

Models for Ministry:

From New Believers To Reproducing Churches

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Introduction

This is a book about discipleship. Discipleship is nothing more or less than the process of following Jesus, learning to walk as He walked. In 1 John 2:6 it says, “The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.” Jesus was a great leader and a great servant. As His followers, we too should be leaders and servants. Leadership and servanthood are intimately related. Christian leadership is influencing others through servanthood. This book therefore, is about leadership development. It deals with how to influence people by serving them and modeling for them. This book is about how you can help new believers grow in maturity and become reproducing leaders in their own right. In John 15 we learn that those who abide in the Lord will bear much fruit. This kind of fruitfulness is another aim of this book. If a new believer can mature to the point of helping plant a church which will in turn reproduce, this will bring glory to God. In John 15:8 Jesus said, “By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

It has been said that, “If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day, but if you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.” This book presents patterns and processes which can be quickly passed on. In the Bible study approach, not every question will be appropriate for every Bible study. The key is to present a concise range of questions which will provide the tools and principles for a lifetime of Bible study.

The format or setting of this approach can vary. Discipleship chains and shadow pastoring, are possible settings. These are new terms to many people. They are described in the Teacher Notes under the Church Planting Training Series in lesson twenty.

As you practice and pass on the patterns and processes in this book, I pray for you as Paul prayed for the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12. “To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Bible Study Approach

Observation—what does it say?

- Who* was involved?
- What* happened? Ideas are expressed? Are the results? Is the purpose?
- Where* did this take place?
- When* did it take place?
- Why* did it happen?
- How* are things accomplished?

Interpretation—what does it mean?

- What did it mean to the original audience?
- What does it mean now?
- What is the main idea?
- How does this passage relate to the rest of the chapter/book?
- What other Scripture passages might shed light on this one?

Application—what should I do? (*SPECK*)

- Is there a *sin* for me to avoid?
- Is there a *promise* to claim? A *praise* to give? A *prayer* to pray?
- Is there an *example* for me to follow?
- Is there a *command* for me to obey?
- Is there *knowledge* for me to learn?

Discussion—to be answered by everyone.

- What did you like about the passage?
- What did you not like about the passage?
- What did you not understand about the passage?
- What will you take with you or remember about the passage?
- What was the main idea of the passage?
- What should you do as a result of knowing this passage?

More application ideas from 2 Timothy 3:16

Teaching: what we should know.

Rebuking: what we should avoid doing or stop doing.

Correcting: what we should do differently.

Training in righteousness: what we should begin or continue doing.

Application formula: In order for change to occur...

The dissatisfaction with the status quo

+ knowledge there is a better way

+ knowledge of how to take the first step

➤ inertia (forces which are creating/influencing the current pattern).

This means we can help people discover why they should obey (the consequences of disobedience and obedience), and how they can obey. The latter might include role playing and helping them develop a plan which includes:

When they will obey,

When it will be difficult to obey,

What they will do to obey, and

Where they will be when they obey.

Accountability includes:

Accountability to teach others what one has learned (2 Timothy 2:2) and

Accountability to apply what one has learned. Application includes items of both omission and commission.

Discipleship is not merely knowledge. There is a knowledge component, but it is primarily patterns and processes to practice and pass on. This means that as much is taught by example as by content. The methods and principles of Bible study, the patterns of prayer life and worship, and the encouragement, fellowship, support and equipping of the Body are all being learned as the leaders model. An attitude of servanthood, humility, urgency, faith, passion for extending God's Kingdom, and love for fellow believers and the lost on the part of the leaders are also vital aspects of this approach. These aspects of discipleship are caught more than taught.

Format of the study in various settings:

- A. Shadow pastor/discipleship chain meeting once a week (one leading two or at most three).
 - a. Start with prayer focused on God (praise, thanksgiving, worship, request for guidance and insight for the Bible study).
 - b. Teach a Scripture song and review previous two songs.
 - c. Learn new Scripture verse(s) and review previous several verses (emphasize memorizing longer passages).
 - d. Review the previous week's Bible passage and ask accountability questions related to application and whether or not they have taught others. If there is an obedience problem then do not go on to a new topic, but lead a study and discussion on the same passage or another passage on the same topic. If the problem persists and is a matter of spiritual rebellion rather than a lack of comprehension, take the matter to the church (Matthew 18:15-17). If they haven't taught someone else then determine if the problem was not understanding the material or lack of opportunity. If it was an understanding problem or there were questions they need help with then search the Scriptures together to seek insight. If it was an opportunity problem for one of them then take time for that person to lead you and the other(s) in a review of the previous week's Bible lesson as part of the current session. If necessary help them identify someone with whom they can regularly do the Bible study. If you are shadow pastoring, include questions about the needs and obedience of their church members.
 - e. Lead a Bible study and discussion on a new passage if d. was OK.
 - f. Review the new Scripture song and memory verse(s).
 - g. Close with a time of sharing prayer requests and praying. This prayer should include prayers for church and government leaders, unsaved individuals, unreached people groups, evangelists and church planters, needs of local believers, personal and group needs, current events, the persecuted, persecutors, etc.

- B. Leadership cell to train more leaders (maximum of 8) meeting at least once a week for a predetermined length of time. Same as A for points a-c, f-g.
 - d. Same as point d in A except you may need another solution for those who didn't teach others due to lack of opportunity. They may need to do it remedially outside of class. Persistent failure to obey or teach others should result in expulsion from the leadership cell if it is clearly due to a character problem which would disqualify them from church leadership. Otherwise the cell leader should work with them to identify the problem and find a solution. If participants are already leading a church then focus application questions on needs and obedience of the groups they lead as well.
 - e. Same as A except the leading of this portion is rotated among the participants on a session by session basis. Debrief with the session leader afterward and allow them to lead point d the following week.
- C. Church planter training (meets up to three times daily) for at least ten days. Same as A for points a-c, e-g.
 - d. For accountability for teaching others, divide the group into triplets between sessions and have each of the three in turn lead a study on the same passage or another passage on the same theme as the one they have just studied together in the larger group. For obedience, have participants come up with an application plan. Many areas of application won't have time to be put into practice between sessions so you must talk through various scenarios at this point.

Bible Study Passages

(Trainers should refer to supplemental notes for further resources, teaching points and suggestions. Note that these lessons can be broken up into smaller pieces if desired. Each lesson is of maximum suggested size for a single session. Many lessons could be beneficially divided into two or more sessions. SAP = Suggested Application Point. MV = Memory Verse.)

NEW BELIEVER MATERIAL

1. 1 Cor. 15:1-5; Acts 17:24-31; Rom. 10:8-15. SAP: Share the gospel with someone. MV: Rom. 10:13-14.
2. 1 Pet. 1:22-2:3; Luke 10:25-28. SAP: Grow in love by study of and obedience to the Bible. MV: Luke 10:27.
3. 1 Pet. 2:4-5; Heb. 13:15-19; Rom. 12:1. SAP: Pay particular attention to praise, submission, service, and prayer. MV: Rom. 12:1.
4. 1 Pet. 2:6-12; Matt. 28:18-20. SAP: Teach or disciple someone in what you have been learning. MV: Matt. 28:19-20.
5. 1 Pet 2:13-25. SAP: Bless someone who has mistreated you or ask forgiveness of someone you have wronged. MV: 1 Pet. 2:20.
6. 1 Cor. 3:1-23; Matt. 7:24-27. SAP: Practice maintaining an awareness of God's presence with you at all times. MV: 1 Cor. 3:11-15.

FAST TRACK STORY (memorize for witness and for overview of OT)

SAP: Memorize the story and tell it to someone. MV: the story.

LIFE PATTERNS MATERIAL

1. Faith, hope and love. Jude 20-21; 1 Thes. 1:3; 5:8; Rom. 5:1-5; Col.1:3-5; Faith: Heb. 11:1, 6; Eph. 2:8-9; Hope: Rom. 8:24-25; 1 John 3:2-3; Love: 1 Cor. 13:1-13; Mark 12:28-31. SAP: Pray that you would grow in faith, hope, and love. Carry out an act of love for someone. MV: Jude 20-21.
2. New creation/new birth. Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; James 1:18. SAP: Explain the new birth to an unbeliever. MV: Eph. 4:22-24.
3. Put off and put on. Col. 3:8-9; Eph. 4:25-5:17; 1 Pet. 2:1-10; James 1:21. SAP: Watch your words in particular (Eph. 4:29) and make it a point to use them to help and not to hurt. MV: Eph. 5:1-2.
4. Word or Spirit: teaching, singing, thanking, submitting. Col. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:18-21; 1 Pet. 4:12-14; James 1:22-27. SAP: Teach someone a song of thanksgiving or write one. MV: Eph. 5:18-20.
5. Relational patterns: spouses, parent/child, workplace, non-Christians, government. Col. 3:18-22; Eph. 5:21-6:9; 1 Pet. 2:13-3:7; James 4:7a. SAP: Select a relationship to improve or make right by appropriate submission. MV: Eph. 5:21.
6. Stand and/or resist. Col. 4:12; Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Pet. 5:8-12; James 4:7b. SAP: Explain the armor of God. MV: Eph. 6:13.
7. Watch and pray. Col. 4:2-6; Eph. 6:18; 1 Pet. 4:7. SAP: Pray daily for the saints. MV: Eph. 6:18.

FAST TRACK STORY REVIEW SAP: Tell the story to someone from memory. MV: the story.

ACTS (church and church planting)

1. Acts 1:1-14 (v. 8 as outline); 2:1-41; John 14:15-17; Matt. 28:18-20. SAP: Be baptized if you have not yet done so. MV: Acts 1:8.
2. Acts 2:41-47; Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-33. SAP: Take the Lord's Supper with other Christians. MV: Acts 2:42.
3. Acts 3:1-4:4. SAP: Minister to or serve someone. MV: James 2:5-17.
4. Acts 4:5-33. SAP: Pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit to witness boldly. MV: Acts 4:31.
5. Acts 4:34-5:13. SAP: Help someone less fortunate than yourself. MV: James 1:27.
6. Acts 5:14-42. SAP: Proclaim Jesus as Lord to someone who doesn't know Him. MV: Acts 5:41-42.
7. Acts 6:1-7:60. SAP: Tell the fast track story to someone. MV: the story.
8. Acts 8:1-40; Romans 6:1-11. SAP: Identify and begin praying for a community which has no witness. MV: Acts 8:4.
9. Acts 9:1-31. SAP: Prepare and memorize your testimony. Tell it to someone who is not a Christian. MV: your testimony.
10. Acts 9:32-10:48. SAP: Pray for those of other nations who haven't heard the gospel. MV: Acts 10:34-35.
11. Acts 11:19-12:24. SAP: Pray for those who are in prison for their faith. MV: Acts 12:5.
12. Acts 12:25-13:52. SAP: Pray for God to call someone from your church as a missionary. MV: Acts 13:2-3.
13. Acts 14:1-28. SAP: Have elders appointed for your church. MV: Acts 14:21-23.
14. Acts 15:1-34. SAP: Come up with a list of people you can trust for counsel on spiritual matters. MV: Prov. 13:10.
15. Acts 15:35-16:40. SAP: Seek guidance from the Lord regarding where or to whom you should witness. MV: Prov. 16:9.
16. Acts 17:1-34. SAP: Search the Scriptures daily. MV: Acts 17:11.
17. Acts 18:1-28. SAP: Identify one or two people with whom you can relate closely in your Christian walk and ministry. MV: Eccl. 4:9-12.
18. Acts 19:1-41. SAP: Be faithful in passing on what you learn. MV: 2 Tim. 2:2 (see Acts 19:8-10).
19. Acts 20:1-38. SAP: Identify one or more people you can take with you when doing ministry (see Acts 20:4). MV: review Eccl. 4:9-12.
20. Acts 21:1-22:30. SAP: Share your testimony with someone again. MV: Rom. 1:16.
21. Acts 23:1-24:27. SAP: Pray especially this week for the governing authorities. MV: Rom. 13:1.
22. Acts 25:1-26:32. SAP: Share your testimony with someone else. MV: Acts 26:17-18.
23. Acts 27:1-28:31. SAP: Share the gospel with someone this week. MV: 2 Tim. 4:2 (see Acts 28:30-31).

