LEAD WHERE YOU ARE

7 DAY JOURNEY
LEAD WHERE YOU ARE

Lead Where You Are is a 7-day journey that calls leaders to reset their Bible engagement practices and to share their commitment to God’s Word with others.

Your journey continues at:
UncoverLeaders.com

There you will discover:
• Bible engagement resources
• Best practices
• Tools to make a difference

All Scripture quotations in this publication are from the Contemporary English Version

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DAY ONE

LEAD WHERE YOU ARE
PUT YOUR OXYGEN MASK ON FIRST.

PRAY
God, help me to have a fresh hunger for your Word. Move me from Bible reading to stronger Scripture engagement in my personal walk with you! Help me not just to read, but also to feed upon your every word, and feed my family and those I serve.

READ MATTHEW 4:4, CEV
“Jesus answered, ‘The Scriptures say: ‘No one can live only on food. People need every word that God has spoken.’”

One temptation that Christian leaders face today is to look for tricks and quick fixes in their leadership efforts from the latest best-selling business books. Although many valuable principles and techniques are contained within business resources, the motivation and foundation for such material can easily become one-dimensional. The purpose of much of the business community is often primarily to improve the efficiency of the corporation, the flow of communication and, ultimately, the financial bottom line. While these types of materials certainly have their place, our most pertinent and potent resource as Christian leaders will always be the Bible.

This may seem obvious, but take a moment to reflect on two reasons why this is true.

• The pace of the leader sets the pace for the team. Consider the speech that flight attendants give each time you fly. “In the event of an emergency and if you are travelling with others who may need your assistance, put your oxygen mask on first…” Your ‘go-to’ source of spiritual strength will ultimately be the one that influences those you lead.

• In the hectic world of church leadership, it’s all too easy for pastors and church leaders to end up simply reading the Bible in hopes of preparing (or cramming) for next weekend’s message versus engaging God’s Word.
Consider the contrasts of reading versus engaging with Scripture:

**READING THE BIBLE INVOLVES**
- Gaining Factual Information.
- Having your devotions.
- Applying the Bible to your life.
- Learning about Bible stories.
- Simply surveying the words.
- A dutiful discipline.
- Reading the Bible.

**ENGAGING GOD’S WORD INVOLVES**
- Experiencing Personal Transformation.
- Becoming more devoted to Christ.
- Applying your life to the Bible!
- Learning from Bible Stories.
- Sincerely obeying God’s Word.
- A compelling desire.
- Letting the Bible “read” you.

When Jesus spoke the words - “People need every word that God has spoken” - he was not only identifying a great need in our lives, he was tapping a deep hunger in our souls. While fasting and praying in the wilderness, he asserted the fact that his greatest sustenance was the Word of God. The fact is that people deeply need God’s Word, especially those who preach and teach it.

Matthew 4 is the chapter that immediately follows the baptism of Jesus. At this event, you will recall that John baptized Christ, that the Spirit of God was present in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father affirmed Christ there: “This is my own dear Son and I am pleased with him” (3:17). Immediately following that affirmation of God and validation of the Spirit, the enemy endeavored to question and diminish the identity of Christ (“If you are God’s Son ...” 4:3).

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of Matthew 4 is the natural way in which Jesus wielded the Word of God (the Scripture) as his inspiration from the Father and his weapon against Satan. It flowed from his lips seemingly effortlessly and naturally. It seems that the Word of God kept this leader focused in heart and clear in his mind. He asserted that God’s Word was more important than his next meal.

In our ministries, we are called to respond to the greatest need of them all – spiritual hunger. Although physical hunger must be satisfied, Jesus emphasized that food alone is insufficient for life in its truest form. The words of God are the food we must need.

**SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT IS WHAT LEADERS NEED IN ORDER TO REALLY “LIVE” AND LEAD AS GOD INTENDED.**
REFLECT

Questions to Ask Yourself as a Leader: On a continuum of reading the Bible versus engaging it, where would you put yourself right now? When it comes to longing for the insights of the Bible, for the words that proceed “from the mouth of God,” how would you describe yourself? Do you anticipate it as much as your next meal? And, do you openly convey this hunger and passion for God’s Word to your family and those you lead?

Questions to Ask Your Team(s): As a ministry team, how dependent are we on the Word of God? How much of what we currently do could we do without it? Are our decisions as a team informed by Scripture? If so, how? When was a time we found direction for a team decision from the Bible? What role does the Word of God have in our ministry and in our meetings? What would help the people we serve become more fully engaged with Scripture?

RESPOND

Engaging the Word Yourself – Read again through the Reading vs. Engagement chart (above) and ask yourself: Am I a Bible reader or engager? Write down your thoughts. Also, consider this question: What would make my time in God’s Word more truly engaging?

