They need to know that you love them for who they are, not the things they can do. The one who withdraws may be seen by the group as not doing his part. The one who is too aggressive will be seen as a trouble maker.

A more difficult source of conflict will come from individuals who have E_____ problems that cause them to feel insecure.

5. Emotional insecurity is a personal problem that requires special attention from the leader. A leader needs to be sensitive to recognize these problems; and he needs to take action to minimize the problem. It is better to take steps to avoid a potential problem rather than wait until the problem develops and then try to solve it. Someone has said, "Prevention is better than cure."

In some cases where the emotional problems are deep rooted and serious, the person may need professional counseling. If you are not trained to give this kind of care, then don't go deeply into their personal problems. However, there are some things that you can do to encourage them so that they can manage to function better within the group.

- a. Observe the things they do well and tell them about it. Also publicly point out to the group these good skills and how they help the group.
- b. Find other ways to give them compliments and point out how valuable they are.
- c. Let them know in specific ways that you see good possibilities for their future.
- d. Let them know that you have confidence in them.
- e. If it is not inappropriate, put your hand on them as a sign of your love and concern for them.

The best way to help an emotionally insecure person to avoid conflict in a group is to show _____ and _____ for them.

6. Take extra care with the emotionally insecure person by showing him special love and concern. People need to realize that they are valuable. They need to feel that they belong in the group. They need to understand that they are capable of doing something useful. They need to realize that they have an important purpose to fulfill.

Some members of your group will lack moral and spiritual maturity. When they are faced with a difference of opinion within the group, they will respond in some way that is destructive to progress and unity. They may want to do harm (retaliate) to the person they disagree with. They may leave the group and quit the work. They may allow the other person to have his way even though they disagree with the person. They are still a part of the group, but their future efforts are weak. They may agree to compromise, but they are not happy with the decision.

Responses to conflict that bring about a destructive result are a sign of _____ and _____ immaturity.

7. When Christians respond to conflict in a way that brings about destruction instead of progress and unity, there is a need to deal with moral and spiritual immaturity. In situations like these, the Christian leader needs to show those who are in conflict how a Christian deals with disagreements. This will take time, patience and instructions from the Bible. In the long run, progress will be made. If you ignore these conflicts, they will only get worse and may totally stop the work.

The rest of this lesson will be devoted to outlining some ways to deal with serious conflicts between members of your group or between you as a leader and someone else. These are steps that you may need to take or steps that you may need to help others take in order to overcome a conflict.

The first step in resolving serious conflict is to evaluate your own attitude. Here are some things you need to think about:

- a. There is a difference between constructive and destructive criticism. Sometimes the person is trying to help, but they do not know how to say it in a way that is not offensive. Is there any truth in the thing the person is saying that you need to consider?
- b. Be careful that you are not taking your own opinion too seriously. There can be several good ways to accomplish the same goal. When someone criticizes us, our natural response is to defend ourselves instead of trying to understand the things they are saying.
- c. Look beyond the criticism or the difference in opinion to see if there is not something more serious that is bringing this disagreement. It may be something that you have overlooked or failed to deal with.
- d. Remain calm. Do not become shocked that you are criticized. Even Jesus was criticized!
- e. If you are feeling anger, you need to take time to cool your emotions and ask God to help you push aside your anger so that you can wisely determine the thing that is causing the conflict and find the best solution. Jesus said, *"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd [wise] as snakes and as innocent as doves"*(Matthew 10:16).
- f. Are you struggling with this problem because you are too physically and spiritually weak to deal with the stress? Overwork can cause us to respond badly to disagreements.
- g. Is this disagreement serious and worthy of concern? Does it come from only one person or from a group of people? What qualifies this person or group to bring a legitimate criticism against you? Does this criticism require a response?
- h. Will the passage of time allow more information to become available that will help solve the disagreement or do you need to respond as quickly as possible to avoid more problems?
- i. Maybe you have made a mistake and need to change your methods, but that does not mean you have to abandon the project.
- j. Maybe you are partly at fault because you failed to communicate the necessary details that would have avoided a misunderstanding.
- k. Which is more important, that you be proven to be right and the other person wrong or that the project be successful? Sometimes our pride causes us to turn small matters into big problems.

The first step in dealing with conflict is to examine our _____.

8. We always need to be sure that we are a part of the solution and not a part of the problem. In order to do this, we must seriously examine our own attitudes about the conflict. We need to pray and ask God to show us where we are wrong. We must be willing to admit to God and to others where we are wrong. This takes humility. Jesus said, *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted* (Matthew 23:12). Also Read Ephesians 4:2, Philippians 2:3 and 1 Peter 5:5-7.

After we have prayed and examined our own attitude we need to make arrangements to meet the person or persons with whom we have the conflict. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss our differences to see if we can find a solution that all can be comfortable with. In this meeting we will need to show our humility by the way we act and by the way we express ourselves. Humility does not mean that we take full responsibility for the problem, it just means that we are open to finding a solution.