CHURCH PLANTING TRAINING MATERIAL

1. God's eternal purpose. Day 1: Isa. 49:5-26; Acts 26:1-20. SAP: Pray especially for unevangelized peoples this week. MV: Isa. 49:6.
2. God's eternal purpose. Day 2: 2 Peter 3:3-12; Rev. 7:9-12; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8. SAP: Identify a specific unevangelized people group to pray for. MV: 2 Pet. 3:9.
3. Horses and mules. Luke 13:6-9; John 15:1-8. SAP: Ensure whoever you are teaching is teaching others. MV: John 15:5.
4. Resources are in the harvest. Priesthood of the believer. Luke 8:4-15; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Acts 19:8-10; 2 Tim. 2:2. SAP: Tell of God's greatness to someone who doesn't know Him. MV: 1 Pet. 2:9.
5. Bible based. Ps. 19:7-11; Isa. 55:6-11; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 2:1-3. SAP: Study the Bible more intensively every day this week. MV: 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
6. Obedience. Day 1: James 1:21-25; John 14:15,21; 15:1-17. SAP: Identify any known areas of disobedience then confess and repent. MV: James 1:25.
7. Obedience. Day 2: Matt. 5:19; 7:21-27; 1 John 2:3-6; 3:21-24; 5:2-3. SAP: Review Life Patterns passages and identify any related areas of disobedience, then confess and repent. MV: 1 John 2:3.
8. Discipline/accountability. Day 1: Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10-11; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14-15; 1 Thes. 5:14; 1 Tim. 5:1-2, 19-21; Gal. 6:1. SAP: Make right any relationship problems with fellow Christians. MV: Gal. 1:6.
9. Discipline/accountability. Day 2: 1 Cor. 5:1-6:8. SAP: Make right any relationship problems with non-Christians. MV: Rom. 12:18-19.
10. Prayer. Eph. 6:18-20; Matt. 5: 43-44; 6:5-15; Luke 18:1-14; 1 Thes. 5:16-18. SAP: Spend extra time in prayer daily this week. MV: Matt. 6:9-13.

11. Participative/shared leadership. 1Cor. 12:4-12; 14:26; 1 Pet. 4:10-11; Rom. 12:3-8. SAP: At your next church service, ensure that everyone gets a chance to contribute. MV: 1 Cor. 14:26.
12. Leaders as servants. Matt. 20:20-28; John 13:3-17. SAP: Serve whomever you teach this week. MV: Matt. 20:25-28.
13. Leaders as equippers. Eph. 4:1-16. SAP: Equip whomever you teach this week for ministry. Eph. 4:11-12.
14. Man of peace. Luke 10:1-20. Also note use of teams on Pauline trips. SAP: Pray for the Lord to reveal to you a person of peace to whom you can witness this week. MV: Luke 10:2.
15. New converts mean new churches and new leaders. New groups of believers: Acts 2:46; 5:42; 20:18-21. New leaders: Acts 14:21-23. SAP: Look for an opportunity to start a new church this week, possibly in the home of the person of peace from last week. MV: Acts 5:42.
16. Modeling. Luke 9:23; Phil. 3:17-19; 4:9; 1 Thes. 1:5-8; 2 Thes. 3:6-9; John 13:12-17; 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 3:10-15; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Pet. 2:21-24; Heb. 13:7; 2 Cor. 12:14-18. SAP: Pay attention this week to modeling the life of Christ. MV: 1 Tim. 4:12.
17. Training cycle. Day 1: Acts 20:17-38. SAP: Assist whomever you teach in an outreach or witnessing activity. MV: Acts 20:32.
18. Training cycle. Day 2: Acts 14:21-23; 18:23; 19:9-10; 20:4; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thes. 3:6-8; Eph. 1:15-16; Col. 1:3-9a. SAP: Help whomever you teach to plan an outreach or witnessing activity to do on their own. MV: 1 Thes. 3:7-8.
19. Avoid creating dependency. Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 2:1-5. SAP: When you teach this week, ensure you do it in a way that those you are teaching can reproduce. MV: 1 Cor. 2:4-5.
20. Shadow pastor/discipleship chain. Ezra 7:10; Matt. 5:19; 1 Cor. 15:3; Phil. 4:9; Col. 1:3-8; 2 Tim. 2:2; Acts 18:24-26. SAP: Check for reproduction of your teaching to the third or fourth generations. MV: 2 Tim. 2:2 (review).
21. Identifying false teachers. Deut. 13:1-14; 18:22; Matt. 23:1-12; 24:4-14, 23-27; 2 Cor. 2:17; Gal. 1:8; 1 Tim. 1:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3; Matt. 7:15-23. SAP: Evaluate any teaching (yours or others) in the church this week to see if it is trustworthy. MV: Matt. 7:15-18.
22. Combating false teaching. Matt. 7:24-27; Acts 20:29-32; Eph. 4:14-16; 2 Tim. 3:13-17. SAP: This week seek out the evaluation of others in your own teaching. Request accountability. MV: Eph. 4:15-16.
23. Giving. 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. SAP: Give a generous gift for the Lord's work this week. MV: 2 Cor. 9:10.
24. Daily aspects of early church life. Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; 6:1; 16:5; 17:10-12, 17; 19:8-10; 20:31. SAP: Make it a point to meet with other believers every day this week. MV: Acts 2:46-47.
25. Suffering for a purpose. Matt. 5:10-12; 16:24-26; John 12:24-26; Phil. 2:3-11; 2 Cor. 4:6-18; Heb. 12:1-11. SAP: Spend time rejoicing in prayer this week for the opportunities you've had to suffer for your faith. MV: Matt. 5:10-12.

CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE STORIES

When new believers understand the basics of their faith as they should by this point, it is a good time to give them a broad understanding of Scriptures. This has been done in a small way through the fast track story. It will be helpful, however, for them to gain a more detailed acquaintance with the Old Testament foundations at this time. An effective way to do this is to do a chronological series of studies, beginning with Genesis and continuing through the Gospels. This helps ensure that large sections of Scripture are not overlooked. It also helps people understand the overall context of Scripture better so they can more effectively interpret and apply it. This will enable them to get more out of all their future Bible studies and be better equipped to help others understand the Bible better. Two resources which are available for stories (in addition to simply selecting stories from the Bible yourself) are *100 Bible Stories* from Beijing University Press and the *Firm Foundations* series.

When doing a chronological Bible story as a Bible study it is always a good idea to review where the story fits in the overall framework of the Bible. This includes both how it relates to previous stories and how it ties in with God's eternal purpose and plan in Christ. It is also often helpful to look for themes related to what you can learn about the character of God and what you can learn about mankind. Accountability for application and teaching are still important facets of this type of study.

BOOK (especially epistle) STUDIES

Studies of entire books of the Bible can be done with the book selected depending upon the local needs. If the group has poor literacy abilities then:

1. Make Bible stories based on the passages.

2. Provide audio cassettes for the stories, passages, and songs.
3. Emphasize memorization from the epistles, especially for passages which do not lend themselves to a story format.

The books of the Bible were written by specific people, to specific people, at specific times, for specific reasons. The more we can understand about these specifics the better we can understand the meaning and application of the Bible. Book studies are a good way to gain this understanding, particularly for the epistles since they do not lend themselves as well to chronological studies. For this kind of study it can be helpful to look at a Bible dictionary, handbook, survey, or commentary. These are available in book format or in computer CD formats such as *First Light II*. You can do such studies without additional books as well, however. As with chronological studies, accountability for application and teaching are still important facets of this type of study.

Following are some good steps to follow in doing a book study.

1. Read the entire book through at least twice to get an overall understanding of it. This step will take at least one session. Try to determine as best you can:
 - a) The main personalities: author, recipient, and main characters.
 - b) The historical setting: where and when the author and recipients lived and what was happening there at the time.
 - c) Purpose: why the book was written.
 - d) Themes: what the main ideas and major emphases are.
2. Do a chapter by chapter or section by section analysis. This will require one session per section or chapter. For each chapter or section:
 - a) Read through it at least twice.
 - b) Determine how it fits into the book as a whole.
 - c) Look at the parts and determine the main ideas.
 - d) Note any illustrations or references to the Old Testament and discuss these.
 - e) Compare key verses with other passages of Scripture. A concordance is helpful for this if you have one. Concordances are available as books or on most computer Bibles.
3. Review step 1 and the points of application from steps 1 and 2.

CHARACTER STUDIES

We have much to learn from examples, both good and bad, in the lives of Bible characters (1 Cor. 10:11). Some good character studies include: Daniel, Timothy, Josiah, Barnabas, Gideon, Joseph, Elijah, Hezekiah, Elisha, Nehemiah, and Peter among others. Following are steps to follow when doing a character study:

1. Locate the passages which discuss the person. A commentary or Bible dictionary is helpful here.
2. Read the passages and try to put them in chronological order.
3. List the person's good and bad actions and attitudes.
4. List the truths, principles, or lessons the person's life illustrates. Each of these should be stated as an application point for the study.

TOPICAL STUDIES

Occasional studies on topics of general interest or need within the local church. These studies should wait until there is a basic understanding of the broad strokes of Christian teaching or a special need for specific topical teaching. Follow the same pattern as with the epistle studies above for those with a low literacy level. SEAN publishes a series of helpful topical study booklets which will soon be available at extremely low cost on CD. This can provide a menu of topical options for special need studies. This type of teaching is typical of much of the epistles.

Application is a central facet of topical studies. With topical studies it is also especially important to compare various Scriptures with one another. These studies are more difficult to do if you do not have a concordance or a Bible with cross-references. There are some resources available which have topical studies already prepared. A good example of this type of tool is the *Train and Multiply* material which was designed for house church leaders. In addition to topics in such materials there are many others. Here are some examples: anger, citizenship, courage, discipleship, evangelism, faith, fear, fruitfulness, giving, godliness, guidance, grace, holiness, the Holy Spirit, humility, integrity, the lordship of Christ, love, marriage, obedience, parent/child relationships, patience, prayer, priorities, purity, salvation, Scripture memory, self-discipline, sin, steadfastness, thankfulness, wealth and possessions, the word of God, and worship.

To do a topical study:

1. First think of all the words which relate to the topic. Then look up verses which contain those words. Again, the easiest way to do this is with a concordance.
2. Read each of the verses you locate and look at the surrounding verses to determine the context in which they are located. For each passage, state the key thought or thoughts. Pay special attention to illustrations.
3. Summarize the key thoughts and list them in categories. For example, if the topic is the Holy Spirit you may use categories such as the names, symbols, work, gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit. If the topic is giving you may use categories such as who should give, what we should give, when we should give, where we should give and how we should give. It is often good to select a key verse or passage for the topic and use it as a memory verse.
4. For each category or passage determine one or more application points. If there are many application points then the study should be divided into several sessions, perhaps one for each category.

Final Word

God's word is the final word. These Bible study tips are a guide which can serve you well for a lifetime of immersion in God's word. It will change your life. There are many blessings which will come from the Bible. So, HEAR it: Rom. 10:17; Rev. 2:7, 17

READ it: 1 Tim. 4:13; Rev. 1:3

STUDY it: Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15

MEMORIZE it: Ps. 119:11; Prov. 7:1, 3

MEDITATE on it: 1 Tim. 4:15; Ps. 1:1-3; Josh. 1:8

APPLY it: James 1:22; Matt. 7:24-27

TEACH it: Matt. 5:19; Gal. 6:6; Deut. 6:6-7

Some good passages to memorize are:

Mark 12:28-31

Matt. 28:18-20

Matt. 5-7

John 15

Eph. 4:22-6:18

All verses connected with the New Believer Materials

HOW TO SHARE YOUR FAITH

There are many ways to share your faith. You can tell the story of salvation history, beginning with creation and continuing through Jesus' resurrection. You can use evangelistic tracts or booklets such as *Four Spiritual Laws* or others. You can share evangelistic movies on video or VCD such as *Jesus* or *The Quest* or others. You can lead people through an evangelistic Bible study such as *New Life* or *Good News for You*. There are training events to equip people to share their faith such as *Evangelism Explosion*. There are illustrations or outlines you can share such as "The Bridge" illustration or "The Roman Road." In addition to all of these you can share your personal testimony of salvation. Below are instructions on how to use your personal testimony and The Roman Road.

Personal Testimony

There are many ways to bring up spiritual matters in everyday conversation. Some very direct ways include asking questions such as, "Do you ever think about spiritual things?" or "What is the most important thing in the world to you?" or "Can I share with you the most important discovery of my life?" Once you have turned the conversation to spiritual things you can usually find a way to naturally share an account of how you came to follow the Lord.

Your personal testimony should contain at least four elements. You should be able to share these basics in about three minutes. It is also a good idea to use Scripture verses in your testimony.

1. Tell what your life was like before you became a Christian.
2. Tell how you realized your need for Christ.
3. Tell how you accepted Christ.
4. Tell what difference it has made in your life since you began to follow Him.

Many people in the Bible shared their personal testimonies. Some examples are the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:18-20), the Samaritan woman (John 4:28-30, 39), Peter and John (Acts 4:18-21) and Paul (Acts 9:1-22; 22:3-16; 26:9-18). You should read these passages to get some ideas about how to share your faith in this way.

The Roman Road

Turn the conversation to spiritual matters in the same way as you would in using your personal testimony. Use your Bible if possible and allow the person to whom you are witnessing read it for themselves if they can. Have them explain each verse in their own words and make sure they understand each verse before proceeding to the next one.