Getting Others Engaged – Plan a sermon series on a short book of the Bible (possibly an Epistle) that you will preach 3 months from now. However, before you start researching and preparing for it, tell the congregation your plan and ask them to assist you in your preparations for these sermons. Tell them that you simply want them to take the next week to read this book and that you are going to email them a questionnaire asking 3 questions about their experience. As you prepare the series of sermons, read their responses and find ways to incorporate a few of them into your messages. This will add a community dimension to your preaching that will help with Bible engagement.
DAY TWO
LEAD WHERE YOU ARE
OUT OF YOUR DEEPENING INTIMACY
WITH GOD.

PRAY
Father, bring me more fully into your Word and your words more fully into me. Help me to find the life, strength and motivation that come from engaging in your Word. I want to connect deeply with your truth and insight. Enrich my intimacy with you and let that experience change the way I live, love and lead.

READ JOHN 15:1-11, CEV
“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts away every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit. But he trims clean every branch that does produce fruit, so that it will produce even more fruit. You are already clean because of what I have said to you. Stay joined to me, and I will stay joined to you. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it stays joined to the vine, you cannot produce fruit unless you stay joined to me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me. If you don’t stay joined to me, you will be thrown away. You will be like dry branches that are gathered up and burned in a fire.

“Stay joined to me and let my teachings become part of you. Then you can pray for whatever you want, and your prayer will be answered. When you become fruitful disciples of mine, my Father will be honored. I have loved you, just as my Father has loved me. So remain faithful to my love for you. If you obey me, I will keep loving you, just as my Father keeps loving me, because I have obeyed him.

“I have told you this to make you as completely happy as I am.”

Jesus takes his disciples to a vineyard and refers to himself as “the true vine” and to his followers as “the branches.” In the midst of the descriptive narrative on the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus suddenly draws upon the vine and the branches to describe the spiritual intimacy, union or connection he came to bring into their lives. He makes it clear that he is out to make them spiritually alive so that they will become spiritually productive. He reveals his goal, his method and means of doing so. These shine a light on the way he works in our lives. Consider this:
The Goal: producing fruit ("produce even more fruit," v. 3) in our lives.

The Methods: staying connected to the “vine”, to Christ (“stay joined to me,” v. 4); God is removing “branches” in our lives that don’t “produce fruit” (v. 2a); and God is trimming the “branches” in our lives that do “produce fruit” so that they will produce “even more” (v. 2b).

The Means: the words of Christ at work within us (“let my teachings become part of you,” v. 7).

Jesus’ discourse on the vine and the branches not only calls the followers of Christ to be connected to (i.e., “stay joined to”) him, but to do so by making sure we let his words get connected to us. He calls us to something beyond simply reading. He doesn’t want us to just meditate on his Word; you might say he wants us to marinate in it! Scripture engagement means getting immersed in it and, as a result, it changing us. After all, when we open ourselves up to someone, isn’t that exactly what happens? We share more of our thoughts and our ideas with them. Openness and honesty occurs. On the same token, we more carefully, sensitively and fully contemplate and consider their thoughts, their words, and their opinions. The experience affects us. That is intimacy. That is engagement with the Word of God.

Not only does Jesus tell these leaders that in order to experience intimacy with him they need to let his words dwell richly within them, he tells them something else. Jesus says if they will allow his words to become part of them, of their lives, thoughts and actions, then they “will become fruitful disciples of [his]” (v. 8). As a result, Jesus told his disciples that a few important things will happen:

- “you will produce lots of fruit” (v. 5b);
- “you can pray for whatever you want, and your prayer will be answered” (v. 7b);
- “my Father will be honored” (v. 8b); and,
- “This [will] make you as completely happy as I am” (v. 11b).

Another temptation of leadership today is to live out of insufficient sources of motivation, all the way from sheer adrenaline, being over-cafeinated, tracking it out on the ministry treadmill, to running on auto-pilot. As leaders, the question we often face is, “What am I living out of?” In other words, “What is my prime source of motivation and strength as a leader?” It is clear that Christ wants us to obey him and live for him out of the motivation of relationship, intimacy and love (cf., Luke 10:27). And, he connects that intimacy to the place we choose to give his words in our lives.

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT BRINGS LEADERS CLOSER TO GOD.
REFLECT
Questions to Ask Yourself as a Leader: What is it that tends to fuel my service to God, adrenaline or intimacy? What is a Scripture or Bible passage that has strengthened my intimacy with God? How so? Am I practicing the presence of God through meditating frequently on the words of Christ in my personal life and leadership? Do I engage the privilege of staying joined to Jesus through his words?