You may need to ask two or more people to act as mediators in the meeting. The mediators provide two valuable services. First, they will be a witness to any agreement that is reached. Second, they will guide and control the discussion to be sure that it is fair and that progress is made in finding a solution. The mediators will open the meeting with prayer, give a general description of the problem to be discussed and give the guidelines for discussion.

In a serious conflict, mediators will provide the following two services:

- a. become _____ to any agreement that is made.
- b. be sure that the discussion is _____ and makes _____.

9. Mediators are witnesses to any agreement and they make sure the discussion is fair and makes progress. Before the discussion begins, the mediators need to give guide lines for a fair discussion. Here are four basic guidelines that are suggested by an organization called International Training Partners (Mobile Member Care):

- (1) Keep the discussion to only one issue at a time.
- (2) Don't interrupt. Allow one person to finish the thing he wants to say before allowing the other person to respond. Suggest that the other person make notes about things he wants to say when he get his opportunity to respond. This way he will not forget some of the important things he would like to say.
- (3) Before responding, the other person should state that which he understood was said concerning the issue under discussion. This helps to keep the discussion focused on one issue and moving forward.
- (4) Do not attack the other person.

These four guidelines can be summed up as follows:

- a. Keep to _____ issue at a time
- b. Do not _____ the other person.
- c. State that which you _____ was said by the other person.
- d. Do not _____ the other person.

10. The four guidelines are: Keep to one issue; Don't interrupt; State that which you understand; Don't attack.

Here are some guidelines on how not to attack. These guidelines are helpful in overcoming a conflict whether it is serious or not.

- a. Always show respect for the person. Never use inappropriate names for the person or his ideas.
- b. Never accuse the person of having wrong motives or bad attitudes. You are not there to judge the other person.
- c. Explain to the person how his actions have caused you a problem and how they have affected you emotionally - your feelings.
- d. Make it clear that you are not there to argue but to find a solution that both of you can agree upon.
- e. Invite the person to explain the reasons behind his actions.
- f. Do not give details nor ask for details that are not necessary to finding a solution to the conflict.

We can summarize these guidelines as follows:

- (1) Show _____.
- (2) Never _____ the other person.
- (3) Explain how their _____ has caused you a problem.
- (4) Make it clear that you do not want to _____.
- (5) Invite the person to _____ his actions.
- (6) Don't waste time on unnecessary _____.

11. To avoid attack, we should show respect, never accuse the person, explain how their actions have caused us a problem, make it clear that we do not want to argue, ask for explanations and never waste time on unnecessary details.

Jesus said, *"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over"*(Matthew 18:15). Sometimes you can resolve a conflict between yourself and someone else by going privately to the person and saying, "I have a problem and I need your help." If they seem open to listen, then proceed to tell them how something that they did caused you a problem. Tell them that you do not understand why they have done this and you would like them to help you solve this problem that is disturbing your relationship with them. Let them know that you are sad about this problem and that you want to find a solution. Be sure to follow the guidelines on how not to attack.

A good approach to someone who has caused a conflict with you is to approach them and say, "I have a _____."

12. When you tell someone that you have a problem and you need his help, it enables him to open his mind to the things you want to say. If you tell him that he has made a mistake, it may cause the person to unreasonably defend his actions rather than examine himself to see where he made a mistake. When he realizes that his action has hurt you, it may open his heart to admit to his mistake.

Also, it may help to think in the terms of their action being a mistake rather than to view it as a plan intended to do harm. Often, the person took action without thinking about the harm it might cause. We are all guilty of doing that at one time or another. We make quick decisions for one reason or another and later realize the mistake we made.

Conflict often comes because someone made a _____ when they made a decision too quickly.

13. A wise person will admit when he has made a mistake because of a quick decision. A wise person will also take action to correct his mistake when possible.

The problem comes when a person refuses to admit to his mistake. If you approach a person privately and he refuses to consider the things you have to say, then you need to take the next biblical step in solving the conflict. Jesus said, *"But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses"*(Matthew 18:16). This is where you need to call in mediators to help you solve the conflict. These mediators need to follow the guidelines stated in frames 9 and 10 above. The main purpose of the meeting is not to document the mistake of the other person, but to make a second effort at solving the conflict. The mediators will be witnesses either to an agreement that overcomes the conflict or to the fact that the person refused to cooperate in finding a solution.

If a private meeting fails to bring a solution then the next biblical step is to call in _____ who will be witnesses to your efforts to solve the conflict.

14. Mediators are the next step when a private meeting fails. Jesus said, *"If he refuses to listen to them [the mediators], tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector"*(Matthew 18:17). This is another reasons to have mediators. They will be your witnesses to the church that you have made a good effort to solve the conflict. The conflict then becomes a problem for the church to handle.

It is important that the church deals with the problem wisely. The fact that two members of the church are in serious conflict can weaken the ability of the church to win souls. Jesus said, *"Men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"*(John 13:35). The official leadership of the church needs to investigate the conflict well. They may need to judge the matter and advise the two of their Christian responsibilities in solving the problem. Read Paul's advice to the church leaders in 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 on how to deal with this type of problem. If one or even both refuse to do their part in resolving the conflict, the church must take disciplinary action. Read the advice Paul gave about this in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13. Refusal to take action makes the church look weak and useless. Refusal to discipline sinful members makes the church leaders appear to be hypocritical.