1. Romans 1:18-20, 28-32 God's identity and role
 - a. Who is God?
 - b. What angers God?
2. Romans 3:23. Man's need for salvation.
 - a. What is man's spiritual problem?
 - b. Who has sinned?
 - c. What is sin?
3. Romans 6:23. The results of sin.
 - a. What is the wage/penalty for sin?
 - b. Who will receive this wage/penalty?
 - c. What is God's plan for man's salvation?
4. Romans 5:6-10. Christ died to pay the penalty for sin and rose again to give new life.
 - a. When did God love us?
 - b. How did He pay for our sin?
 - c. How did he save us and give us new life?
5. Romans 10:9-10. How can a person receive this salvation God offers?
 - a. What two things must a person do to be saved?
 - b. What does it mean to believe?
 - c. What does it mean to call Jesus your Lord?
6. Ask them if they would like to become a follower of Jesus. Pray with them to accept the gift of life and commit their new life to God.
7. Rom. 10:13. Assurance of salvation.
 - a. What does this verse promise?
 - b. What did you just do?
 - c. What did God do for you?
8. Begin the New Believer Materials with them.

HOW CAN I BE PART OF A CHURCH?

A church is a group of baptized disciples of Christ who meet together regularly for worship, fellowship, nurture, and equipping for ministry. God commands His followers to gather together in this way in order that they might remain faithful, worshipping Him and growing spiritually strong (Heb. 10:23-25). If you do not know of an existing church in your neighborhood then you can form a church from your own family members, friends, and neighbors who are Christians. If you do not know any other Christians then you should try to lead others to faith and begin meeting with them. Jesus said, "Where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst" (Matt 18:20). The Bible studies in Acts illustrate how churches are to function.

TEACHER'S NOTES SECTION

Teacher's Notes for the New Believer Material

Session 1. 1 Cor. 15:1-5; Acts 17:24-31; Rom. 10:8-15. SAP: Share the gospel with someone. MV: Rom. 10:13-14.

Assume you have just led a person to Christ, he has just finished saying 'amen' in a prayer of faith, and is getting up off his knees. What next? Where do you go from here?

First of all spend time with him rejoicing over his new life in Christ. This is a momentous event, a life changing event, one which has altered eternity for him and those around him. But having rejoiced with him, *don't walk away!!* Having assisted in this spiritual birth, it is now time for spiritual nurture. (How horrible it is to hear of babies in trash dumpsters, and cardboard boxes. Many babes in Christ also are discarded, uncared for, unfed and unloved, led to choose and pray for salvation, and then abandoned before they receive their first meal or care!)

Begin now with spiritual nurture

Purpose: to stabilize, and set the course for his obedient worship of the Lord

Format: give a little information, and ask for obedience to the information shared

Obedience to Christ is not taught as much as displayed.

A profile of the new believer:

Who he is: He is a babe in Christ, born again, indwelt and led by the Holy Spirit, a child of God.

What he knows: He doesn't have all the answers, but he can obey what he knows, and what he knows is that he has become a child of God. He should share that. He has just experienced a cataclysmic, and eternity changing event in his own life.

Who are his friends: All or most of his friends are probably not Christians, he is nearer the watershed point in his life now than he will ever be again. He has an opportunity NOW to tell his friends and family naturally of the momentous change in life, purpose, and Master. Help him know how to do that, which will lead to sharing his new faith. He knows more about Christ now than all or most of his friends. That makes him an expert to them!! Help him understand his experience and decision, and then help him (in obedience to Christ—his brother) obediently share it with those he cares most about. Above all, *don't* tell him to wait!!! Mistakes for him will be growth experiences just as they were for you.

Obedience is more important than lots of knowledge. Most models and methods of new believer development are knowledge centered. Jesus' approach was obedience centered.

Paul's first missionary journey displays Paul's willingness to quickly pass on the core of the gospel for stabilizing Christians, entrust them to the Holy Spirit, form new groups of worshiping believers (a church), designate leaders in each church and stay in touch with the group for ongoing instruction and guidance. What did he do to establish them in their faith and corporate worship of the Lord? (Acts 14: 21-22)

His letters, though written to maturing fellowships of Christians, still related the core of the gospel. New believers don't need the whole load of detailed doctrinal information at the beginning. They need to know some basic beginning information, and they need to obey what they know. Obedience is the way of growth and strengthening. Jesus commanded: "Teach them to obey all things I have commanded you." We must not interpret that to mean, "Teach them all things before they can obey."

Life in Christ is like a pearl. Slice a pearl in half, and you will find that it is made up of successive layers of the same substance layered over and over and over. The more layers there are, the more the luster, beauty, and value. The core beliefs taught to a new believer are the same beliefs followed by a mature believer. There are no 'secret' doctrines or belief given to a mature believer that is not given to a new believer, it is just that there are more layers, a filling out of those same beliefs and more experience and obedience which gives a fuller, more lustrous, mature spiritual life.

So what are the stabilizing **CORE BELIEFS** that a new believer needs. Surely they include the following truths listed in three sections.

Jesus is Lord--The Gospel reviewed to establish the new believer. The new believer needs to learn, repeat and apply these truths. Possible actions of **obedience** are: share, witness and teach the truths to others and be baptized (understanding and claiming these truths by faith for himself, and sharing them with others).

Worship, follow (obey) and learn from Him—To learn how to worship Him, who is both Master and Lord. This section involves teaching some skills such as self feeding, conversing with the Father, serving others in Jesus Name, a new identity within the People of God, sharing the Gospel with others, as well as changing attitudes about submitting and suffering for doing good. Possible actions of **obedience** are: reading the Word daily, praying daily together, serving others, forming, leading or participating in a group of God's People, sharing the gospel with others, etc.

Building on the Foundation of Jesus—Believing in Jesus is lifestyle, not passive knowledge. Building is a part of maturing. We build for God's glory, while knowing that we are the Temple of God. Hence we are to live holy lives to bring glory to Him. We are not 'mere men'. A possible action of **obedience** is following the Spirit's leadership in holiness.

These **obedience** lessons are built around the following passages of Scripture.

1. **JESUS IS LORD**
 - a. **THE GOSPEL** I Cor. 15:1-5 (His death for our sin, burial, and resurrection)
 - b. **THE ONE TRUE GOD IN CHRIST JESUS HAS COME TO SAVE YOU** Acts 17:24-31 (He is Creator, Master, and Righteous God)
 - c. **SALVATION: TO YOU AND UNBELIEVERS** Romans 10:8-15 (In your heart, in your mouth and telling others)
2. **WORSHIP HIM, FOLLOW (obey) HIM, AND LEARN FROM HIM** I PETER 1:22-2:23 (The Word, Spiritual Sacrifices (Heb. 13:15-18--Praise, Submitting, Serving, and Praying), The People of God, Witness, and Suffering with Jesus)
3. **BUILDING ON GOD'S FOUNDATION** I Cor. 3:9-17 (God's Foundation, our labor upon it, God's Temple, and the Holy Spirit)

The attached diagram and scriptures are a simple way to teach those **CORE BELIEFS** that the Apostle Paul taught to the early Christians.

Common mistakes:

1. It is a mistake to teach **Information based development**, with little obedience required (catechism classes, new believer classes, etc.).
 - a. Depersonalizes the maturing process (kind of like an orphanage approach)
 - b. Teaches the new believer that he can't do anything by asking him to sit, listen and learn (one has called this the sit, soak and stink method).
 - c. Inundates him with information and standards that he can't progress to, and he hasn't been asked to obey, except in generic terms.
 - d. Slows down the reproductive cycle of new Christians, and often sterilizes them so that they never reproduce.
3. It is often a mistake to **Send them to an existing fellowship**. When we win someone to the Lord, we are prone to send him to an existing fellowship of believers. So we send him to just any church, whether they will be cared for, and given a growth opportunity or not. If they go to an existing larger fellowship all they do is be welcomed, accepted, taught, and seated. New believers are seldom if ever given anything to do. In the midst of much more mature believers, they feel weak, immature and helpless. They may be given some menial task, but in matters of faith (sharing the gospel, teaching their friends about Jesus, teaching someone how to pray, gathering their family as a spiritually maturing believer), they get the idea that they must mature more before proceeding. Many new believers can witness to and gather friends and family into a group of worshipping believers, and become a church.
4. It is a mistake to **Fully exegete the passage....** So don't exegete the passage and try to teach everything in it to the new believer. There is much in the passages listed. The New Believer needs the framework found in the passages, but not everything in the passage is needed at this time. Do your own Bible Studies on the passage. Practice teaching, but it is best practiced with a new believer. You can come back later and add more layers to the framework, but **DON'T** get too far ahead of their level of obedience.
5. It is a mistake to **Emphasize the negative**. Keep your teaching positive. If you load the believer with **DON'TS** you will be developing a legalistic new believer.

THE GOSPEL REVIEWED

I Cor. 15:1-5

THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS WHICH YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND FOR WHICH YOU HAVE TAKEN YOUR STAND!!! Vs. 1

You have received Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Congratulations, welcome to the Kingdom of God.

You are now a child of God, a brother with Christ and all Christians.

You have now the full privileges and responsibilities of the other members of God's family.

God is your Father, and with that comes the privileges of prayer, His continual presence, forgiveness of your sin, and eternal life!!! Let's celebrate!!!

You have taken your stand with Him by faith.

THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS BY WHICH YOU ARE SAVED, IF YOU HOLD FIRMLY TO THE WORD!! (if you do not, you have believed in vain... you are not saved). Vs. 2

THAT GOOD NEWS IS: Vs. 3-5

Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures Vs. 3

1. We are sinners.... Disobedient to God
2. Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins (Psm. 22:16; Zech 12.:10)
He was buried vs. 4
 2. He was raised from the dead on the third day as foretold by the Scriptures (Isaiah 25: 8; Acts 2:27) vs. 4, 5His resurrection was true, factual, verifiable, real and physical. He was seen by many who testified that He was alive.

THE GOSPEL REVIEWED--- HE IS CREATOR, LORD, AND HOLY JUDGE

Acts 17:24-31

HE IS CREATOR AND MASTER (LORD) Vs. 24-29

- a. We do not serve another god, we serve the very Originator and Sustainer of the universe and life itself. Vs. 25, 26, 28
- b. He does not live in temples or building made by men. Vs. 24
- c. He made every nation of men. Vs. 26, 28
- d. He desires men to know Him, and come to Him. Vs 27
- e. He is not an image, nor a man, nor made by man, nor by man's design or skill. He is GOD. Vs. 29

HE IS HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS (JUST) AND HE CALLS ON ALL TO REPENT Vs. 29-30

God, who is our Father through faith and commitment to Jesus Christ His Son, is holy and righteous. He expects His people to also be Holy. He commands all men to repent of their wrong doing (sin). Vs. 30

HE WILL JUDGE THE WORLD THROUGH JESUS Vs. 31

- a. He will judge the world with justice by Jesus. Vs. 31
- b. He has shown with proof that Jesus is His son by the resurrection. Vs. 31

THE GOSPEL REVIEWED---SALVATION FOR YOU AND OTHERS Romans 10: 8-15

- I. **THE WORD OF SALVATION AND YOU---IT IS IN YOUR MOUTH, AND IN YOUR HEART. Vs. 8-13**
 - a. CONFESS---Jesus is Lord Vs. 9, 10
 - b. BELIEVE---God has raised him from the dead Vs. 9, 10
 - c. We will not be ashamed (disappointed, fooled, put to shame because he does not keep His promise) Vs. 11
 - d. BE BLESSED---He will richly bless you Vs. 12
 - e. CLAIM SALVATION---Salvation is a certainty Vs. 10, 13
- II. **THE WORD OF SALVATION AND UNBELIEVERS Vs. 14- 15**
 - a. Many have yet to hear Vs. 14
 - b. They will not be saved without calling upon him Vs. 14
 - c. They cannot call on him without hearing Vs. 14
 - d. They will not hear without someone telling them Vs. 15
 - e. The tellers must be sent Vs. 15

Mark 12:33

And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Obedience to the Word: In your heart, in your mouth

Share testimony with two people and teach them I Cor. 15: 1-5 and Romans 10: 8-15

Session 2. 1 Pet. 1:22-2:3; Luke 10:25-28. SAP: Grow in love by study of and obedience to the Bible. MV: Luke 10:27.

FOLLOW (OBEY) HIM AND LEARN FROM HIM (in word, spiritual sacrifices, fellowship, witness, and suffering)

WORSHIP HIM, FOLLOW HIM, LEARN FROM HIM

A. THE WORD (living and abiding word of God) I PETER 1: 22-2: 3

Session 3. 1 Pet. 2:4-5; Heb. 13:15-19; Rom. 12:1. SAP: Pay particular attention to praise, submission, service, and prayer. MV: Rom. 12:1.

B. SPIRITUAL SACRIFICE (praising, serving, submitting and praying) I PETER 2:4-5; HEBREWS 13:15-21

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Session 4. 1 Pet. 2:6-12; Matt. 28:18-20. SAP: Teach or disciple someone in what you have been learning. MV: Matt. 28:19-20.

C. FELLOWSHIP (a people of God, relating to Christians) I PETER 2: 9a, 10

D. WITNESS (word and deed, relating to non-Christians) I PETER 2: 9b, 11-12

Session 5. 1 Pet 2:13-25. SAP: Bless someone who has mistreated you or ask forgiveness of someone you have wronged. MV: 1 Pet. 2:20.