Questions to Ask Your Team(s): Has anyone ever grown a plant or watched someone tend to one? How productive was it? What did it require? How connected do you feel you are to the words of Christ? What are they producing in you? What do you tend to “live out of”?

RESPOND
Engaging the Word Yourself – Write down a list of some of the “branches” in your life (i.e., activities, interests, relationships, possessions, dreams, etc.) that you believe God has removed because of their unfruitfulness? What are some that you believe yet need to be removed? Why? Write down a list of the fruitful branches in your life that you believe he has cut back so that they will produce more.

Getting Others Engaged – Take your team to a garden or farm. Enjoy the outing, but also call ahead a few days and line up 20 or 30 minutes with one of the gardeners. Talk with them about what makes the plants thrive. Afterwards, find a place to sit with your team and talk about what it means for you to stay connected to Christ and his words.
PRAY
Father, your Son Jesus offered a prayer to you on behalf of his followers, praying that we would all be one even as you and he are One. Please bring your church into complete unity as you desire and help me to not only live out my faith but to do so together with the family of God, this glorious community.

READ ACTS 2:42-47, CEV
“They spent their time learning from the apostles, and they were like family to each other. They also broke bread and prayed together. Everyone was amazed by the many miracles and wonders that the apostles worked. All the Lord’s followers often met together, and they shared everything they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. Day after day they met together in the temple. They broke bread together in different homes and shared their food happily and freely, while praising God. Everyone liked them, and each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved.”

One of the greatest challenges of church leadership and pastoring is measuring spiritual growth and vitality in our own lives and in the lives of those we seek to disciple and equip. How do we know we are actually growing spiritually and helping others to grow? What are the signs?

In order to grow spiritually as leaders and as followers of Christ, we need an effective context for that growth, namely - authentic community. Among the key elements of the Early Church God has set before us in Acts 2 is this sense of strong relationship, or in other words, fellowship or authentic community. Acts 2:42-47 is a model of a healthy and authentic faith community; a context in which people of faith not only grow, but grow together.

Vitality oozes out of the paragraph (above) from Acts 2. One way to observe it is just to consider the verbs: “learning” … “broke bread ... together”… “prayed together”... “met together”... “shared everything they had”... “give ... to whoever needed it”... “shared their food”... “praising God”... “being saved”...
Do you know what that sounds like? Life, real life together, that’s what. A vitalized community of people full of God’s grace, Spirit and of good works. But, these all depict the gifts, graces and practices that poured FROM this vital congregation of Christ-followers. What was it that was first poured into them that helped to foster this strong community of faith? Here it is:

“They spent their time learning from the apostles…” (v. 42). The first characteristic Luke (the writer of Acts) cites is this. The primary practice of this vital Church of Acts 2 was spending time in and around the Word of God. Their practice was engaging God’s Word and its result was a sense of authentic community and connection. The people’s devotion to learning from the apostles drew them together in powerful and authentic unity; better said –community.

Of course, at the time of Acts 2, there was no formal New Testament as we know it today. The words of Christ were communicated by the apostles who had learned under his teaching and example. So, the Christ-followers drew upon the Word of God by devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching. This practice was the foundation of an exciting and compelling community experience that resulted in spiritual fruit and harvest: “each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved” (v. 47b).

There are at least Seven Vital Signs of Spiritual Growth in Acts 2. Here they are:

- **Vital Teaching** (v. 42)
- **Vital Prayer** (v. 42)
- **Vital Grace** (God’s answers to prayer, v. 43)
- **Vital Giving** (Stewardship, vv. 44-45)
- **Vital Community** (v. 46)
- **Vital Worship** (v. 47a)
- **Vital Witness** (v. 47b)

These are the characteristics of a Vitalized Church, or a church that is alive! The State of the Bible Survey (ABS/Barna Group, 2011) revealed that the majority of Bible readers (55%) also attended a small group or Bible study, where they studied the Bible in a group. This affirms that the combination of Bible engagement amidst a community of faith is an absolute dynamic duo in the growth and development of the Church.

Loneliness, ironically, is one of the greatest challenges and temptations faced by pastors and leaders of all kinds today. In a recent study (LifeWay Research, 2011) it was found that 55% of 1000 pastors surveyed said they can “become discouraged” and “lonely” in ministry. Ironically, while working to create community for others sometimes pastors can easily miss experiencing it themselves.
Community is the context of the Church. Christians and church leaders need to read and engage their Bibles personally, but we also need to do so together with our faith community. In fact, an honest and reflective reading of the Bible will remind us repeatedly that the biblical call is one to authentic community. We need God. We need the Bible. And, we need each other.

**SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT STRENGTHENS A LEADER’S SENSE OF AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY & CONNECTION TO THE CHURCH.**

**REFLECT**

**Questions to Ask Yourself as a Leader:** Is my Bible reading and study a solely individual experience or do I regularly engage Bible study within authentic community? How so? What steps could I take to strengthen this in my life?