If mediators are unable to solve the conflict then it becomes the responsibility of the _____ to investigate and find a solution. Sometimes the leaders may have to J_____ the matter and D_____ a member who refuses to cooperate or refuses to repent.

15. Conflicts that cannot be resolved become the responsibility of the church. The church leadership may have to judge the matter and take disciplinary action against a member who refuses to do his part in resolving a conflict.

The members of the Corinthian church came from many different cultures and had many wrong ideas about how a Christian should live. Satan had strongholds in their minds because they were spiritually and morally weak. These strongholds caused conflicts among the members. Read the advice Apostle Paul gave in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 about this challenge.

Christian leaders must use their spiritual power to _____ every argument and to stop every prideful effort that seeks to oppose the Kingdom of God. They must take every wrong thought and make it O_____ to Christ.

16. Satan will use conflicts to challenge the church membership in their knowledge of God's will and their obedience to Christ. The Leadership must use their spiritual gifts to destroy every idea that opposes God's Word. They must take action to stop every activity that is in disobedience to the teachings of Christ. Failure to take action will allow Satan to destroy the church.

There are two more things that are important in dealing with conflicts. First, there will be times when we need to compromise in order to bring solution to a conflict. However, in the process of compromising, we must never compromise God's teachings. In fact, we must constantly remind those in conflict of the will of God concerning the spiritual and moral issues involved in their conflict. We may need to spend time teaching the whole church God's will concerning the issues involved in the conflict. Read the following passages of Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:10-16.

The one thing that we must never do in solving a conflict is to _____ on God's teachings.

17. The greatest failure in solving a conflict would be to compromise God's teachings. It is wrong to bring peace by compromising or ignoring the way God has asked us to live. As Christian Leaders it is our responsibility to guide our group in following Jesus. We do not want them to follow Satan's deceptive ways which are often presented in the form of human traditions.

The second thing we must remember in dealing with conflicts is that leaders must keep themselves blameless. Read Titus 1:6. Any leader who is involved in a conflict must do everything within his power to clear his name of any wrong doing. Any leader who is guilty of wrong doing must be fully disciplined in public. The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy, *"Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning"*(1 Timothy 5:19-20).

A leader who is guilty of doing a wrong thing is to be disciplined in _____.

18. Leaders are not exempted from discipline. Some cultures honor their leaders no matter how corrupt they may become. This cannot happen in the church. The church has two basic purposes stated in the Great Commission, to win followers for Christ and to teach them how to follow Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). Failure to discipline a leader would be a failure to fulfill one of the two primary purposes of the church.

REVISION:

- a. Conflict is to be expected because we have _____ types of _____.
- b. The easiest conflicts to solve are those that involve E_____ insecurity or wrong E_____. The more difficult conflicts to solve involve immaturity in _____ and _____ development.
- c. When we find ourselves in conflict with someone else, the first thing we must do is examine our own _____.
- d. The second step is to approach the person in a _____ meeting.
- e. If we cannot resolve the conflict with the second step then we need to call in _____ who will be _____ to any agreement that may be reached and who will be sure the discussion is done _____.

- f. If the above efforts do not resolve the conflict, then it becomes the responsibility of the _____ to find a solution.
 - g. The church leaders may find it necessary to J_____ the matter and to _____ one or more of its members.
 - h. In trying to find a solution, we must keep reminding ourselves of the will of _____ concerning the issues involved in the conflict.
 - i. Satan tries to use conflict to destroy the church. Bringing peace by using human traditions while ignoring God's Word would be a F_____.
 - j. Failure to discipline a leader would be failure to fulfill the _____.
- *****

Unit Five: THE TEST OF A LEADER

Lesson Three: Making The Tough Decisions

1. Leaders have to make decisions that others are unwilling to make. This is one thing that makes you to be a leader. People follow you because they see that you are willing to make the tough decisions. Also, they follow you when they see you making those tough decision with integrity based on strong moral principles.

One thing that makes you to be a leader is that you are willing to make the _____ decisions.

2. People who cannot make tough decisions cannot be good leaders. Good leadership requires good character, integrity and the ability to do the work. Part of that work is making the right decision. About 95% of your decisions will be easy. The correct decision is clear to see and there are no serious moral or political issues involved in the decision. However, 5% of the decisions you make will require good decision making skills, courage, integrity and strong moral character in order to make the right decision. The test is: (1) can you make the right decision when circumstances are tough? (2) Are you willing to make the tough decision? and (3) Will you follow through and take action on the tough decision?

If we are going to make the tough decisions we must be:

- a. able to make the _____ decisions when circumstances are tough (skills).
- b. _____ to make the tough decisions (attitude)?
- c. able to take _____ on the tough decisions (follow through)?

3. Some people do not have good decision making skills. These people cannot make tough decisions. They need to improve their decision making skills. Some people know the right thing to do, but they are unwilling to make the decision because of the social and political stress they will face. Some people make the decision, but they do not follow through and take action. These people need spiritual growth that will enable them to have spiritual courage.