E. SUFFERING (Jesus-your example) I PETER 2: 13-25

Session 6. 1 Cor. 3:1-23; Matt. 7:24-27. SAP: Practice maintaining an awareness of God's presence with you at all times. MV: 1 Cor. 3:11-15.

BUILDING ON GOD'S FOUNDATION 1 Cor. 3:1-23

II. GOD'S FOUNDATION vs. 1-11 (Matt 7:24-27)

A. We are of God, not of men vs. 1-8

B. We are God's building vs.9

C. The only foundation is Jesus Christ vs. 11

III. YOUR LABOR vs. 12-15

A. We labor to build upon God's foundation vs.

B. Our salvation is sure

IV. GOD'S TEMPLE vs. 16-17

A. We are God's Temple

B. God's Holy Spirit lives within us

C. We are God's Temple, we are Holy

D. We are not of men. We belong to God vs. 21,22,23

WORSHIP IN 1 PETER

WORD: 1:22-2:3
SPIRITUAL SACRIFICE: 2:4-5
FELLOWSHIP: 2:9a, 10
WITNESS: 2:9b, 11-12
SUFFERING: 2:13-25

LIFE PATTERNS

6. WALK

Put off/put on
Col. 3:8-9 Eph. 4:25-5:17
1 Pet. 2:1-10 James 1:21

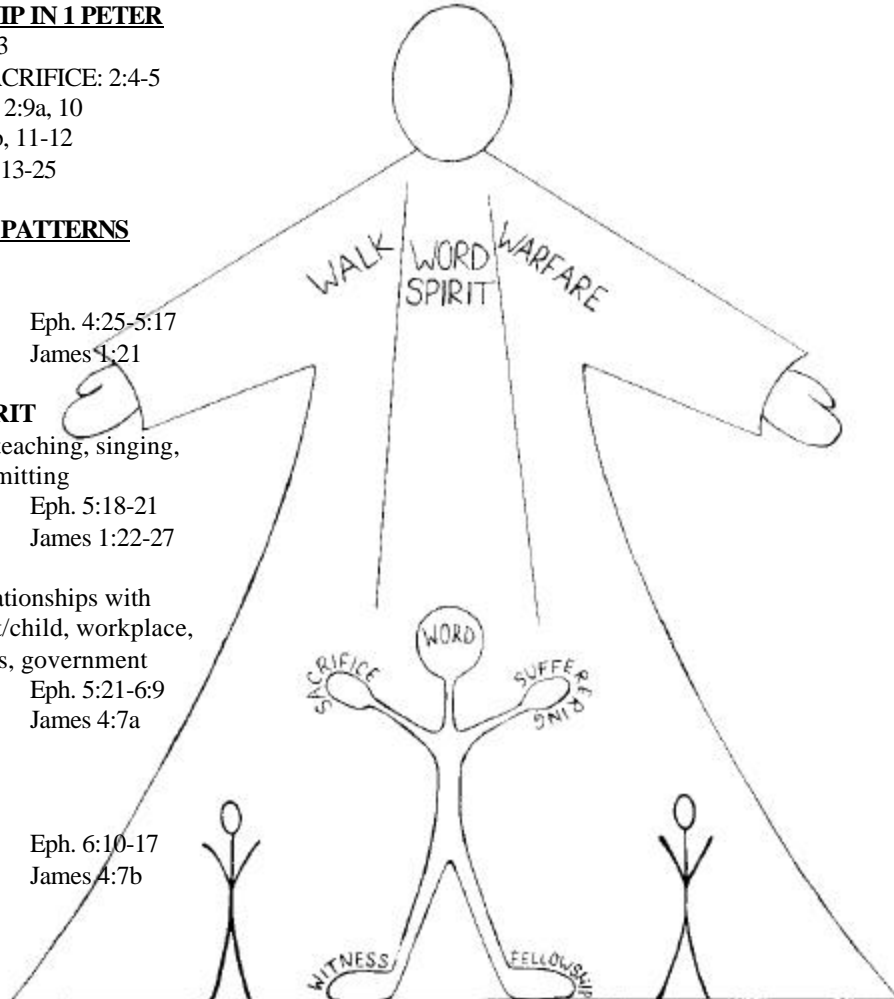
7. WORD/SPIRIT

ATTITUDES: teaching, singing,
thanking, submitting
Col. 3:16-17 Eph. 5:18-21
1 Pet. 4:12-14 James 1:22-27

ACTIONS: relationships with
spouse, parent/child, workplace,
non-Christians, government
Col. 3:18-22 Eph. 5:21-6:9
1 Pet. 2:13-3:7 James 4:7a

8. WARFARE

Stand/resist
Col. 4:12 Eph. 6:10-17
1 Pet. 5:8-12 James 4:7b



5. BUILDING ON GOD'S FOUNDATION I COR 3: 9-17

1. JESUS IS LORD (His death for our sin, burial, and resurrection) I COR. 15: 1-5

2. THE ONE TRUE GOD IN JESUS HAS COME TO SAVE YOU
(Creator and Righteous God) ACTS 17: 24-31

3. SALVATION: TO YOU AND UNBELIEVERS
(In your heart, in your mouth, and telling others) ROM 10: 8-15

4. FOLLOW (obey), WORSHIP, AND LEARN FROM HIM
(The Word, Spiritual Sacrifices, the People of God, Proclaiming, and Suffering with Jesus) 1 PETER 1: 22-2:25

Teacher's Notes for the Life Patterns Series

These are the patterns and processes for us to practice and pass on to others, the fabric of discipleship. Note that days 2-3 correspond to the "Walk" section of the diagram in the new believers' material. Days 4-5 correspond with the "Word/Spirit" section of the diagram. Days 6-7 correspond with the "Warfare" section.

Session 1. Faith, hope and love. These are the basis for our Christian discipleship. Jude 20-21; 1 Thes. 1:3; 5:8; Rom. 5:1-5; Col.1:3-5; Faith: Heb. 11:1, 6; Eph. 2:8-9; Hope: Rom. 8:24-25; 1 John 3:2-3; Love: 1 Cor. 13:1-13; Mark 12:28-31. SAP: Pray that you would grow in faith, hope, and love. Carry out an act of love for someone. MV: Jude 20-21.

Session 2. New creation/new birth. Our lives are new, therefore we have new patterns of living. Our new lives must show forth God's glory. We are to walk in a manner worthy of Him. Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; James 1:18. SAP: Explain the new birth to an unbeliever. MV: Eph. 4:22-24.

Session 3. Put off and put on. Our patterns of living are like clothing. We are to put off our old patterns of living and adorn ourselves with new patterns of living. Col. 3:8-9; Eph. 4:25-5:17; 1 Pet. 2:1-10; James 1:21. SAP: Watch your words in particular (Eph. 4:29) and make it a point to use them to help and not to hurt. MV: Eph. 5:1-2.

Session 4. Word or Spirit: teaching, singing, thanking, submitting. We are to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly and be filled with the Spirit. The result will be reflected in our attitudes as we: 1) teach with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, 2) sing to God with our hearts, 3) thank God in all things and in all our actions, and 4) submit to one another in the reverence of Christ. Col. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:18-21; 1 Pet. 4:12-14; James 1:22-27. SAP: Teach someone a song of thanksgiving or write one. MV: Eph. 5:18-20.

Session 5. Relational patterns: spouses, parent/child, workplace, with non-Christians, with government. Wives submit. Husbands love. Children obey. Fathers train. Employees work hard. Employers be fair and just. Christians submit to government. Authorities praise good and punish evil. Col. 3:18-22; Eph. 5:21-6:9; 1 Pet. 2:13-3:7; James 4:7a. SAP: Select a relationship to improve or make right by appropriate submission. MV: Eph. 5:21.

Session 6. Stand and/or resist. We must recognize that we are in a battle, a spiritual battle. We must also recognize that people are not our enemies. Satan and the spirits of darkness are the enemy. We must be prepared to stand and resist the enemy. Col. 4:12; Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Pet. 5:8-12; James 4:7b. SAP: Explain the armor of God. MV: Eph. 6:13.

Session 7. Watch and pray. One of the major ways we can prepare for and engage in the spiritual battle is through prayer. We must be diligent in prayer and put on the whole armor of God. Col. 4:2-6; Eph. 6:18; 1 Pet. 4:7. SAP: Pray daily for the saints. MV: Eph. 6:18.

Teacher's Notes for the Fast Track Story

The Fast Track Story is a summary of God's work throughout history from creation through the work of Paul. It is a compilation of various summaries in the book of Acts. There are a very few bridging or summary statements which are extra-biblical. There are also occasional changes in tense or person for the sake of consistency and a few explanatory phrases. For the most part, however, this is straight Scripture from the following passages in Acts: 17:24-29; 15:16-17; 7:2-3; 3:25; 7:4-37; 3:22-23; 7:38-45; 13:17-19; 13:20; 3:24; 13:21-23; 13:33b-37; 2:25-31; 2:34-35; 7:46-50; 10:43; 13:24-25; 10:38-39a; 2:22-23; 13:27-30; 2:24; 10:40-42; 13:32-33; 2:33a,36; 3:18, 26, 38-39; 3:19; 2:38-39; 17:30-31; 26:4-20.

The purpose of this story is to give the new believer a broad overview of the high points of Old Testament history. This can help them put things they learn in to perspective. They should attempt to memorize the key historical points in this story and understand how each part fits into salvation history.

This story can be used as a witnessing tool since it explains salvation history. Each person should memorize the story and teach it to others. They should be able to explain who major Old Testament characters are and how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. They should also be able to describe how God is continuing to work and wants us to participate in spreading the good news.

The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist.

Being then the creation of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.

The God of glory appeared to a man named Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, about four thousand years ago, and said to him, "LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR RELATIVES, AND COME INTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU." And he spoke, saying to Abraham, "AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED."

Then Abraham left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to Canaan, which is modern day Palestine. But He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground, and yet even when Abraham had no child, God promised that HE WOULD GIVE IT TO HIM AS A POSSESSION, AND TO HIS DESCENDANTS AFTER HIM. But God spoke to this effect, that his DESCENDANTS WOULD BE ALIENS IN A FOREIGN LAND, AND THAT THEY WOULD BE ENSLAVED AND MISTREATED FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS. AND WHATEVER NATION TO WHICH THEY WILL BE IN BONDAGE I MYSELF WILL JUDGE, AND AFTER THAT THEY WILL COME OUT AND SERVE ME IN THIS PLACE." And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve heads of the tribes of Israel.

Jacob's sons became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him, and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household. Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it and Jacob's family could find no food. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent his sons there.

On their second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent word and invited Jacob his father and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons in all. And Jacob went down to Egypt and there he and his sons lived and died. From there they were removed to Shechem in the land of Canaan and laid in the tomb which Abraham had purchased for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, until THERE AROSE ANOTHER KING OVER EGYPT WHO KNEW NOTHING ABOUT JOSEPH. It was he who took shrewd advantage of the Jews, the descendants of Abraham, and mistreated them so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive. It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father's home. And after he had been set outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and nurtured him as her own son.

Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds. But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, "Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?" But the one who was injuring his neighbor pushed him away, saying, "WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND JUDGE OVER US? YOU DO NOT MEAN TO KILL ME AS YOU KILLED THE EGYPTIAN YESTERDAY, DO YOU?" At this remark, MOSES FLED AND BECAME AN ALIEN IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN, where he became the father of two sons.

After forty years had passed, AN ANGEL APPEARED TO HIM IN THE WILDERNESS OF MOUNT Sinai, IN THE FLAME OF A BURNING THORN BUSH. When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look more closely, there came the voice of the Lord: "I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB." Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look. BUT THE LORD SAID TO HIM, "TAKE OFF THE SANDALS FROM YOUR FEET, FOR THE PLACE ON WHICH YOU ARE STANDING IS HOLY GROUND. I HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE IN EGYPT AND HAVE HEARD THEIR GROANS, AND I HAVE COME DOWN TO RESCUE THEM; COME NOW, AND I WILL SEND YOU TO EGYPT."

This Moses whom they disowned, saying, "WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?" is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush.

This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, "GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." He was referring to Jesus. Moses is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who led the people through the desert and he received living oracles to pass on to you.

The people were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, SAYING TO AARON, "MAKE FOR US GODS WHO WILL GO BEFORE US; FOR THIS MOSES WHO LED US OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT-- WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM." At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, "IT WAS NOT TO ME THAT YOU OFFERED VICTIMS AND SACRIFICES FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, WAS IT, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL? YOU ALSO TOOK ALONG THE TABERNACLE OF MOLOCH AND THE STAR OF THE GOD ROMPHA, THE IMAGES WHICH YOU MADE TO WORSHIP. I ALSO WILL REMOVE YOU BEYOND BABYLON."

The Israelites, had the tabernacle of testimony, their tent of worship, in the wilderness, just as God directed Moses to make it according to the pattern which he had seen. And having received it in their turn, their children brought it in with Joshua, Moses' successor, upon dispossessing the nations whom God drove out before the Israelites, until the time of David.