**Questions to Ask Your Team(s):** What are the “contexts” you create that welcome Bible engagement among those you serve? What connection do you see and sense, in this congregation, between our Bible engagement and our experience of authentic community?

**RESPOND**

**Engaging the Word Yourself** – Read through Acts 2:42-47 slowly and a few times. Also, consider the Seven Vital Signs of Spiritual Growth (above) and ask yourself: Could these be seen in my personal life? Are they visible and apparent within the congregation I serve? What are our strongest points? What would make these even stronger? What are our weak areas? How could they be corrected? Reflect prayerfully and journal your observations.

**Getting Others Engaged** – Take some time in a worship service or via an email to communicate to your congregation or team some Bible study strategies and ideas. Let them know more about some of the tools and practices you find the most helpful to experiencing Scripture Engagement in your life. Provide links to an online Bible and Bible study resources. The people who so frequently hear you teach and preach are more interested than you may know to find out some of your secrets and sources!
PRAY

Dear Lord, help me to draw deeply from your Word and the insights it contains. Open my mind and heart to not only read and study it, but to do so eagerly and consistently. Make me truly a person of your Word.

READ JOSHUA 1:6-9, CEV

_The LORD said:_

“Long ago I promised the ancestors of Israel that I would give this land to their descendants. So be strong and brave! Be careful to do everything my servant Moses taught you. Never stop reading The Book of the Law he gave you. Day and night you must think about what it says. If you obey it completely, you and Israel will be able to take this land.

“I’ve commanded you to be strong and brave. Don’t ever be afraid or discouraged! I am the Lord your God, and I will be there to help you wherever you go.”

Joshua is a Bible character who has brought encouragement and inspiration to countless leaders. His life and example is a vivid image of the challenging responsibilities of leadership. As leaders, you and I can identify with Joshua on many levels. Consider just a few:

- He was following a larger-than-life leader (for many of us, that is true).
- A group of God’s people were looking to him to guide them to the next place.
- He felt under-qualified for the challenge.
- His predecessor, though respected, had made some mistakes that he did not want to repeat.

The book of Joshua was written as a record of the Hebrew people. But, it was also recorded in order to inspire future leaders of God’s people to trust and obey his principles and laws. It does us well to take a few minutes to consider the mandates Joshua was given to guide him through one of the most momentous seasons of Jewish history.
Ironically, while we experience the phenomenal access to tools and resources that have come with the Information Age, there is one vital practice that we are missing for the most part. That is: thinking. Another word would be “meditate.” The fact is that we are so surrounded and saturated by information and communication tools that we are often on information overload. Our knowledge can easily become a million miles wide and only one inch deep.

Interestingly, when God advised this young leader, Joshua, on what it would take to be effective at leading his people to the next level, he told him that it was important to do two things: 1) “never stop reading The Book” 2) “Day and night … think … about what it says…”

I wonder: How much reading of the Bible are most Christians doing today? And, how much time are they taking to think about the Bible. When Billy Graham was asked, “If you could live your life and ministry over again, what is one thing you would do differently?” he responded without hesitation, “I would take more time to read and study the Bible. If I had done that, I think I would have been more effective.”

Now, although few would dare question whether or not Graham has been effective, how refreshing it is to hear a leader admit his need for more of God's Word. But, what are some simple yet satisfying ways to do more than just “read” the Bible? Here are a few approaches I have found helpful:

**Pray the Bible** – This is a simple practice you can incorporate into your times of Bible study. As a passage and the principles it contains open up to you, turn them into a prayer that you pray over your life, over your congregation or over your family. It is also helpful to write out this prayer and then pray it aloud. This practice brings a passion and soul-connection for the reader to the very words of God.

**Picture the Bible** – In particular, when you read a Bible story through a time or two, put your Bible down and open your imagination. Take some time to picture the story in your mind. Ask yourself: What might this scene have looked like? What might it have been like for you to be there? How might these characters have felt given the circumstances and what the Bible reveals about them? What were the characters’ views or viewpoints of this scene? What might God’s view of it have been?
Ponder the Bible – When Mary was first told that she would bear the Christ child, the Bible says she “kept thinking...and wondering about” these things (Luke 2:19). It implies that she “treasured these thoughts in her heart.” Meditating on the Bible is just that – thinking about it, about its words, about the significance of these words and about the implications of these words. The Word of God is meant to be carefully considered, to be treasured, to be reflected on, and to be pondered. Pondering the Bible and journaling can go hand in hand.