Tough decisions are usually unpopular or they are difficult to carry out. There are many things that can cause a decision to be tough.

- Some may disapprove because the decision goes against normal cultural practices.
- Some may disapprove because the decision goes against a person who is popular.
- The decision may cause problems for several people because they have all been doing something that is wrong and they have refused to change.
- Some decisions require personal sacrifice so that others may gain.
- Some decisions require you to take a risk. If things do not go as planned, the loss could be great.
- Some decisions require you to do things you do not like to do, but you know they need to be done.
- Some decisions require a large investment of time and resources.
- Some decisions require you to do something that you have never done before.
- Some decisions require you to learn new skills.
- Some decisions require you to admit that you are wrong or that you made a mistake.

- Some decisions require you to confront situations that are wrong or people who have done a wrong thing.
- Some decisions will cause problems for others even though they have done nothing wrong.

Decisions can be tough when they require us to take action that is U_____ or make decisions that are D_____ to carry out.

4. There are many things that make some decisions unpopular and difficult to carry out. A good leader must be willing to make those decisions and to carry through with the appropriate action. Sometimes a leader makes the right decision but he fails to carry through with any action. It appears as if he is leading by the things he says, but time proves that he is not really taking any action. If he takes no action, then he is not leading. James 2:17 says that faith without works is dead.

Decision making without action is _____ leadership.

5. Leadership is dead or useless if no action is taken on the tough decisions that are made. It is as if the decision was never made. The rest of this lesson will give you ten truths to help you make and carry out the tough decisions:

Joshua led his army to march around Jericho for seven days without weapons. It probably seemed foolish to his army and to the enemy, but Joshua knew it was God's will and he was required to obey. Joshua became a great military leader.

David faced the well trained and well armed giant with a few stones and a catapult. David's own brothers and the enemy laughed at him, but David knew God's power and God's will for the nation of Israel. He knew God could do it through him. He knew the action that God required from him at that moment. David became the greatest king of Israel because he was willing to make the tough decisions based on his faith in God.

A good leader must accept that making and carrying out tough decisions is a _____ for leadership.

6. Followers expect you, the leader, to make the tough decisions. This is one reason they will follow you. It is a requirement of leadership. If you are not willing to make those tough decisions, then you will not make a good leader.

A good leader will do research before he makes a tough decision. He will search the Bible to learn the things God has to say about the issues involved. He will obtain and document all the facts he can. He will evaluate how the facts affect the lives and the work of the group he is leading. He will seek advice when and where it can be useful in making a wise decision. He will prepare a strategy of action that will enable him to carry through with the decision.

A good leader will take time to do _____ before he makes a tough decision.

7. Research is absolutely necessary for making a tough decision. Wise decisions are never based on rumors and emotions. Wise decisions are based on facts combined with faith and obedience to God.

Sometimes it is good to set a deadline for making the tough decision. While the leader needs to take time to do research, he must not delay in making the tough decision. Unnecessary delay may cause further problems. It may cause failure. Do not delay in doing the research and do not delay in making the decision. Sometimes you have to say, I will decide by this date no matter what else happens; otherwise, it may be too late to make a decision. If you delay, you may lose the opportunity to solve the problem or you may lose the opportunity to take any kind of action.

A good leader may need to set a _____ for making some of the tough decisions he faces.

8. A leader may not be able to obtain all the information he would like before making a decision. However, because of various reasons, he may need to set a deadline and make the decision by a certain date in order to avoid serious failure and future problems.

While deadlines are often necessary, timing can also be an important issue in making a wise decision. Sometimes the right decision needs to be made at the right time in order to be successful. The right decision made at the wrong time may not be accepted by everyone. A wrong decision made at the right time would still be a mistake. A wrong decision made at the wrong time could create a disaster.

A good leader will learn how to make the right decision at the right _____.

9. Timing can be as important as making the right decision. We may make the right decision, but if we make it too soon it may not be accepted or it may be too soon to take action.

If the decision involves taking a risk or doing something new, people need time to think about it and understand it before they are willing to accept it. On the other hand, if we make the decision too late, the opportunity for action may be too late. This happened when Moses sent the twelve men to check out the land of Caanan. Only two were ready to step out in faith and trust God to help them conquer the land. For the other ten, the decision was too early. Their faith in God was not strong enough (Numbers 13:30-33; 14:6-11). The nation of Israel would have failed to take the land at that time. Forty years had to pass before a new generation could be raised up who had the faith to follow a new leader called Joshua in conquering the land.

Here is a three-step agenda for making effective group decisions. (1) Start the group meeting by giving reports on the results of past decisions and the activities of various committees or departments within the group. (2) Next, follow up on things that were discussed in the last meeting but were not decided upon. It may be that more information was requested or more time was requested to think about the issues before the group would feel comfortable in making a decision. Remind the group of the discussion in the previous meeting. Bring out any new information. Encourage more discussion and then see if the group is ready to make a decision. Make decisions only when the group feels comfortable to do so. (3) Introduce new ideas for discussion. Provide printed information where possible. Ask for questions and comments about the new ideas. Ask the group to think about the new ideas and to be prepared for more discussion and a possible decision on the new ideas at the next meeting of the group.