So the God of this people Israel chose them and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance-- all of which took about four hundred and fifty years from the time they were enslaved in Egypt.

After these things He gave them judges for about four hundred years until Samuel the prophet. And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced the days of Jesus the Christ. Then the Israelites asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. After God had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, "I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, a MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will." From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus. In doing so, God has fulfilled His promise, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU." As for the fact that God raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: "I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE blessings OF DAVID." Therefore He also says in another Psalm "YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY." For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. For David says of Him, "I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN. THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE; BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE." I may confidently say to you regarding David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is occupied to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: "THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, 'SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'"

David found favor in God's sight, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the Lord. But it was Solomon his son who built a house for Him. However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says: "HEAVEN IS MY THRONE, AND EARTH IS THE FOOTSTOOL OF MY FEET; WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD FOR ME?" says the Lord, "OR WHAT PLACE IS THERE FOR MY REPOSE? WAS IT NOT MY HAND WHICH MADE ALL THESE THINGS?"

But it was David's descendant Jesus, born about a thousand years later, of whom all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins. Jesus was immediately preceded by John the Baptist who proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, "What do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie."

You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. There were many witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. He was a man attested to by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him. This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, was nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men who put Him to death. For those who lived in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the words of the prophets which they read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him. And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb.

But God raised Him up again on the third day, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. God granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is to those who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He ordered them to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that He is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. And they preached to people the good news of the promise made to the prophets, that God has fulfilled His promise in that He raised up Jesus.

Therefore Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. Therefore let all the world know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus who was crucified. The things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. For you, God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways. Therefore let it be known to you, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through any other way. Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself. God, having overlooked the times of ignorance, is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through Jesus whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.

One of the witnesses of the risen Lord Jesus was a man named Paul. From his youth he grew up at Jerusalem and lived strictly as a devout Jew. He did many things hostile to the name of Jesus even after His death. Not only did he lock up many of Jesus' followers in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death he cast his vote against them. As he punished them often in all the synagogues, he tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, he kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

While so engaged as he was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday he saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around him and those who were journeying with him. And when they had all fallen to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him in the Hebrew dialect, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads." And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me."

So, he did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. It is as a result of this message and the purpose of God that His salvation be made available to all people everywhere, that we have come to you and you will go to others. God desires all people to know Him and serve Him.

Teacher's Notes for the Studies in Acts

At the beginning of the study of Acts you should point out the structure of the book. Note that Acts 1:8 can provide an outline for the entire book with Acts 1-7 being the Jerusalem section, Acts 8-12 being the Judea and Samaria section, and Acts 13-28 being the ends of the earth section.

Following are some lessons or themes to try to draw out during the Acts series of studies.

1. Acts 1:1-14 (v. 8 as outline); 2:1-41; John 14:15-17; Matt. 28:18-20. SAP: Be baptized if you have not yet done so. MV: Acts 1:8.
 - A. Prepare to extend God's Kingdom.
 - a. Acts 1:8. Witness for Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit in four areas:
 - i. Locally (Jerusalem),
 - ii. Nearby, with people of the same culture (Judea),
 - iii. Nearby, with people of similar cultures (Samaria),
 - iv. Unevangelized peoples, wherever they are (the ends of the earth).
 - b. Acts 1:14. Wait in prayer for the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Start church planting projects with prayer for God's supernatural help; He enables churches to be born in response to our faith. Compare Acts 10:1-9 where both Peter and Cornelius were praying when God started to move to bring about the new church.
 - c. Acts 2:1-4. Be filled with the Holy Spirit for a purpose (the experience was never an end in itself in Scripture).
 - B. Proclaim the whole gospel.
 - d. Acts 2:14-36. Proclaim the entire gospel account (including Jesus' resurrection: compare Luke 24:46-48, Acts 13:32-34 and every other occasion in which the apostles witnessed for Christ).
 - e. Acts 2:37-41. Call the people to repentance (compare Luke 24:46-48) and confirm it with baptism without undue delay (compare Acts 16:13-15, 31-34; 22:16).
2. Acts 2:41-47; Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-33. SAP: Take the Lord's Supper with other Christians. MV: Acts 2:42.

Establish the foundation of obedience for the church.

 - a. Acts 2:38-47. Make disciples in the way Jesus commanded in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) by teaching them from the beginning to obey all His commands:
 - i. Repent, believe, receive the Holy Spirit
 - ii. Confirm this conversion with baptism and continue to live the new, holy life that it initiates (compare Rom. 6:1-14).
 - iii. Study, teach and obey the Word of God (make disciples).
 - iv. Love God, fellow disciples, people in need (in a practical way) and enemies (forgive).
 - v. Break bread (they used a culturally relevant worship form and met in groups small enough for the discipling to take place; compare Acts 20:7, 20). For teaching on the Lord's Supper see Matt. 26:26-28 and 1 Cor. 11:23-33.
 - vi. Pray regularly (compare Acts 4:23-31).
 - vii. Give sacrificially (compare Acts 4:32-37).
3. Acts 3:1-4:4. SAP: Minister to or serve someone. MV: James 2:5-17.

Give compassionate care to those who are needy.

 - a. Acts 3:1-16. Pray in Jesus' name for those who need physical healing (compare Acts 5:12-16).
4. Acts 4:5-33. SAP: Pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit to witness boldly. MV: Acts 4:31.

Deal boldly but respectfully with hostile authorities.

 - a. Acts 4:23-31. Pray for courage and wisdom to deal with the authorities (compare Acts 5:17-42).
5. Acts 4:34-5:13. SAP: Help someone less fortunate than yourself. MV: James 1:27.

Correct unruly believers with firmness.

 - a. Acts 5:1-11. Maintain the purity of the church body by correcting without condemning (compare Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 5).
6. Acts 5:14-42. SAP: Proclaim Jesus as Lord to someone who doesn't know Him. MV: Acts 5:41-42.

Obey God rather than men, whatever the cost.

 - a. Acts 5:27-29. Even though they had already been imprisoned for preaching, that did not prevent them from doing so again after their release.
7. Acts 6:1-7:60. SAP: Tell the fast track story to someone. MV: the story.
 - A. Name people to serve those in need.

- a. Acts 6:1-7. Conserve the pastoral leaders' time by naming deacons who are filled with the Holy Spirit, to care for those with material needs.
- B. Face persecution boldly.
 - a.. Acts 6:8-7:60. Let the privileged ones, those who willingly die for Christ, suffer martyrdom (compare Rev. 20:4-6). Speak boldly to the authorities (compare Acts 21:37-23:11 and chapters 24-26).
- 8. Acts 8:1-40; Romans 6:1-11. SAP: Identify and begin praying for a community which has no witness. MV: Acts 8:4.
 - A. Avoid opposition when possible.
 - a. Acts 8:1-4. Leave communities that reject Christ, to proclaim Him to more receptive people (compare Luke 10:10-11; Acts 13:50-51).
 - B.. Multiply small nuclei of believers to which converts are easily added.
 - a.. Acts 8:4-8, 25. Reproduce churches through those who travel as families or small task forces to new areas (compare the example of Aquila and Priscilla in Rom. 16:3-5, 1 Cor. 16:9).
 - b. Acts 8:36-39. Baptize converts to confirm and symbolize their faith (compare Acts 2:38-41; 8:12-13; 16:14-15,31-33; 18:8 and see Romans 6:1-11).
- 9. Acts 9:1-31. SAP: Prepare and memorize your testimony. Tell it to someone who is not a Christian. MV: your testimony.
 - A changed life is a great testimony to the Lord's power so live a changed life.
 - a. Acts 9:21. The most powerful testimony in Paul's life was how he was changed.
- 10. Acts 9:32-10:48. SAP: Pray for those of other nations who haven't heard the gospel. MV: Acts 10:34-35. Communicate the gospel within cultures through existing webs of relationships and local leaders.
 - a.. Acts 10:2-48. Work through heads of households or other influential people to spread the gospel and respect both their culture and authority (compare Acts 16:13-15, 29-40; 18:7-8; Luke 10:5-6). These persons of peace should have at least three characteristics:
 - i. They should be responsive (Acts 8:27-39; 16:31-34; 17:2-4, 11; 18:7-8).
 - ii. They should be well-known, either in a positive or negative sense (Acts 10:1-48; 16:14-15; 8:26-27; 17:11-12; 18:1-3 or Mark 5:2-20; John 3:7-43).
 - iii. They should be a person who will pass on the message (see above passages: Lydia, Philippian jailer, Cornelius, Gerasene demoniac, woman at the well, etc).
- 11. Acts 11:19-12:24. SAP: Pray for those who are in prison for their faith. MV: Acts 12:5. Take the gospel to people groups who have not heard it.
 - a.. Acts 11:20-21. God blesses those who strive to bring about His redemptive purposes.
- 12. Acts 12:25-13:52. SAP: Pray for God to call someone from your church as a missionary. MV: Acts 13:2-3.
 - A. Form temporary task forces to plant new churches in other cultures or areas.
 - a.. Acts 13:1-3. Separate those with missionary gifting ("apostles" in the sense that Barnabas, Luke and other "sent ones" were called apostles) especially for church planting. They are separated from the mother church in the power of the Holy Spirit, to send them to the people they are to work with (compare Acts 11:12; Eph. 4:11-12).
 - B.. Penetrate both small towns and cities.
 - a.. Acts 13:4-14:7. Go where the people are responsive; let the gospel flow from the towns to the cities and from the cities to the towns—either way. Don't assume that the Holy Spirit is limited by our ideas of how or where He will work.
- 13.. Acts 14:1-28. SAP: Have elders appointed for your church. MV: Acts 14:21-23. Train leaders *in* new churches.
 - a.. Acts 14:21-23. Keep visiting or sending others to visit new churches until their new leaders are established (compare Acts 20:13-36; Titus 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:2).
- 14.. Acts 15:1-34. SAP: Come up with a list of people you can trust for counsel on spiritual matters. MV: Prov. 13:10. Deal with crucial issues on the inter-church level.
 - a.. Acts 15:1-31. Have meetings in which elders (leaders) from different churches deliberate, plan and decide issues. Do not treat churches as totally independent; let them continue to cooperate with other churches for counsel and help.
- 15. Acts 15:35-16:40. SAP: Seek guidance from the Lord regarding where or to whom you should witness. MV: Prov. 16:9. Balance starting new churches and helping to follow up with previously planted churches.

- a. Acts 15:35; 16:9-10. On each of his three missionary journeys, Paul revisited churches he had previously planted in order to encourage and strengthen them. He also started churches in new areas on each of his journeys.
16. Acts 17:1-34. SAP: Search the Scriptures daily. MV: Acts 17:11.
Adjust your approach based on the nature of your audience.
- a. Acts 17:1-2; 21-23. When Paul preached to Jews he used one approach. When he preached to Greeks, he used another.
17. Acts 18:1-28. SAP: Identify one or two people with whom you can relate closely in your Christian walk and ministry. MV: Eccl. 4:9-12.
Work bi-vocationally in order to do ministry, especially where circumstances demand it.
- a.. Acts 18:1-3. Use small business as Aquila and his wife did, or any other vocation that allows you to mix with people in order to facilitate church planting.
- b.. Acts 18:24-28. Disciple leaders behind the scenes, as Aquila and Priscilla did for Apollos.
18. Acts 19:1-41. SAP: Be faithful in passing on what you learn. MV: 2 Tim. 2:2 (see Acts 19:8-10).
- a. Teach and share the good news with people who will in turn pass it on.
- b. Acts 19:9-10. Because Paul taught people who spread the message, the entire province of Asia heard the gospel in a period of only two years.
19. Acts 20:1-38. SAP: Identify one or more people you can take with you when doing ministry (see Acts 20:4). MV: review Eccl. 4:9-12.
Equip converts to be able to minister and grow on their own.
- a. Acts 20:4. Paul took converts with him from the various churches he planted in order that he could model ministry for them, assist them in doing ministry, and watch them doing ministry. This helped them grow in their effectiveness in church planting.
- b. Acts 20:26-32. Paul equipped the converts in the churches he planted to feed on the Bible so they could grow in the Lord and be protected from false teaching in his absence. He enabled them to function without him so he could move on to ministry in other places.
20. Acts 21:1-22:30. SAP: Share your testimony with someone again. MV: Rom. 1:16.
Use opposition as an opportunity for a wider hearing for the gospel.
- a. Acts 21:30; 40. Also see the next three lessons which cover the remainder of the book of Acts. Paul had repeated chances to address either high government officials or large crowds as a result of the opposition he faced.
21. Acts 23:1-24:27. SAP: Pray especially this week for the governing authorities. MV: Rom. 13:1.
Do not be afraid of governing authorities. They may provide support or protection for the church planter, but they do not have the ability to stop God's work.
- a. Authorities provided protection for Paul. They were unable to cope with the truth and power of his message, however (Acts 24:24-25). Ultimately, God has all authority (see Matt. 28:18-20).
22. Acts 25:1-26:32. SAP: Share your testimony with someone else. MV: Acts 26:17-18.
Be bold in dealing with governing authorities since they do not have ultimate authority. Always seek their good and their salvation.
- a. Acts 26:24-29. Paul did all he could to bless the authorities and help them find peace with God. He risked his own welfare for their benefit in his boldness.
23. Acts 27:1-28:31. SAP: Share the gospel with someone this week. MV: 2 Tim. 4:2 (see Acts 28:30-31).
Do not be afraid of anything. The safest place is in the center of God's will.
- a. Acts 27:29-35; 28:2-6. Paul was saved from certain death in the shipwreck and when bitten by the snake. He had nothing to fear because God had more work for him to do. The dangers only resulted in him gaining influence. Even death holds no fear for the Christian (see Phil. 1:21-26).