Practice the Bible – As you find biblical directives and principles regarding compassion, generosity, etc. lead your family or your team in practically obeying these through an act of service or compassionate ministry. The Bible can be considered from a spiritual perspective, but it can also be experienced with some measure of action and even a bit of physicality.

Whether praying, picturing, pondering or practicing the Bible, all of these are simple methods you, your family and your congregation can utilize in order to help you think about the Bible, to meditate on the Word of God. There are, of course, many other methods including the ancient Christian practice known as Lectio Divina.

Another temptation pastors face is that of pulling back in their personal Bible study and engagement. In fact, one ministry organization that counsels and rehabilitates ministers who have fallen into sexual sin or compromise (Emerge Ministries) has cited that one of the most common denominators among those who have fallen is admitting that their personal Bible study and prayer discipline had withered.

Consider this: If the people of God need the Word of God to live spiritually, then how much more do those who lead the people of God need it?

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT INVOLVES A LEADER’S CONSISTENT DEVOTION TO THE WORD OF GOD.

REFLECT
Questions to Ask Yourself as a Leader: Is my engagement with God and the Word of God as a leader passionate and consistent; or is it becoming utilitarian and irregular; more a “part of my job”? In what ways does the Word of God regularly inform my lifestyle, my decisions, my values and my leadership?

Questions to Ask Your Team(s): Why do you think God commanded Joshua to “never stop reading The Book” and to “day and night ... think about what it says”? What role or value does frequency play in our Bible engagement? Is infrequent Bible reading or study dysfunctional spiritually? How so?
RESPOND

Engaging the Word Yourself – *Practice Thinking About the Bible ... On Your Own.* Over the next four days engage one of the 4 Bible Meditation Practices (Pray, Picture, Ponder, and Practice) each day. As you read the Bible, engage it in a new manner by praying it, picturing it, pondering it and practicing it.

Getting Others Engaged – *Practice Thinking About the Bible ... With Your Team.* Over your next four staff meetings engage each one of the 4 Bible Meditation Practices as a group. You may want to facilitate these on your own or oversee the first one and delegate the other three to staff members.
PRAY
Heavenly Father, you have called me to not only live a life of faith, but also one of holiness that reflects your character. I am so often aware of how short I fall from your standard. As I read your Word cause it to purify my life, heart and mind from the ways of this fallen planet, and help me to embrace the powerful truths of your glorious Kingdom.

READ PSALM 119:6-16, CEV
“Thinking about your commands will keep me from doing some foolish thing.
I will do right and praise you by learning to respect your perfect laws.
I will obey all of them! Don’t turn your back on me.
Young people can live a clean life by obeying your word.
I worship you with all my heart.
Don’t let me walk away from your commands.
I treasure your word above all else;
it keeps me from sinning against you.
I praise you, Lord! Teach me your laws.
With my own mouth, I tell others the laws that you have spoken.
Obeying your instructions brings as much happiness as being rich.
I will study your teachings and follow your footsteps.
I will take pleasure in your laws and remember your words.”

Holiness begins in our hearts and minds. This passage (Ps. 119) makes that correlation quite clear. Paul taught in Romans that “if our minds are ruled by the Spirit, we will have life and peace” (Rom. 8:6). The psalmist here draws upon several terms of cognition including: “thinking,” “study,” “learning,” and “remember.” Practicing these disciplines will result in the Word of God producing holiness, fullness, and wholeness in our lives. We will do the right things (respect, obey, worship) and we will reap the rewards (happiness, pleasure).

The cultivation and preservation of holiness, then, in the life of the leader is connected to disciplines of the mind and heart. Right thinking begets righteous living. This is, of course,
not to say that we can earn our salvation. Yet, Paul does call upon us to “work with fear and trembling to discover what it really means to be saved” (Phil. 2:12).

How, then, can we enrich our thinking about the meditation upon Scripture?

Thinking About the Word of God – We need to read the Word of God and think about what these words mean and imply. This Psalm begins with “Thinking about your commands…” (v. 6). As we do so with the Scripture, our lives and our world will change.

Respecting the Word of God – This is also essential in order for the Word of God to have its rightful place in our lives and churches. “I will do right and praise you by learning to respect your perfect laws” (v. 7).

Obeying the Word of God; (the “Perfect Laws”) all of them – We are called to “Obey God’s message! Don’t fool yourselves by just listening to it” (James 1:22). “I will obey all of them” (Ps. 119:8a).

Treasuring the Word of God – When we as Christ-followers think and consider what the Word of God does for us, we will not just read it – we will treasure it. “I treasure your word above all else” (v. 11a).

Sharing the Word of God – Getting the Word of God into the lives, communities and nations around us requires action; it is news that must be told and a message that must be shared. As we do, people will become free and “you will be free” (John 8:36). “With my own mouth I tell others…” (v. 13a).