A good leader will follow a three-step agenda for effective group decision making:

1. Give _____ on activities.
2. _____ up on discussions from the last meeting.
3. Introduce _____ ideas for discussion.

10. The agenda for making good group decisions requires three steps. First give activity reports, then follow up on discussions from the last meeting that were not finalized with decisions and then introduce new ideas for discussion. Never make decisions on new ideas unless it is an emergency situation that requires immediate action.

No single leader can know everything. Other people have experience, knowledge and spiritual gifts that we do not have. This is the reason that a wise leader will seek advice from others before making a tough decision. He will search for others who have had to make a similar decision in order to learn from their experience. Proverbs 15:22 says, *"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."*

A good leader will seek _____ from the right people.

11. It is wise to seek counsel (advice) from people who have experience and information in the area where you are making a decision. It is also wise to seek counsel from those who will be involved in carrying out any decisions you make. They may see problems and opportunities that you never saw. If they are involved in helping you make the decision, they will be more supportive of the decision you make.

A successful Christian leader always makes decisions based on Christian principles and Christian values. The fearful person asks the question, "Is it safe?" What if David had focused his thoughts on this question when he faced Goliath? The person who wants to be popular will take a vote or a survey of opinions and go by the majority. The Christian Leader will go by his Holy Spirit guided conscience. He is more concerned about God's will than personal safety or popularity.

A good leader will make decisions based on Christian _____ and Christian _____.

12. Sometimes decisions that follow Christian principles and Christian values are unpopular and seem to be unsafe. A good leader will follow his conscience instead of his emotions or his people.

A good leader must realize that his emotions will not always agree with his vision for the future nor with his conscience concerning the things that are right or wrong. It is normal for his emotions to cause him to doubt that he is making the right decision. He may need to review the reasons he is making the tough decision, but he must never allow his emotions to override his conscience. It is normal to grieve over losses that will come because of a tough decision, but do not let the grief keep you from making the tough decision. It can be emotionally difficult to let go of old ways and things that we are comfortable with. But we must focus on the blessings that will be gained by the new things that are coming. Sometimes we have to pray that God will give us the strength to carry through with the tough decision. Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, struggled with strong emotions as he prepared to yield to God's plan to use him as the sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. Although he knew it was the right thing, the best thing and the only thing he should do, he still had to struggle with his emotions. Jesus prayed, *"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done"*(Luke 22:42).

A good leader will not allow his _____ to keep him from following through on the tough decision.

13. Our emotions will sometimes try to discourage us from making the tough decision. Emotions are useful, but they can also mislead us if we are not careful. We cannot totally ignore our emotions and we cannot totally trust our emotions. We must evaluate them in the light of God's will and God's purpose for our life.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "My obligation is to do the right thing. The rest is in God's hands." Tough decisions usually involve problems where we do not know all the answers. They involve circumstances where we cannot predict the outcome. They require resources that we do not have in hand. We know that the tough decision can be successful only if God solves the problems that we cannot solve, guides circumstances that we cannot control and provides resources that we cannot produce ourselves.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were obligated to remain faithful to God. They told King Nebuchadnezzar, *"If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up"*(Daniel 3:17-18).

A good leader understands that both he and _____ have a part to play in carrying out the tough decisions.

14. There are some decisions that are obvious. The tough part is carrying through with them because the risks are great and we do not know what the outcome will be. We know that God will do his part and we will have to accept the outcome no matter what it may be.

Tough decisions cannot be made alone. We must take time to pray and ask God for wisdom and courage. We must ask for the guidance of his Holy Spirit in our life. We must make the decision knowing in our heart that this is the action God wants us to take. We do not make the decision based on emotions or rumors. If facts seem to contradict God's teachings and God's will, then we must follow God. It takes wisdom to make the right decision and it takes courage to carry through with the tough decision. Read James 1:5 and Acts 23:11.

A good leader will pray for both _____ and _____ that will enable him to take the tough decisions.

15. God will give us wisdom and courage when we take time to pray and ask for his help in taking the tough decisions. The Apostle Paul went to Jerusalem knowing he would face opposition. He was arrested and put in prison. His emotions probably caused him to doubt that he had done the right thing by going to Jerusalem. However, the angel assured him that he should have courage because he was fulfilling God's will for his life (Acts 23:11).

Review this lesson and then complete the ten things that will enable a good leader to make the tough decisions.

- a. Making tough decisions is a requirement for _____.
- b. Take time to do _____ before making a tough decision.
- c. Some tough decisions require a _____ to avoid dangerous delays.

- d. Some tough decisions also have to be made at the right _____ in order to gain the support of others.
- e. Effective group decisions require a _____-step agenda.
- f. _____ from the right people will help you to make the right decision.
- g. Tough decisions must be based on Christian _____ and _____.
- h. Our _____ must never keep us from following through on tough decisions.
- i. Both we and _____ have a part to play in carrying out the tough decisions.
- j. We must pray for both _____ and _____ that will enable us to take the tough decisions.