Teacher's Notes for the Church Planting Studies: Urgency and Speed

One of the most important factors you can communicate to new believers is the urgency of the task of evangelism and church planting. Time is important. The notes for lessons 1 and 2 are a good place to get started on this idea. Feel free to change the format, but please communicate the general ideas whenever the opportunity arises. The notes for all of the lessons are simply to help you as a leader communicate some ideas which have been proven in church planting experience over the years. Don't allow the notes to overshadow the Bible study, but use them as illustrations as the opportunity arises.

Lessons 1-2: God's eternal purpose

Day 1: Isa. 49:5-26; Acts 26:1-20. SAP: Pray especially for unevangelized peoples this week. MV: Isa. 49:6.

Day 2: 2 Peter 3:3-12; Rev. 7:9-12; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8. SAP: Identify a specific unevangelized people group to pray for. MV: 2 Pet. 3:9.

God's plan in Acts 1:8

- a. Jerusalem and Judea (PRC)
- b. Samaria (national minorities)
- c. Ends of the earth (global) [note 20+% have no access to the gospel]

	PRC	Nat'l Minorities	World
Population	1.26 billion	141.6 million	6.01 billion
Non-Christian	1.18 billion	140 million	4.02 billion
Saved/day	20,000	250	112,000
Die/day	21,400	2,400	140,000
Born/day	54,500	6,120	365,000
More unsaved/day	13,100	3,470	113,000

You have heard that time is money, but I say to you, time is souls. Every four seconds someone in China enters a Christless eternity. Due to the natural growth rate there is one more lost person in China about every six seconds. The rate of church growth is not even close to keeping up with population growth at this point. And China has been the brightest spot on the Christian map in terms of church growth over the past twenty-five years.

There are more lost people alive today than there have ever been before. Tomorrow there will be even more. If you care about people's eternal destiny then you know why I place so much emphasis on speed or pace. If churches are not reproducing more quickly than population growth then we are losing the race the Lord has set before us. Once they are gone there is no chance to save them. If they are to have any hope of making a serious impact on lostness it will require a rapid multiplication of churches. Business as usual is not even keeping up with population growth at this point. We must rapidly increase the rate of church growth if we are going to save as many as possible.

There is a false dichotomy drawn between quality and speed. The frequent assumption is that faster implies weaker or inferior. This is not necessarily the case. One major reason for this presupposition about faster meaning weaker is our view of discipleship. I believe that deep in our hearts many of us have bought into the idea that discipleship is a body of knowledge to transfer rather than patterns and processes to practice and pass on. Where did we get this idea? Maybe from Matthew 28:19: "Teaching them...". But it doesn't stop there. It says, "Teaching them to obey..." which is a pattern. Certainly knowledge is involved, but it is not primary. The gaining of knowledge will last a lifetime, but the pattern of obedience should be practiced from day one.

The Chinese have a saying, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." If we view discipleship training as the transfer of a body of knowledge then it divides the Body into knowers and learners. Where do you draw the line? How did Jesus do it? He sent His disciples out to minister from the beginning. How did Paul do it? Did he plant a church and stay around for years before letting them stand on their own feet? He never stayed anywhere for more than a few weeks except in Corinth (18 months) and Ephesus (3 years). Let's look at the first missionary journey. After spending a few weeks at each city and leading a few to the Lord, how did he lead all those new churches. He didn't! Acts 14:21-23 says,

21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and {saying} "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Paul did not have time to tell the people everything they needed to know about Christ and their new life in Him. He did have time to model patterns for them. How do you interpret, feed on, and apply Scripture? How do you relate to one another in the Body? How do you pray and hear from the Holy Spirit? There are only a few basic processes by which we grow. If Paul could communicate those through modeling then he could entrust the new churches into the Lord's hand with confidence. Yes, he followed up and checked back with them, but he did not coddle them. He

was not overprotective. Read the epistles in this light. Note how many times Paul said to follow his pattern or example, how often he said to note how others did or did not follow his pattern. First Thessalonians is a good example in this regard. Speed is not necessarily inversely proportional to quality.

Reaching this world for God will require rapid multiplication. Whenever I think of rapid multiplication I think of rabbits. When I think of slow multiplication I think of elephants. Elephants are fertile only four times per year. This compares with seventeen or eighteen times a year for other large mammals. They have only one baby per pregnancy. They have a twenty-two month gestation period. Elephants do not reach sexual maturity until eighteen years of age. Therefore, if you start with a pair of adults and wait three years you can go to from two to three elephants.

Rabbits, on the other hand, are practically continuously fertile. They have an average of seven babies per pregnancy, they have a one-month gestation period, and they reach sexual maturity at four months of age. While the theoretical potential is never reached because of disease, over crowding, lack of food supply and other issues, the potential multiplication is absolutely staggering. If rabbits averaged eight babies per pregnancy, four male and four female, and reproduced at the optimum possible rate, in three years they could go from two rabbits to four hundred seventy-six million rabbits. The point of this illustration is to show that reproduction rate matters. It matters in churches too.

Note: the following suggestions can be spread out over the course of the next 22 lessons.

One way to significantly reduce the reproduction cycle is **to immediately place local believers in leadership positions in planting a church in a pioneer area**. If this is not done, then it could take years for local believers to view themselves as competent to replace someone from outside who may have significantly more training or experience. This has been a forty year process in the church which I currently attend. It was planted by a foreign missionary and still has not found “suitable” local pastoral leadership. We have been without a pastor for three years since the church planter’s retirement. An outsider never taking an up-front leadership position also avoids many serious problems inherent in leadership transition.

Another leadership issue that can seriously affect the reproductive rate is the use of **multiple leadership forms** which enable the **leadership training to be done primarily on the job** and to stay ahead of the growth curve as extra leaders are always available to start new churches. Since sending people away to some residential school is avoided this can greatly shorten the necessary preparation time for leaders.

Another factor which can only help the rate at which people come to the Lord is through **massive societal exposure to the gospel**. Rom 10:14a
“How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?”

2 Cor 9:6
“Now this {I say} he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

When the tide comes in, all the boats in the harbor rise. Spiritually speaking, exposing people to the truth of the gospel will help the tide of the Holy Spirit to come in, changing people and the society. If large numbers of people are being exposed to Scripture then you will accelerate the work. Heb 4:12
“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart”

Isa 55:11
“So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding {in the matter} for which I sent it.”

God will honor His word. It will have an effect.

Another way to shorten the reproductive cycle of churches is to **model and communicate** the idea that the **discipleship** process is just that, a process. It is not a body of information to transfer, but a pattern of living and relating to God, His Word, and His Body. **This is a pattern which can be modeled and learned in a short period**

of time, enabling a lifetime of ministry and growth. This view of discipleship will enable and indeed, require new believers to very quickly be productive in ministry themselves. It brings every believer into a fruitful life of obedience from the very beginning rather than causing new believers to be a burden on more mature believers who must disciple them for years before the new converts can begin to minister themselves.

If a method is utilized which involves **evangelistic Bible studies and initial follow-up discipleship Bible studies** there can be significant gains made by conducting the studies **on a daily basis rather than a weekly basis.** For the sake of illustration let's assume a twelve-session Bible study for evangelism and a twelve-session Bible study for immediate follow-up discipleship. If these were conducted on a weekly basis they would take a total of twenty-four weeks as opposed to four weeks if they are done on a daily basis. This is a saving of five months which can be the difference in tens of thousands of churches over ten or fifteen years due to the time saved in the church planting process.

There are additional advantages to having daily studies. First of all, it emphasizes the importance and urgency of the topic. Particularly in the discipleship phase it is a well know phenomenon that the period of time that elapses between conversion and follow-up is a major factor in the probability of whether or not the person will follow through on their new commitment. The one drawback is that in discipleship studies there is often a level of homework including scripture memory which would be difficult to compress into a daily time frame. However, some of this material could be postponed until after the initial follow-up period, and the corresponding gains in terms of immediate confirmation of one's decision more than outweigh the disadvantages which would come from slightly delaying some of this discipleship material.

Particularly in some urban societies people I talk to claim that people would never be able to have time for daily studies, but they overlook the fact that they are asking for a limited period of time of a few weeks, whereas they would have to set aside several months of one session per week if a weekly approach is used. But in these same highly intense, competitive and busy societies, people routinely take out large chunks of time for business training and other items of importance to them. If someone is highly motivated and serious about their commitment they can make time for daily studies for a brief period.

Another opportunity for increasing the pace of church planting is to **place an emphasis on the responsibility of sharing the gospel due to its inherent nature.** We have the message of life in the midst of dying people, the cure for the deadly disease which those around us have contracted. We have life boats at the scene of a ship wreck. If this attitude is clearly communicated in word and action by the church planters it will naturally be caught by the new converts, because it is obvious in areas where the gospel is not readily available. This urgency and desire for reaching out to those who have not yet heard the truth becomes part of the DNA of the church. It will become characterized by boldness in sharing the gospel gladly.

Also, it is a good idea to **emphasize the gospel following existing lines of relationships.** Certainly the new converts need to have the pattern of sharing with those whom they do not know. The gospel always travels faster along existing lines of relationship, however, so no opportunity should be missed for the quick evangelization of family and friends. These are but a few of the possible ways to shorten the reproductive cycle without harming the quality of the fruit. This is an important matter which should receive constant attention and thought.

Lesson 3: Horses and Mules

Luke 13:6-9; John 15:1-8. SAP: Ensure whoever you are teaching is teaching others. MV: John 15:5.

God's plan for populating His creation depends on reproduction. Throughout the ages people have realized that bearing children was a sign of good health and blessing from God. Having many children and grandchildren is a sign of honor. The same thing is true spiritually. God's plan for populating His Kingdom depends on reproduction. Bearing spiritual children is a sign of good spiritual health and blessing from God. Having many spiritual children and grandchildren is a thing of honor. This is true for individuals and for churches. Churches can reproduce just as believers can reproduce.

Mules are sterile. They are a hybrid, a cross between a horse and a donkey. They cannot reproduce. Horse churches are churches which reproduce. Mule churches don't. We cannot allow fear of planting mules (churches that don't reproduce) to prevent us from planting churches at all. It is far better to plant a mule than no church at all. Fear of doing it wrong can lead to paralysis which is a fatal error. A mule is a victory, albeit a smaller victory than a horse (a reproducing church). It is far better to plant a mule and learn from the experience and try to do better next

time. There is no harm done by planting a mule. The mule will not become the rule because it will not reproduce. You can try again in another place and do better next time. Once you get a horse it will multiply, and it will become the rule because the horse churches will very quickly outgrow the mule churches in terms of total number of believers. Almost any way of planting a church is better than not planting a church at all. Nothing significant is ever achieved without taking risks, and there is no risk greater than the status quo. If the situation does not change, unreached people groups will remain unreached and millions will die and enter a Christless eternity. No possible alternative is a greater evil than this. So the greatest risk of all in our situation is the status quo. We must not fear making mistakes, because the mistakes can be no worse than the current situation.

Lesson 4: The Resources are in the Harvest

Priesthood of the believer. Luke 8:4-15; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Acts 19:8-10; 2 Tim. 2:2. SAP: Tell of God's greatness to someone who doesn't know Him. MV: 1 Pet. 2:9.

As Christians, we are all ministers. We are all priests who are to bring others to God so they too can be priests. We are all seed that has been harvested and are to be planted so we can reproduce and bring about an even greater harvest.

If you are working among an unreached people group, the chances are that the greatest church planters, the most effective church planters among your target group in two years are people who are not yet even believers today. The most effective church planters two years from now will be people who will be won, perhaps, in the next few months. The resources are truly in the harvest. If we fail to plan for that and fail to recognize that fact, we are condemning the results to be relatively meager. No unreached people group can afford to rely primarily on outside workers for evangelism and church planting. Outside workers are necessary to get a work started, but once it is started it must be carried out and carried to completion by members of that target group or it is destined for failure.