Delighting (Taking Pleasure) in the Word of God – God’s Word is not only verses to be read, it contains moments of pleasure and delight to be savored.

Studying the Word of God – Studying involves reading, thinking, respecting, and considering the Word of God with intentionality and focus. “I will study your teachings and follow your footsteps…” (v. 15)

The Word of God is not only right and true; or something to simply be obeyed. It is also truly beautiful; something to be admired and adored. In fact, regular reading and reflection on Scripture is the most effective catalyst in growing in Christ-likeness in people’s lives.

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT NURTURES GODLINESS & HOLINESS IN A LEADER’S LIFE.
REFLECT

Questions to Ask Yourself as a Leader: As a leader, which am I doing more often: keeping (or hiding) parts of myself from God and his Word, or hiding God's Word within my heart? As I ponder passages of Scripture, am I pondering my faithful obedience to them in lifestyle as much as their potential to become a part of my sermons? When was the last time I poured over a passage of Scripture and really thought about it?

Questions to Ask Your Team(s): How much do you think the people we serve in this church genuinely think about Scripture? What place of prominence does it hold in our minds and our common conversation? As we talk with each other about sports, the weather, our families, and work, how much do you hear the themes and values of the Bible emerging? Is the Bible affecting holiness among us? What could we do to more fully treasure the Word of God in our lives and within this church?

RESPOND

Engaging the Word Yourself – Take some time today to journal on the subject of holiness. The psalmist writes that we “can live a clean life by obeying your word” (v. 9). In light of the passage from Psalm 119 (above) describe some of the characteristics and behaviors of holiness. Are they vital today? What role does holiness play in your, your faith and your activities?

Getting Others Engaged – With your team or small group take some time to read verses that speak of the holiness of God. Discuss the subject using these questions: What does it mean to be holy? How do you feel about the fact that God says, “I am the holy God and you must be holy too” (1 Peter 1:16)? Have we overlooked the theme of holiness in the church today? How so? Why?
DAY SIX

LEAD WHERE YOU ARE
FROM YOUR CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD.

PRAY

Dear Lord, you are my rock and salvation. You, O Lord, are my confidence. Help me to lean the weight of my trust and dependency fully upon you and the power of your Word. Open my eyes to see the incomparable power available to me and the people of God through your Spirit and your Word.

READ 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17, CEV

“Keep on being faithful to what you were taught and to what you believed. After all, you know who taught you these things. Since childhood, you have known the Holy Scriptures that are able to make you wise enough to have faith in Christ Jesus and be saved. Everything in the Scriptures is God’s Word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live. The Scriptures train God’s servants to do all kinds of good deeds.”

A great source of encouragement to pastors and church leaders is found in two New Testament books in particular, 1st and 2nd Timothy. There is such a need for more mentoring and discipling of leaders (and followers) in today’s church. We all need a “Paul” (i.e., an older mentor to speak into our life). We all need a “Timothy” (i.e., a younger protégé to pour into from our own lives and experiences). The church needs to be generationally linked in this age of collaboration. But what was Paul’s primary focus in his directives to the young pastor of the Church at Ephesus, Timothy? Arguably it is the paramount area of teaching and preaching the Word of God. Over 30 times in his short letters, Paul uses the words “preach,” “teaching,” “train,” “Scripture” and “Word of God.” Clearly Paul is using his affirmations and directives in these two letters not only to guide this disciple-pastor, but to build his confidence in the Word of God.

If you could sit across from Paul at a table and have him instruct you as growing pastors in the art of gaining confidence in the Word of God, here are a few things he would likely say with urgency:
“GROW IN IT PERSONALLY!” – Our confidence in God’s Word as followers (and as leaders) comes from our consistent exposure to it. Clearly, Timothy was taught the Scripture “since childhood” (v. 15a). His home was full of God’s Word. It is difficult to imagine a more important goal to have as a pastor than filling your life, your home and your church with the Bible, and training your congregation to do the same.

“UNDERSTAND IT DEEPLY!” – Our confidence in God’s Word increases as we recognize its authority. Paul was unequivocal about his conviction that the Scripture is thoroughly authoritative. “Everything in the Scriptures is God’s Word” (v. 16). He wanted to ensure that the leader who was tending to the congregation he planted in the influential city of Ephesus had a clear respect for the authority of Scripture. In your congregation, the church will be as certain of the Word of God as is their leader.

“COMMUNICATE IT BOLDLY!” – Our confidence in God’s Word is strengthened when we find that it is so useful. It isn’t just words we read, but directives that we follow, obey and relay that prove so potent. For Paul, ministry flowed out of God’s Word. Ministry was simply doing what God says we are to do. At one point Paul says plainly and simply to Timothy: “Preach God’s message” (2 Tim. 4:2).