Unit Five: THE TEST OF A LEADER

Lesson Four: Building Relationships

1. One definition of spiritual leadership is *the development of loving relationships*. Dr. John Maxwell says, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care." Jesus developed good loving relationships almost every place he went. Jesus showed concern for individuals by meeting their needs physically, spiritually and emotionally. He was welcomed in most villages. People rushed to meet him when he came to their village.

If you cannot love people and somehow try to help them with their needs, you cannot be an effective leader. People follow you because their relationship with you offers some blessing in their life. An old proverb says, "He who thinks he leads, but has no followers, is only taking a walk."

Another test of a leader is how well he can develop _____.

2. Loving relationships, especially between a leader and his followers are necessary for spiritual growth. You cannot be an effective leader without good relationships with your followers. A leader's most important skill may be his ability to develop good relationships with his followers.

Your attitude toward those you want to lead is critical in developing these relationships. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. You can read it in Luke 10:30-37. Here is a modern day version of the parable.

A Pastor and an Elder were traveling in the pastor's car late at night. They were going to a leadership conference. Suddenly they spotted a man lying along the road with empty travel bags scattered around him. They slowed down and stopped long enough to realize that the man had been seriously beaten and then robbed of his car and every valuable item he had except for his Bible. After a quick discussion, they decided they should speed on before they were robbed. They would tell the police in the next city and let them take care of it. After all, their conference started early the next morning and they did not have time to waste.

Soon a Moslem business man from another country drove by. He took pity on the man. He took out his first aid kit and treated the man's wounds. He took the man to the hospital in the next town and arranged for the payment of his full treatment until he could leave the hospital. Then the Moslem went to the police and reported the robbery. After making all necessary arrangements, he continued his journey.

Who showed love in this story? _____

3. The Moslem business man showed his love for others. He was willing to take a risk in order to help someone else. He gave some of his resources to help someone else.

The way you view others will determine how you treat them and the kind of relationship you will develop with them. The robbers saw the man they robbed as a victim they could use for their personal gain. The pastor and the elder saw the circumstances of the man as a problem they wanted to avoid. The Moslem business man saw the man as a fellow human being who needed to be loved.

We can view people in three different ways: as a victim to be _____, as a problem to _____ or as a human being to be _____.

4. Every week, we will be tempted to treat different people in one of three ways: use them, avoid them or love them. Our goal must be to look past their problems in order to see their needs and see their potential to become a better child of God.

One way to do this is to see yourself as a person who can offer some kind of help. Here are four different ways to develop a relationship using this approach.

1. Think of yourself as a host. You are inviting the person into your life. You are willing to share something that may bring comfort or encouragement to the other person.
2. Think of yourself as a doctor. You ask questions to learn details so that you can determine the source of the person's problems and suggest possible solutions.
3. Think of yourself as a counselor. A good counselor does more listening than talking. He summarizes the things he sees happening in the life of the person. He helps the person to understand why the things are happening in his life. He helps the person to find a solution that works for the person.
4. Think of yourself as a guide. You may have some experience or some knowledge or some information that you can pass on to the person that will enable him to accomplish a goal that he has.

As a host, I will share something personal that brings _____ or _____.
As a doctor, I will ask _____ and offer possible _____.
As a counselor, I will _____ and help them to find a _____.
As a guide, I will pass along something that will enable them to accomplish their _____.

5. Relationships are built when you help other people. You need to invite them into your life. Share something that brings comfort or encouragement. Ask questions about their problems and suggest possible solutions. Listen as they talk about their problems and help them find a solution. Pass along something that will enable them to reach their goal.

If you are going to build relationships by helping people, you must be sensitive to their emotional and spiritual needs. Let us look at some of these needs that you may be able to help with.

1. People are insecure. They do not have confidence in themselves. They look for secure, confident people like you to advise them and tell them the best things to do. Many times they just need someone to encourage them and to assure them that they are doing the right thing.
2. People like to feel that they are valuable and important. Find ways to honor and praise people for the things they do well. Be sincere in the praise you give. Give some detailed reasons for your praise. Do it both in public and personally in a private conversation.
3. People want to have a better tomorrow. When there is no hope for the future, there is no power for today, no reason to work hard today. Find reasons to give people hope that tomorrow will be better. Jeremiah was the weeping prophet who foretold the downfall of the nation of Judah, but he wrote this in Lamentations 3:21-23: *But I have hope when I think of this: The Lord's love never ends; his mercies never stop. They are new every morning; Lord, your loyalty is great.*
4. People want to be understood. Discover the things that are important to each person. What do they talk about? What do they cry about? What do they laugh about? What do they want to achieve in life? Show an interest in the things they are concerned about. *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:15).*

5. Some people feel confused about life because they do not have a long-term plan for their life. Help people to discover God's special purpose for them.
6. Some people feel their needs are more serious than other people's needs. These felt needs distract them from becoming an effective member of the group. Discover their felt needs and help people to find solutions that they are comfortable with.
7. People get discouraged. There seems to be no solution to their problem. Find out why they are discouraged. Let people know you are praying for them. Introduce people to someone who has successfully endured the same problem.
8. People want to succeed. Discover their goals in life. Look for ways to help them reach their goals.
9. People need to have friends. Friendships are built on common interests and common goals. Look for the one thing that you have in common with a person. Help him to find others who share his interests and goals.
10. People are looking for good examples to follow. They are looking for someone who has been successful so they can observe the person's life and learn from them. Be a good example of Christian love and strong moral character to each person.