We naturally recognize this principle in agriculture. Saudi Arabia recently made an agreement with Australia to import sheep. Australia wanted to butcher the sheep before shipping them. The Saudi's claimed that freshness would be lost and they were afraid the sheep would not be *halal*, so they convinced the Australians to let them butcher the sheep once they arrived in Saudi Arabia. The Australians ensured that it was written in the contract that all the sheep must be slaughtered. None must be bred. The Aussies then built the largest livestock ship in the world to transport them. The Saudi's signed the contract but failed to follow through on it and are culling out their own breeding stock so they can save money and reduce dependence upon Australia.

We can all recognize the prudence of that maneuver, even if it is dishonest. Yet, we fail to recognize that when it comes to kingdom issues such as laborers for the harvest field of souls. We must never forget that the resources are in the harvest. A wise farmer does not buy seed year after year. He keeps some of his best grain to plant the next year's crop. An African worker recently told me he had seen families allow their children to starve rather than allowing them to eat the next year's seed corn. Those families believed in this principle. Do we?

In Luke 8:4-15 Jesus tells the parable of the sower. He says the seed which fell in good soil brought forth one hundred fold. With this sort of fruitfulness if there are two harvests each year, then starting with a single grain, after four years you could have enough rice to feed every person on earth all the rice they could eat for an entire year. This illustrates what God can do spiritually through faithful servants.

Lesson 5: Bible based

Ps. 19:7-11; Isa. 55:6-11; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 2 Pet. 2:1-3. SAP: Study the Bible more intensively every day this week. MV: 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

Bible study patterns are important because every believer is going to have to be a productive contributor to the task if it is ever going to be finished. Every member needs to reproduce. If Bible teaching becomes a passive activity, that passivity will lead to passivity in application which will doom the movement. Most people will not ever take the initiative or even consider becoming an active propagator of their faith if they are constantly in the mode of a being a passive recipient in their spiritual life. This means that everyone needs to contribute to the discussion and take part in the application portion of the study.

Lessons 6-7: Obedience

Day 1: James 1:21-25; John 14:15,21; 15:1-17. SAP: Identify any known areas of disobedience then confess and repent. MV: James 1:25.

Day 2: Matt. 5:19; 7:21-27; 1 John 2:3-6; 3:21-24; 5:2-3. SAP: Review Life Patterns passages and identify any related areas of disobedience, then confess and repent. MV: 1 John 2:3.

Obedience to Scripture must be the measure of success. This establishes the Bible as the authority rather than the leader or teacher. This helps protect the movement against personality cults or theological deviations creeping in over several spiritual generations. It doesn't hurt that Christ's commands include the task of taking the gospel to every person and every people group. Obedience to those commands results in tremendous fruitfulness.

Knowledge is not enough. The demons have proper doctrine but have not submitted themselves to the lordship of Christ (see James 2:19). Faith is a relationship of trust which is demonstrated by obedience rather than by correct belief (James 2:14-26).

Lessons 8-9: Discipline/Accountability

Day 1: Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10-11; 2 Thes. 3:6, 14-15; 1 Thes. 5:14; 1 Tim. 5:1-2, 19-21; Gal. 6:1. SAP: Make right any relationship problems with fellow Christians. MV: Gal. 1:6.

Day 2: 1 Cor. 5:1-6:8. SAP: Make right any relationship problems with non-Christians. MV: Rom. 12:18-19.

Accountability is a part of church life. We must practice church discipline--and not only for sins of commission but also for sins of omission. If someone is failing to make disciples, for instance, he should be approached to see if it is a spiritual problem or if he simply needs to be equipped better.

Small groups or small congregations provide the intimate setting required for effective accountability. It is hard to hide in the crowd if your group has fewer than fifteen members. This helps assure involvement by every member. It also helps keep the leadership task doable. It provides a measure of security as well. Finally, it helps establish a community which is a true spiritual family with a high sense of mutual concern.

If you have an accountability relationship with a church leader then you also need to constantly ask about the obedience and fruitfulness of the church they are leading. This is an important facet of their own accountability since they are responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church.

Lesson 10: Prayer

Eph. 6:18-20; Matt. 5: 43-44; 6:5-15; Luke 18:1-14; 1 Thes. 5:16-18. SAP: Spend extra time in prayer daily this week. MV: Matt. 6:9-13.

Prayer is an indispensable part of the Christian life and Christian ministry. The best way to teach prayer is to model it. Be a person of passionate, frequent, and faithful prayer. Demonstrate in your life prayer that is God-centered and others-focused.

It has been said, "When men work, men work. When men pray, God works." Jesus Himself saturated His ministry with prayer. There has been no significant growth or progress in the church which was not accompanied and fueled by prayer. Prayer enables us to know God's will and to do God's will. Prayer changes us and changes the world. Prayer is a major weapon in the spiritual battle we are engaged in.

Lesson 11: Participative/shared leadership

1Cor. 12:4-12; 14:26; 1 Pet. 4:10-11; Rom. 12:3-8. SAP: At your next church service, ensure that everyone gets a chance to contribute. MV: 1 Cor. 14:26.

Leadership is important. Church leaders do not necessarily need to be highly trained and educated pastors. Requiring formal education would severely limit the pool of potential leaders. This would only add extra-biblical requirements. Note that the only issue not related to character but to ability in the letters to Timothy and Titus which outlined the requirements for pastors, was the ability to teach. Having full-time, paid, professional leaders will slow down church multiplication by requiring large congregations capable of supporting such leaders. Much of the time, energy, and resources would then be consumed by maintaining the existing church rather than outreach. This level of professionalism is unnecessary for typical home groups.

Having multiple leaders share responsibility within each congregation is also important. A careful reading of the New Testament clearly indicates this was the Biblical pattern. Paul always worked with one or more partners any time he did ministry. Jesus always sent His disciples out in pairs (Luke 10:1). Church planters always appointed multiple elders in the churches they planted (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5). This helped reduce the load on any one individual, making it possible for people to serve in this manner on a volunteer basis. It also reduced the requirements on what it took to be a leader. Multiple leadership also helps prevent an artificial distinction between clergy and laity, encouraging all members to be involved in ministry. For leaders, their primary ministry is equipping the other members of the Body to do the ministry of building up the church. Having multiple leaders enables leader preparation to be handled on-the-job for the most part through mentoring and modeling. Perhaps most importantly, it provides a ready supply of “extra” leaders which could be used to lead new churches locally if the mother church grows too large, or start new churches in some other place. It also provides insurance against persecution in case a church leader is imprisoned.

Lesson 12: Leaders as servants

Matt. 20:20-28; John 13:3-17. SAP: Serve whomever you teach this week. MV: Matt. 20:25-28.

Servant leadership is a topic which is difficult to overemphasize. It is so different from anything we see in government or education or religion or anywhere else outside the church. Because of the power of modeling, authoritarian leadership seems to be the pattern people naturally gravitate toward. Do whatever you can to avoid modeling or practicing such leadership. Be a servant.

Lesson 13: Leaders as equippers

Eph. 4:1-16. SAP: Equip whomever you teach this week for ministry. Eph. 4:11-12.

Leaders serving as equippers of others is another role or function which is not common in the world. This is one way leaders can be servants. Ministry is for all members of the church, not just those with the most training or experience. All members have spiritual gifts through which they can and should minister. Leaders must equip them to do so effectively. Equipping other leaders is intimately connected with planting new churches. New churches cannot be planted unless new leaders are equipped.

Lesson 14: Man of peace

Luke 10:1-20. Also note use of teams on Pauline trips. SAP: Pray for the Lord to reveal to you a person of peace to whom you can witness this week. MV: Luke 10:2.

Locating a person of peace whose heart God has prepared is a proven way to begin new churches. Such a person can serve as an advocate in the community. Often their family, friends, and neighbors will come to the Lord as well. This person and those to whom they relate can form a new church.

Also note that it is more effective to group unbelievers and win them than to win individuals and group them. It is often very difficult to win individual converts, disciple them, and then try to form them into a new church. It is often far more effective to group them either based on pre-existing relationships such as family or friends, or based upon common interest or experience. If people can be exposed to the gospel in groups, it somehow lessens the fear of letting those people know they have converted. Often individuals will make their decision only in a one-on-one setting in persecuted environments, but it will still help them feel free to meet with and witness to others if they were exposed to the truth in a group setting. Instead of winning a person to the Lord and then having that person tell his family and friends, why not locate someone who seems to be open to the gospel and have him get his family and friends together before he becomes a Christian? A low-key witness in the group setting can go a long way toward diffusing suspicion and distrust among family members later and may open up some tremendous possibilities for witness to them. If you are witnessing in such a setting, be sure to submit to the family authority. This usually means you should focus much of your attention on and direct the conversation to that authority figure, especially when it comes time for a decision to follow the Lord.

If an individual does become a Christian apart from their family, help them get their family relationships right as part of their early steps in following the Lord. Guide them to ask forgiveness for past actions or attitudes towards their family members which were not right. Help them seek reconciliation with family members with whom they have strained relationships. Guide them to submit to their family authorities. These actions will help cement their decision and will serve as a testimony to their unsaved family members.

Lesson 15: New converts means new churches and new leaders

New groups of believers: Acts 2:46; 5:42; 20:18-21. New leaders: Acts 14:21-23. SAP: Look for an opportunity to start a new church this week, possibly in the home of the person of peace from last week. MV: Acts 5:42.

This was the pattern followed by Paul (Acts 13:14-14:23 e.g.) even when he was only in an area for a short period of time. This pattern which showed up in Jerusalem and in Ephesus and in Rome of churches meeting in multiple homes within the same city also bears out this pattern.

Often opportunities for starting new churches are missed because of people's default patterns with new converts. The default pattern is frequently to incorporate new believers into existing churches. This should not be the default. The default pattern should be to start new churches whenever you get new converts. There are exceptions when a church is very new or very small, but as a general rule every opportunity should be taken to begin new churches. This can either be done by immediately assisting the new converts to pursue the conversion of friends and family members or by dividing an existing church and sending some of the members (including whoever led them to the Lord) to join the new convert or converts to form a new church.

Studying church growth around the world reveals two constant patterns. The first is that smaller churches grow faster than bigger churches. The second is that newer churches grow faster than older churches. This is one good reason to seek to start as many new churches as possible rather than incorporating new converts into existing churches.

Churches are a bit like ice. If you have a very large block of ice and you are wanting to cool water it is not most efficient to keep the block as whole but rather to crush it, thus multiplying the surface area which is exposed to the water. This increases the cooling rate drastically. If you break a huge ice block into a million little blocks you will increase the cooling rate by one hundred fold.

Assume for a moment that churches are supposed to impact society in the same way the ice was supposed to cool the water. Small churches have the greater surface area with the unbelieving society. Not only is there greater geographic dispersal, but more importantly, the number of relationships which believers have with unbelievers is multiplied. As a church grows and ages the percentage of a person's close relationships gradually becomes more and more saturated with other Christians. Whereas, if a church is kept small and relatively new in its membership, then the tendency to saturate relationships with other Christians is greatly reduced and slowed. This gives greater opportunity in smaller and newer churches for evangelism by members of the church.

Every person has a limited number of significant relationships they can actively maintain. Think for a moment about how many significant local relationships you have with unbelievers as opposed to Christians. You see, there is a tendency to saturate our relationships with other believers. This is compounded in large churches or old churches. Our relationship set begins to stagnate in those situations.

Your default should be: new believers are not put into existing churches, but are part of churches formed because of their conversion. This was evidently the pattern in the New Testament. Even in places which had many believers, they did not primarily meet as a large group, but daily house to house.

Lesson 16: Modeling

Luke 9:23; Phil. 3:17-19; 4:9; 1 Thes. 1:5-8; 2 Thes. 3:6-9; John 13:12-17; 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 3:10-15; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Pet. 2:21-24; Heb. 13:7; 2 Cor. 12:14-18. SAP: Pay attention this week to modeling the life of Christ. MV: 1 Tim. 4:12.

In church planting you need to model what you want to see as the result. For example:

Participative Bible teaching needs to be modeled from the beginning. The first time you lead an evangelistic Bible study you need to do this. In personal witness you need to do this. Don't use a purely lecture or sermon or monologue format.

Obedience to Scripture needs to be explicitly stated as the norm for believers. Again, from the first evangelistic Bible study this needs to be a pattern that the church planter subjects himself and others to. The Bible needs to be a book that demands accountability, a living book with which to interact.

Common people should be allowed to be leaders. If you are extremely gifted or well-trained, then do your work in such a way that it can be emulated by less gifted and untrained converts. In dealing with unbelievers or with new converts don't use books they don't have access to.

Small home groups should be used from the beginning, even before people are converted. It is generally more effective to group unbelievers and win them than to win individuals and then group them. Don't set large groups as the goal or the ideal.

You see how each of the many characteristics can be modeled from the beginning, even before people are Christians.

Lessons 17-18: Training Cycle

Day 1: Acts 20:17-38. SAP: Assist whomever you teach in an outreach or witnessing activity. MV: Acts 20:32.

Day 2: Acts 14:21-23; 18:23; 19:9-10; 20:4; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thes. 3:6-8; Eph. 1:15-16; Col. 1:3-9a. SAP: Help whomever you teach to plan an outreach or witnessing activity to do on their own. MV: 1 Thes. 3:7-8.

