2 Timothy 2:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.
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Session 1: Finding Your Place on the Wall

“I am your servant; impart to me understanding so that I may fully grasp the depths of your statutes.” - Psalm 119:125

Welcome

A. The call to follow Christ is the call to lead.

B. Leadership is influence (in either direction).

C. What qualities define a good leader?

1. Worldly: Arrows in

2. Godly: Arrows out (vertical and horizontal)

Jesus’ Model for Leadership Development

1. Choose: The Lord chose to call you into a position of leadership through Holy Yoga. Your choice is whether or not you obey. Obedience can’t be preferential or partial to the timing or circumstances. All in is the only option. Keep in mind God knows your personal limitations and can accomplish anything without you, but He desires to bless you through your obedience, despite the costs. As Brennan Manning says, the ordinary is extraordinary. Your students need you to be you.

"Everything has already been decided. It was known long ago what each person would be. So there’s no use arguing with God about your destiny.”
- Ecclesiastes 6:10

2. Invest: Holy Yoga desires to help you develop your leadership skills by supporting you, praying for you, educating you and otherwise equipping you to be disciples as well as leaders in your communities (including your home, workplace, social circles, etc.). However, the responsibility to grow rests on your cooperation with the Lord and effective management/stewardship of your resources and opportunities. If it’s a “have to,” it won’t happen. If it’s a “get to,” God will give to you abundantly through the challenges you will inevitably face.

3. Release: Jesus didn’t release His disciples expecting them to “perform,” but to have faith and operate from the power of the Holy Spirit - from a platform of grace. Nehemiah 1:11 reminds us that release doesn’t equate to coercing or creating our own agenda, but waiting to receive a vision from God and realizing that it can only be accomplished through Him and by Him.
Nehemiah: Three Portraits of a Leader

Nehemiah is unusual in holding three distinct but highly influential offices. We can learn from both his example in each role, as well as his movement from one position to the next.

A. **Cupbearer**: ministering outside the “church” (in many cases to just one)
   
   Nehemiah 1:2
   
   1 Peter 2:11-17

B. **Builder**: ministering alongside the “church”
   
   Nehemiah 2:17-20

C. **Governor**: ministering over the “church” (from several to multitudes)
   
   Nehemiah 8:9 - Individual roles to corporate celebration, study, repentance, worship and management of the city.

Servant Leadership: Cultivating a Servant’s Heart

**What it is**: Servant Leadership is influencing, equipping and empowering people to accomplish God’s purpose and plan. It is serving others unselfishly while influencing and empowering them to grow in a Christ-directed, purposeful direction. Finally, it is leading with the recognition that the same propensity to sin exists in our own hearts, alongside deep wounds and suffering, as opposed to believing we are somehow “above” the broken condition of humanity.

**What it is not**: Servant Leadership is not manipulation, exploitation or personal agendas which are all too common today in the business world and were in Jesus’ time. Dr. Richard J. Krejcir writes that, “Rotten leadership is more destructive than a legion of demons, as it corrupts godly principles and displays a skewed understanding of our call to follow Christ. It seeks its own, and not the Word. Being a servant leader is never a force of personality; it is earning that respect because you love and care” (www.intotheyword.org).

**Holy Yoga’s definition of Servant Leadership**

- Willingness - obedience: 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Peter 1:13-16
- Going Low - humility: 1 Peter 5:5-7
- Doing it Afraid - courage: 1 Peter 5:8-11 (fight, flee or stand firm in your faith)
Session 1: Finding Your Place on the Wall

- Recognizing brokenness - repentance: Neh. 1:6, 9:1

- Leading with a Limp - “To find life you have to lose it. To broaden your effectiveness, you have to narrow your focus. To grow in confidence, connectedness and success, you have to admit for all to hear that you are a failure. Few leaders operate out of confidence built on anything but the crumbling foundation of arrogance. Few know peace that is not dependent on performance. Few exercise freedom and creativity that are not bound to conventionality. And few possess the capacity to care for people that is not shadowed by either the urge to please others or to knuckle under the tyranny of should. Take a different path. As an act of leadership, consider the risk of giving up your life through facing, naming and bearing your weaknesses, and imagine the paradoxical yet promised benefits. Let’s walk into that reality, but it’s imperative to remember that all movement into reality requires enormous faith” (p. 7-8).

- Giving God credit for any and all success - gratitude and celebration: Neh. 8:10

Additional Qualities to Cultivate
The Bible is full of examples of leaders who exemplify additional traits that God uses to lead His people.

1. Optimism: David (“What’s next?” vs. “Why me?”)
Because David believed that God would be in any and every situation/decision he faced, he stepped outside of his comfort zone to act in greatness and love, even in the bleakest of circumstances, including the terminal illness of his newborn son (2 Samuel). We would do well to adopt the following into our vocabulary in preaching to ourselves and those we lead/influence:

   - “Who knows? God might be merciful.”
   - “Who knows? God might use His power on my behalf.”
   - “Who knows? God might surprise me with something supernatural.”

2. Love: Jonathan
I think this relates particularly to our treatment of each other, as fellow leaders. Jonathan never viewed David as a threat to his own inheritance - in fact, he gave his brother his heart. Let’s commit to never using people to achieve power/recognition, nor feel threatened by a sister or brother whose gifts seem to trump our own. The acid test of discipleship is love. Learning to love without defense, pretense or strings attached is the true test of a Godly leader.