Complete these statements about emotional and spiritual needs that are opportunities for building relationships.

Insecure people need to be _____ and _____ that they are doing the right thing.

We need to find ways to _____ people both in public and in private.

Find reasons to give people _____ for a better tomorrow.

We need to show an interest in things that are _____ to other people.

We need to help people discover God's _____ for their life.

Help people find solutions to felt _____ that are serious to them.

Find ways to _____ people who are facing difficult problems.

Find ways to help people _____ in reaching their goals.

Look for the things that you have in _____ with other people.

Be an _____ of Christian love and moral character that other people will want to follow.

6. As leaders, we need to encourage and assure the insecure person. We need to praise people. We need to give hope to people. We need to be interested in things that are important to other people. We need to help people find God's purpose for their life. We need to help people with their felt needs. We need to encourage people who face difficult problems. We need to help people succeed. We need to discover things that we have in common with other people. We need to be an example others can follow.

It is difficult sometimes to focus on the emotional and spiritual needs of others when we have our own to deal with. However, as we develop good relationships with others, we will discover that some people will also help us with our emotional and spiritual needs. As we become sensitive to the needs of others, some will become sensitive to our needs.

List the four approaches we can take in developing a relationship. (frame 4)

1. As a _____.
2. As a _____.
3. As a _____.
4. As a _____.

PERSON NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

What do you struggle with the most in developing relationships? _____

List some people that you feel God is asking you to develop a relationship with? _____

Which of the four approaches will you use for each person in order to develop a relationship? (like a host, like a doctor, like a counselor, like a guide) _____

Unit Five: THE TEST OF A LEADER

Lesson Five: Self-Evaluation Test

1. In one of our previous lessons we said that a good leader never stops growing. He continues to develop new skills and he continues to improve on his old skills. You have completed ten/five weeks of lessons on the topic of Christian Leadership. I hope you have learned some useful things about how to be a better leader. I hope you have made some changes in your leadership style that will enable you to be a more effective Christian leader. I hope you have grown emotionally and spiritually in specific area of leadership. It is now time to evaluate your leadership skills and determine the areas where you can still grow. Remember, you never stop growing.

This is a self-evaluation test of your leadership skills. No one is going to evaluate you or judge you. No one is going to look at the things you write in this self-evaluation. You are going to be honest with yourself and you are going to be honest with God as you answer some questions about yourself. The answers to these questions will show you areas where you can still improve on leadership.

Only you and God and your mentor can improve your leadership skills. The beginning of improvement is for you to recognize and admit to yourself and to God that you need to improve in certain skills. With God's help you can improve in your leadership skills.

You do not need your mentor or someone else to tell you the skills you need to improve. The most effective approach is to evaluate yourself in light of the things you have already understood in these lessons. We are always quick to defend ourselves when someone points out our weaknesses. However, when we admit to ourselves that we have a weakness, we are more willing to do something about it.

Before you begin this self-evaluation, ask God to help you be honest with yourself and with him.

Have you prayed? _____

2. With God's help you can become an effective leader in His kingdom. But first you must discover and evaluate both your strong areas of leadership skills and your weak areas of leadership skills.

In this self-evaluation test we will use seven areas of leadership skills. Each one is explained. Then, you are given some statements to use in evaluating yourself in that area of leadership.

The first area of evaluation is **CHARACTER**. Strong moral character enables a leader to:

- (1) have integrity in order to gain respect and trust;
- (2) be consistent in his actions, decisions, and judgments;
- (3) be credible (believable).

Character involves four areas of your personal life.

(a) **Personal Identity:** Strong moral character comes as a result of knowing that you are right with God and that you are doing his will in your life. You do not need the approval of others in order to feel successful in life. Because of this, you will not be tempted to compromise God's moral values or his teachings in order to gain the approval of men.

(b) **Emotional Security:** Emotional security comes as a result of a close relationship with God. You knowing that, no matter what challenges you face, God will work it out and bring about the best results for His purposes (Romans 8:28).

- (c) **Ethics and Values:** A Christian Leader must know the things that are most important to God. He must make decisions based on God's value system, not that of his culture. He must know the things that God says are holy and righteous and he must know the things that God says are sin. He must judge all matters based on God's will not man's desires.
- (d) **Self-Discipline:** We must be able to control our own life before we can expect anyone to follow us. Someone who cannot manage his own life well cannot help others manage their life. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:5, "If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?"

As you think about your character, rate yourself based on the statements below. Each statement will tell something that a leader does if he has good character. Below each statement are the numbers 1 through 10. You will circle the number that best evaluates your character compared to the statement. If you are weak in this area, you will circle number 1 or 2 or 3. If you are average in this area, you will circle number 4 or 5 or 6 or 7. If you are strong in this area you will circle number 8 or 9 or 10.