In church planting it is helpful to keep in mind the training cycle: model, assist, watch and leave. Learning to ride a bicycle is a helpful analogy in regard to the training cycle. Typically a child, as she grows, will see people riding bicycles. This provides a model and gives her a frame of reference for what the activity involves. The parent is modeling.

That child will not learn to ride a bicycle without getting on the seat herself, however. When she is old enough and big enough the parents or some other person will assist that child. While she gets on the seat, the person assisting will often grasp the seat and the handle bars and help the child maintain balance while she learns to pedal and steer. The child gradually learns to how to maintain balance. The parent is assisting.

Then, the parent will let go of the bicycle. Then the child will fall and get hurt, but they get up again, get on the seat, and the parent gets them going and lets go again. The child falls. This pattern continues repeatedly until finally the child is able to maintain their balance and rides successfully. The parent is watching.

When the parent is satisfied that the child can do this by herself and understands the basic safety rules, the parent then leaves and the child rides on its own where and when she wishes. The parent is leaving.

The parent first provides a model by riding the bicycle, then provides assistance by holding the bicycle, then watches while the child rides the bicycle and then finally leaves. This is an illustration of the training cycle.

Generational markers can often serve as a useful guide in knowing when to change roles. That is, the church planting team models as they plant a church. Then they change roles after the establishment of the church and take an assisting role. They assist the first generation church in planting a second generation church. After the second generation church is planted they again change roles and begin watching as the second generation church plants a third generation church with the assistance of the first generation church. Then another second church is planted by the first generation church. When this takes place the church planting team can transition to start work in a new area, modeling again as they do the work in another first generation church.

This pattern is clearly stated in passages such as 2 Tim. 2:2. It is implied in other places. For instance in Ephesus, when Paul was teaching in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9-10). Although he was staying in the school, everyone in the province of Asia heard the message. This implies that his students were in turn teaching others who were teaching others. There is no other way the message could have spread so far and wide in such a short period of time.

Lesson 19: Avoid creating dependency

Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 2:1-5. SAP: When you teach this week, ensure you do it in a way that those you are teaching can reproduce. MV: 1 Cor. 2:4-5.

The best way to avoid creating dependency is to follow the training cycle in healthy ways. You can follow this cycle at any number of levels. At the macro level it means you should consciously **model** good patterns in planting a church. Then you can provide **assistance** in terms of Bible-based guidance as requested for the first generation of reproduction. Don't give your opinions either; instead, take questions back to Scripture. Never say "I think..." but rather, "Let's see what the Bible says about that..." Next, **watch** from a distance to ensure that third-generation and

repeated second-generation reproduction occurs and that biblical patterns are being followed. At this point you should **leave** in order to begin new work elsewhere and to ensure that dependence does not stunt the growth or hinder the reproduction of the new church-planting movement. At a micro level the same pattern can occur in terms of individual discipleship.

The most difficult step is usually the last one. You must learn to entrust the new converts to the Lord. They are indwelt and guided by the same Holy Spirit you have. They have the same Bible to learn from. You must realize that your continuing presence can actually serve to stunt their growth and maturity. The most common mistake in church planting may be developing a dependence upon the church planter rather than on the Lord. This results from each step of the cycle being mishandled. The modeling is not appropriate because things are done which cannot be imitated by the new believers. The assisting is of a nature to develop dependence because the church planter does things for the new converts rather than helping them to do it for themselves. The observing is laced with the assumption that, until things are done the same way as the church planter would do them, they're just not being done right. Instead, the criteria for leaving should be that things are done biblically and that reproduction is occurring. As a result either the reproduction or the exiting never occurs.

There is a difference between developing leaders who can and those who cannot feed on Scripture themselves and continue to grow without being constantly dependent on outside training and guidance. This difference may perhaps best be illustrated by the difference between starfish and octopi. Starfish represent cell groups which have leaders who can be self-feeding but are connected. The octopus represents cell groups with leaders who are dependent for ongoing feeding and training in order to grow. If you cut off the leg of a starfish you get two starfish and nothing is lost. With an octopus, if you cut off the leg you get a new leg and the old leg is lost. With an octopus cell group the leadership depends upon the hierarchy to provide regular teaching and structure and authority instead of learning to feed on scripture for themselves. So if, because of persecution or severed relationships or some other problem, the cell group is separated from whoever is providing the ongoing feeding, it will typically die.

Similarly, with a starfish, if the head is destroyed you get as many starfish as there are pieces of starfish. But with an octopus, if the head is destroyed, the octopus is dead. In an octopus cell group, if the leadership is imprisoned or dies or falls into sin or some other problem, typically the church is seriously damaged or even killed. Whereas there is no problem like that with starfish cell groups, because each unit is not reliant on outside support, but is self-sufficient for feeding and growth.

There is one advantage for octopi. Starfish are simple and non-specialized, whereas octopi are complex and specialized. A well-organized hierarchy of octopus cell groups which is complex and specialized can provide a myriad of services and opportunities which can never be offered by loosely connected starfish cell groups because they are simple and non-specialized. They can only meet the simple, basic, straightforward needs, not the highly specialized needs. The authoritative structure in the octopus network of groups enables it to act with greater coordination than is possible with a starfish network of groups.

Lesson 20: Shadow Pastor/discipleship chain

Ezra 7:10; Matt. 5:19; 1 Cor. 15:3; Phil. 4:9; Col. 1:3-8; 2 Tim. 2:2; Acts 18:24-26. SAP: Check for reproduction of your teaching to the third or fourth generations. MV: 2 Tim. 2:2 (review).

The best way to learn something is to teach it. You will pay better attention when you hear something if you know you will be responsible to pass it on. We not only have a responsibility to obey the Lord, but also to teach others what we have learned. We must teach other believers and preach the gospel to unbelievers. This means that every Christian should be a student and every Christian should be a teacher for at least one other person.

Many church planting approaches rely on the church planter assuming leadership in the new church at the beginning. This is not a good idea unless the church planter plans to remain with the church. It is far better for the church planter to mentor some of the new converts from the beginning to serve as leaders. Once there are baptized believers in an area, they should be the ones providing the up-front leadership. The church planter models up to that point and then begins to assist through shadow pastoring.

Shadow pastoring involves meeting with the new leaders in order to prepare them to lead when the entire church meets together. The shadow pastor can go over a Bible study with them, pray, teach them a new song or help them write one, model participative leadership patterns, and so on. When the church meets as a whole the shadow pastor may not attend at all or take a very low profile in the meeting. Very early on the shadow pastor will encourage the

fledgling congregation to begin working toward planting a new church themselves. The shadow pastor assists in this process. After the first reproduction then the shadow pastor will begin to watch in a similar fashion that a parent watches their child fall down when learning to ride a bicycle. The young church will make mistakes. This is certain. When they plant another church and are remaining true to the Bible, the shadow pastor will need to move on to begin work in another area or return to their home church. They can already physically move on after the assisting stage, but they will need to maintain regular contact throughout the watching stage.

A biblical example of someone preparing a leader behind the scenes in this way can be found in Acts 18:24-26. Priscilla and Aquila equipped Apollos in this way without taking him out of leadership or correcting him in the church itself.

How a church planter treats new converts is an important determinant in the quality and nature of leadership which arises from among them. Rarely will people far exceed what is expected of them. Treating people as partners leads to the development of independent coworkers; treating them as observers leads to the formation of dependent followers who continue asking for guidance.

One way to ensure participation and maturity development of each believer is to utilize discipleship chains. A discipleship chain relationship is one that takes place outside of the regular church meeting. It is usually a one-on-two discipleship process. It can be one-on-three, but it is preferable to have a one-on-two relationship. The pattern is that a more mature believer discipled two others from within the congregation each of whom discipled two others who then discipled two others. Each discipling relationship involves mutual accountability for putting into practice scriptural truth that is learned and teaching what one has learned. This two-fold accountability is extremely important.

In order for this process to work a person need only be one step ahead of the person whom he or she is discipling. For instance, a believer has been in the Lord ten weeks can disciple others who have only been believers for eight weeks, who could in turn disciple others who have been disciples six weeks, etc. This pattern has many advantages over common disciple patterns where one person discipled many, either as a large group or individually but disciplers are assumed and required to be highly mature and experienced believers. I refer to that pattern as banyan tree leadership. The banyan tree is a large tree which continues to put out shoots and roots laterally so that it gradually covers large amounts of ground and it has quite dense foliage. Underneath a banyan tree there is no growth of any other kind of plant. The ground is hard packed mud. This type of leadership does not allow for other leaders to develop. New believers become accustomed to constantly being on the receiving end of teaching. Only a rare few will ever consider themselves to be potential leaders because the few leaders who do exist are extremely experienced and mature. In a bad sense, they are irreplaceable.

A discipleship chain, however, not only allows but requires the development in maturity of other believers. With a banyan tree type of leadership, newer believers will rarely, if ever, view themselves as adequate to replace their primary discipler. Whereas, in a discipleship chain every believer is required to become a discipler. Even those believers at the end of the chain are expected to teach what they've learned to an unbeliever, whether it is a child, a family member, or a friend. The command to make disciples was given to every believer so we need to equip and expect every member to do so.

A good model for beginning a discipleship chain is the shadow pastoring system where the shadow pastor is mentoring two or three leaders from the group outside of the regular church meeting time. This can also serve as a good way to pass on leadership pointers which may or may not be suitable to teach during a regular worship service. The discipleship chain pattern is not limited in its growth potential as is the traditional model but also develops more mature believers in a shorter period of time than one-on-many systems. One important thing to remember however is that the top or head of the chain needs to have continuing input and equipping from some source. This can partially be provided by a mutual accountability in discipling between or among the heads of other discipleship chains. It can also be provided within a network of groups by regular leaders meetings where more advanced Biblical training and equipping is provided by an outside source. Failure to provide for this ongoing equipping and accountability has resulted in the death of many good churches around the world.

As a rule, a discipleship chain will extend only as far as the local house church or cell, so will not exceed four generations (plus the unbelievers the last generation is "teaching"). When a cell grows to the point of division, the existing chain dissolves and re-forms in the new church. This provides an opportunity for those who are growing quickly or are able teachers to "move up" in the chain.

Lesson 21: Identifying false teachers

Deut. 13:1-14; 18:22; Matt. 23:1-12; 24:4-14, 23-27; 2 Cor. 2:17; Gal. 1:8; 1 Tim. 1:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3; Matt. 7:15-23. SAP: Evaluate any teaching (yours or others) in the church this week to see if it is trustworthy. MV: Matt. 7:15-18.

In China today, false teachers are a huge problem. Cults are rampant, largely because new church leaders and other new Christians do not know how to interpret and apply Scripture. They are dependent on others to teach and interpret Scripture for them. When false teachers come, they trust their confidence and authority in teaching. We must be aware that false teachers will come and learn to identify them so we can resist their teaching.

Lesson 22: Combating false teaching

Matt. 7:24-27; Acts 20:29-32; Eph. 4:14-16; 2 Tim. 3:13-17. SAP: This week seek out the evaluation of others in your own teaching. Request accountability. MV: Eph. 4:15-16.

The word of God never changes. Learning the Bible and applying its teachings is the best way to combat false teaching. The Bible is more authoritative than any leader. Learning to properly interpret and apply the Bible to your life is how you can remain safe from false teaching. This is why it is so important to teach people to feed on the Bible for themselves. Remember, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Lesson 23: Giving

2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. SAP: Give a generous gift for the Lord's work this week. MV: 2 Cor. 9:10.

In the Old Testament, believers were required to give ten percent of their income for the work of the Lord. Today we have no such requirement but we are commanded to give and to be generous. We should give even more freely and generously to show our gratitude for the grace we have received. Giving of our earthly possessions is a way to reap eternal benefit as we build the Lord's Kingdom.

Lesson 24: Daily aspects of early church life

Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; 6:1; 16:5; 17:10-12, 17; 19:8-10; 20:31. SAP: Make it a point to meet with other believers every day this week. MV: Acts 2:46-47.

Our relationship with God is a daily matter. It would seem strange for a married person to only drop by to see their spouse once a week. In our spiritual life we will never develop an intimate relationship with our Creator if we only relate to him on an infrequent or occasional basis.

Lesson 25: Suffering for a purpose

Matt. 5:10-12; 16:24-26; John 12:24-26; Phil. 2:3-11; 2 Cor. 4:6-18; Heb. 12:1-11. SAP: Spend time rejoicing in prayer this week for the opportunities you've had to suffer for your faith. MV: Matt. 5:10-12.

Following the Lord as a disciple is a costly commitment. It will cost us comfort, convenience, ease, and safety. This cost is worth it, however, because of the purpose. The purpose is that the Lord will be glorified. His eternal purpose of salvation to all nations will be accomplished. We will be remade into His image, a new creation, and will live with Him eternally.

Further Resources

To receive a Bible you may visit a Three-Self Patriotic Church or write to the address below. If you have access to the Internet you can download a copy from www.ccim.org

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