“WATCH IT WORK IN PEOPLE’S LIVES!” – Our confidence in God’s Word is enhanced every time we observe the work it accomplishes in people’s lives. Paul said: “The Scriptures train God’s servants to do all kinds of good deeds” (v. 17). Paul was speaking from experience, of course. He had by now traveled extensively to spread the Word. From town to town, he had watched the Word of God work wonders – miracles, healings, life-change, transformations of all kinds. In fact, Paul was now writing not only about how the Scripture could train people to “do all kinds of good deeds”; he was writing to someone who was living proof of this – Timothy! Paul’s preaching was more than notes on papyrus; it was becoming life in the form of a developing young leader.

When it comes to training and discipleship, an old saying comes to mind: “I hear – I forget; I see – I remember; I do – I understand.” The principle is clear: words merely heard are soon forgotten, but words lived out and practiced change us forever. That quote is not a passage from Scripture, but it does contain a truth that is essentially biblical. Sometimes our Christianity can be so platform or podium oriented that we miss the purpose of getting the Word of God into the practical lives of our hearers. Discipleship requires that we not only see the Bible as something to read, but as God’s Word to experience, live and obey. In fact, the first chapter of Acts says, “I ... wrote to you about all that Jesus did and taught ...” (Acts 1:1)

According to Paul, as ministers, the Scripture is not just something we read but something we use to affect the lives of people (v. 16). He lists at least four ways in which this impact occurs:
• **You Teach People the Word of God** – We use the Scripture to vividly describe the path of God to our congregations and community.

• **You Help People with the Word of God** – We communicate the Word of God in order to restore people to the path of God. More than six out of every ten frequent Bible readers feel their outlook on life has become more positive as a result of their Bible-reading experience in the past month (62% say this “completely” describes their experience) and that they are more willing to engage in their faith (61%) (*from ABS/Barna Group State of the Bible Survey, 2011*).

• **You Correct People by the Word of God** – We use the Bible to lovingly confront people when they stray from the path of God.

• **You Show People How to Live in the Word of God** – We practice the Scripture in order to model the path of God.

Pastors have all heard the well-known adage, “Practice what you preach,” but one leader I heard turned it around and asked: “What would our sermons be like if we only PREACHED what we PRACTICED?” Ouch! That struck a chord I would not soon forget. I’m still thinking about that one. If we practiced this, our sermons may be shorter. It reminds me that the Word of God is much more than words that come through my mouth via a sermon or teaching; they are to be character that is displayed through the actions and values of my every moment.

As it turns out, the Bible is not just information; it is a transformational tool we use to change lives. Within the pages of Scripture the Word of God is described as: a “sword,” a “hammer,” a “lamp,” a “light,” a “seed,” and a “fire.” It is so powerful it pierces, pounds, brightens, directs, grows and burns within our souls. The Bible is forceful.

**SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT BRINGS POWERFUL LIFE CHANGE TO LEADERS, CONGREGATIONS & COMMUNITIES.**

**REFLECT**

Questions to Ask Yourself as a Leader: Do you read and study the Bible alone or in community with others? Who is your “Paul”? Who is investing into your life and faith? Who is your “Timothy”? Into whose life are you intentionally investing yourself? What would it take for you to cultivate a solid mentor or protégé in your life? How might it change your faith experience?
Questions to Ask Your Team(s): Is Bible study primarily an individual or a community experience in this church? What role has discipleship played in your faith? What role does it have in your life today? Who is investing into your life and into whose life are you investing? Is our congregation truly linked generationally? How might this be improved?

RESPOND
Engaging the Word Yourself – Read through 1 & 2 Timothy and make a list of all of the leadership advice that Paul gave to Timothy.

Getting Others Engaged – Host a Generations Month that involves having several Bible study and fellowship events in which you intentionally put people into groups that are intergenerational. Spark discussions around the Word of God and create settings in which the younger can learn from the older (cf., Titus 2:4).
DAY SEVEN

LEAD WHERE YOU ARE
HUMBLY AND FOR THE GLORY OF GOD,
DESPITE THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE.

PRAY
Great God and King, I am nothing without you. Help me to see you do great things in and through my life, but as a leader help me to keep my ego and tendency towards pride in check. Clothe me with humility and deep dependency upon you, your Spirit and your Word, O Lord.