Rate your character based on the following statements:

- a. I assume responsibility for myself and my team.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- b. I am secure in my identity and my self-esteem.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- c. I do the things I should, even when I don't feel like it.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Character is the foundation on which you will build your leadership skills and gain leadership recognition. When we have strong character, we can successfully move forward to build other necessary skills.

The next area of evaluation is COMPASSION. Compassion deals with a leader's attitude toward others. Compassion is a fruit of the Holy Spirit in our life involving patience, kindness and goodness (Galatians 5:22-23). Compassion is taking an interest in the life, the circumstances, the emotions and the spiritual development of others.

Rate your compassion based on the following statements:

- a. I will help those in need even when it costs me.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- b. I am moved emotionally by my love for others.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- c. I am fulfilled when I serve and meet the needs of others.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. We cannot have followers if we do not have compassion on people. Compassion must come from a love in the heart not from an attitude of duty. If we are not sincere in our expressions of love for people, they quickly discover it.

Now let us think about the next area of evaluation, COURAGE. Courage means we stand up for God's way or God's will in the face of fears. Courage means we do not back down in the face of challenges. Courage means we act brave even when we do not feel brave by knowing that God is on our side. Courage means we try new things even though there are risks involved.

Rate your courage based on the following statements:

a. I like to start new projects even when it means taking a risk.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b. I don't mind being the first to take a risk.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

c. When ideas arise, I want to take action, not talk.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Most people like things the way they are and they do not want to go through the trouble of making changes or corrections. Changes and corrections often have to be made in order to bring about progress and growth. Leaders have to be change-makers. It takes courage to make changes and corrections.

Let us think about the topic of COMPETENCE. Competence is a measurement of your ability to do a certain task. We might say that a certain man is competent at playing the keyboard. This means that he plays the keyboard very well. You can mention almost any song and he can play it or he can figure out how to play it.

For a leader, competence refers to his ability to plan a project and then bring the project successfully to completion. A competent leader has the understanding and the creativity to figure out the things that need to be done and how to get them done. Future lessons in this course will help you to develop your competence in this area of leadership, but let us go ahead and evaluate your competence in preparation for those lessons.

Rate your competence based on the following statements:

a. My ideas often turn into plans
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b. I can figure out how to finish a job I start.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

c. I am good at solving problems.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. People will not follow a person who cannot complete something that he starts. No one wants to get half way through a project and then lose everything invested in the project: money, time and other resources. A leader must be a good planner and good at solving problems.

CONVICTION refers to a willingness to sacrifice for the things you know are right and correct. Conviction depends on having a strong character based on clearly defined morals and values. Christian convictions are not based on emotions, but on biblical facts that you have studied and examined and proven to be true. Convictions develop because you are

fully convinced that the things you understand to be true are the only useful facts to be considered in making a decision or making a judgment.

Rate your conviction based on the following statements:

a. I know clearly the things that are right and correct and the things that are wrong.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b. I make sacrifices because of my belief in the things that are right and wrong.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

c. A strong desire to do the right thing enables me to act on the things I believe.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. It is one thing to know the right thing to do. It is another thing to have the conviction to do the right thing in the face of opposition and hardship. Under difficult circumstances, a leader must have both courage and conviction. Courage will be weak without conviction.

COMMITMENT is a strong desire to finish something you start. It is a strong desire to fulfill the promises you have made. Commitment is a sign of your integrity. People who are not committed easily give up and often fail to fulfill their promises.

Rate your commitment based on the following statements:

a. I finish everything that I start.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b. Obstacles do not discourage me but challenge me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

c. I can stay focused on one goal.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Commitment and conviction work together to bring success to any project, any program or any relationship such as marriage. Commitment is the thing that enables you to be faithful in times of temptations and discouragement.

CHARISMA enables leaders to accomplish more. Charisma refers to the ability to draw people to yourself. Charismatic people demonstrate an enjoyment for life. They are cheerful and encouraging to other people. Their presence gives people joy and hope. Charismatic leaders automatically show love for people and openly share themselves with people. No one enjoys being around a sad person, an unhappy person or an angry person. Everyone likes to be near a cheerful, happy person. They want to know the things that the person is thinking, saying and doing. They know that being near the person will give them feelings of joy and happiness.

Rate your charisma based on the following statements:

a. When I enter a room, I think of others, not myself.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b. I give confidence and encouragement to others.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

c. I am genuinely interested in other people.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. Charismatic people think about the needs and concerns of others. They see good things in life and they want to share them with other people in order to make other people feel good. Charismatic people think about other people before they think of themselves. People who are always concerned about themselves and always talking about their needs and their problems will not draw people to themselves.

These seven areas of evaluation are personality characteristics that can be developed. Some come naturally because of our personality, but others can be developed and improved. All seven are important to leadership. They become more important when we mentor others to be leaders.

PERSON NOTES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:

Review the seven areas of evaluation. Which of the seven qualities are your strongest?

Which areas do you need to develop or improve? _____

What will you do to improve your leadership skills? _____