READ 1 PETER 5:1-6, CEV
“Church leaders, I am writing to encourage you. I too am a leader, as well as a witness to Christ’s suffering, and I will share in his glory when it is shown to us. Just as shepherds watch over their sheep, you must watch over everyone God has placed in your care. Do it willingly in order to please God, and not simply because you think you must. Let it be something you want to do, instead of something you do merely to make money. Don’t be bossy to those people who are in your care, but set an example for them. Then when Christ the Chief Shepherd returns, you will be given a crown that will never lose its glory. All of you young people should obey your elders. In fact, everyone should be humble toward everyone else. The Scriptures say, ‘God opposes proud people, but he helps everyone who is humble.’ Be humble in the presence of God’s mighty power, and he will honor you when the time comes.”

Why do I lead? What is my motive? These are two important questions to consider periodically as a pastor and church leader. Peter had his motives checked more than once by Christ during his tutorials as a young disciple. He exhibited some of the same weaknesses that we face as we grow and develop as leaders, including: impulsiveness (cf., John 18:10), overconfidence (cf., Mark 14:29), envy (cf., John 21:20-22) and controlling tendencies (cf., John 13:8). By the time he wrote his first letter he was no doubt a man familiar with brokenness and humility; not only a leader, but a “broken-in” leader. Today’s pastors or leaders are wise to consider Peter’s advice regarding leadership motivations.

The book of First Peter opens by establishing the fact that all believers (leaders included) will suffer difficulties and challenges. He goes on to say that we should learn to view such “opportunities” with an attitude of joyful expectation; to trust that God will use them to help spur and reveal our growth. The question Peter seeks to answer in this passage is this: Why should a pastor or church leader be willing to suffer? His answer: Because of the reward God
has promised. Before he reveals that reward, however, he taps into this all important area of leadership motivation.

After deconstructing false (and ungodly) motivations for leadership, Peter sets out to paint a picture of what good and godly leadership looks like. He chooses the metaphor of a good shepherd as Christ used in John 10. He digs deeply into the core of a leader’s motivation and calls them to not just fill a leadership slot, not simply hold a leadership title or take on a leadership office, but to “be shepherds of God’s flock.”

“Just as shepherds watch over their sheep, you must watch over everyone God has placed in your care....” (1 Peter 5:2a)

Peter describes the motivations of a true godly leader. He says such a person leads:

- Not out of the pressures (of man). . .but out of obedience (to God).
  “…Do it willingly in order to please God, and not simply because you think you must.” (1 Peter 5:2b)

- Not for the profit (from man). . .but as a servant (of God).
  “…Let it be something you want to do, instead of something you do merely to make money.” (1 Peter 5:2b)

- Not after the power (over man). . .but for the glory (of God).
  “Don’t be bossy to those people who are in your care, but set an example for them. Then when Christ the Chief Shepherd returns, you will be given a crown that will never lose its glory.” (1 Peter 5:3-4)

One question worth asking at this point is this: What relationship do “pressures,” “profit” and “power” have? Is there a common denominator? C.S. Lewis would say there is—PRIDE. Here’s how he describes it in Mere Christianity:

“Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind... [and] Pride is essentially competitive – by its very nature ... Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone.”
One of the best ways to keep ourselves and the people we serve humble is to keep our eyes, hearts and minds focused on the Word of God. It not only purifies but also humbles us. As leaders, our duty is to help people turn away from pride and stay engaged in the Word of God.

Peter was a man not at all unfamiliar with ego, self-sufficiency and the undesirable residue of pride. He knew and saw the motivations of pressure, power and profit in its various forms. And yet, he was drawn back to the humble and strong image of the leader as shepherd, the preferred model of Christ. The hand that had once wielded a sword and cut off a servant’s ear in order to “protect” Christ traded his self-assertion and his sword for a shepherd’s staff and, so it seems by his counsel here, a shepherd’s heart.

**SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT MAGNIFIES A LEADER’S VIEW OF GOD & HUMBLES THEIR VIEW OF THEMSELVES.**

**REFLECT**

**Questions to Ask Yourself as a Leader:** What is my motive for leading? Do I sometimes lead for the power? Out of a sense of duress or pressure? Or, for the profit it brings me? Does leadership tend to humble me or make me prideful?

**Questions to Ask Your Team(s):** What motivates you to lead? What is it in a leader that motivates you to follow? What were Jesus’ motivations for leading? At what times in his ministry did those motivations show up the most?

**RESPOND**

**Engaging the Word Yourself** – Take some time to journal over this: Peter borrowed a metaphor for leadership that Jesus initially taught – that of the leader as shepherd. What is it about a shepherd that makes this role so fitting an example of godly leadership? Which of these characteristic do you find the easiest to emulate? Which is the most difficult? Why?

**Getting Others Engaged** – In your small group or on your team, discuss this question: In Matthew 9.36 it says that when Jesus saw the people, he was moved with compassion because he saw them “like sheep without a shepherd.” In what ways do the people in our congregation and community appear the same way today? To what extent do we see them the way God sees them? How could our view be improved?
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