3. Integrity: Joseph
Despite Joseph’s rapid rise to immeasurable success and power, he finished the race without compromising his beliefs or character. His moral authority was born of a surrendered heart of recognition of his stewardship. We are all “prone to wander,” and must take a daily inventory of our heart and mind to remain standing upright and walking humbly with our God.
4. Wisdom: Solomon
Without God’s wisdom, we remain the blind leading the blind. Alone, we are nothing. Studying Solomon’s writing and other scriptures, conversing with other believers on difficult decisions and praying for the Holy Spirit’s guidance are essential practices for leaders and disciples.

5. Emotional Authenticity: Jeremiah
By all worldly accounts, Jeremiah’s ministry was a disaster. He never saw “success,” yet his influence reaches to eternity. His ability to remain focused was due in large part to his candidness with God, who heard his cries of frustration and disappointment, and replaced them with hope and healing. Don’t be afraid to bring the Lord your heartbreaks, fears and failures - and to share them with each other. Leaders perhaps know more than anyone loneliness and letdown, yet must move through if their ministry is to continue. Lamentations 3:22-23 - “For your compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

6. Courage: Esther
As a woman chosen more for her beauty than her skills, Esther’s bravery is that much more powerful and convincing of God’s provision and prompting. The quintessential example of servant leadership, she risked her life to save her people from a dangerous king. As a leader there will be many circumstances when you are in a position where you need to act, often immediately, in a role outside of your gifting. While it sounds contradictory, this is what God has sowed in you to do - although you will have to learn to do it “afraid.”

7. Intensity: Paul
Leaders, by nature, don’t do things half-way. Paul exemplifies total commitment of mind, body and spirit, which raised the bar and motivation of those he touched. Your focus, commitment to excellence, passion for Jesus and commitment to the HY family will elevate your students’ expectations of themselves and subsequent performance of their own role in the kingdom. 1 Cor. 9:24.

8. Boldness: Peter
Peter’s personality bordered on impetuous, yet his gift of speaking out, despite his lack of schooling, impacted others in a powerful way. Boldness trumps knowledge in effectiveness!

9. Patience: Nehemiah
In Nehemiah 1:11, we witness a servant’s heart willing to mourn alongside his suffering countrymen while he waits for the Lord’s plan to unfold. It’s often easier to take action whether to make others feel more comfortable or appear trustworthy and successful in front of our students, families and friends. Waiting on the Lord, though, is a powerful witness, particularly in looking back and how God effected His perfect will.
We often mistakenly assume that anger is the opposite of love. Not true. Hatred is the opposite of love and, unchecked, it slips into apathy which is the most dangerous and damaging of all emotions to the soul. Nehemiah’s anger in 4:4 is on God’s behalf, which he expresses, then uses, to fuel both determination and unity in his “team” (4:6). In 5:6 Nehemiah is angry on behalf of those he leads - after prayer and reflection, he acts in God’s will to amend the unjust situation. Righteous anger is always concerned with another’s wellbeing. He leads, and “a great many people” came to witness which undoubtedly glorified God (5:7).

In Psalm 7 it says that evil “inflames” God’s anger, but He defends the righteous. Anger, however, should not be used by us a weapon - lashing out in anger is not godly, but bringing it to Lord and asking for justice and deliverance from that which angers most certainly is.

Understanding Stewardship: Whose ministry is it anyway?
Nehemiah 5

In godly politics, “governors” are not elected without first proving themselves as cupbearers and builders. Each of us is uniquely placed in our personal lives and ministries to manage the affairs of God’s kingdom. This is stewardship, and it plays a monumental role in the life of a leader committed to God’s plans and purposes.

A. Definitions
1. The position and duties of a steward, a person who acts as the surrogate of another or others, especially by managing property, financial affairs, an estate, etc.
2. The responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving.

Stewardship was referred to often by Jesus as particularly relevant to leaders in His church. While stewards were responsible for administering and managing the “business” of their overlord’s affairs, the same “shrewdness” and “adeptness” is required of those managing kingdom affairs. Two parables - in particular, the parable of the talents and the pounds - assume promotion in the work of God. He chooses those that are hard-working and willing to serve and sacrifice, yet not always successful, to groom into His greatest assets on earth. Consider:

- Numbers 11:28 - Joshua succeeded Moses only after proving himself since youth as his assistant.
- 1 Samuel 3:5 - Samuel first served Eli hand and foot before God called him to be prophet and judge.
- 1 Samuel 17:17-19, Psalm 78:70-72 - David served Jesse in the field before God called him to lead His people.
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- 1 Kings 19:21, 2 Kings 3:11 - Elisha long served Elijah before rising to the role of prophet.

- Philippians 2:22 - Timothy served under Paul before being entrusted with a ministry of his own.

   1. Luke 16:10 - The man who is faithful in small things can be expected to handle big things.

   2. Luke 16:11 - A man who is faithful in handling material things can be trusted to handle spiritual things.

   3. Luke 16:12 - A man who is faithful in what belongs to someone else can be trusted to with his own.

C. Characteristics of a Steward
   Similar to the traits of spiritual leaders, the Biblical profile of stewardship requires certain ethical principles and attributes to be cultivated through prayer, obedience, study and experience.
   - Trust: 1 Cor. 4:2 - God Himself has entrusted you with a ministry.

   - Ability: Hebrews 13:20-21 - You are moving into leadership already equipped with the spiritual and natural gifts God has given you. You do not come empty-handed!

   - Responsibility: Acts 6:3 - You have accepted your calling at Holy Yoga with appropriate respect and commitment to the weight of your role.

   - Accountability: Luke 12:42 - You are being asked much, but will be given much as well by the Holy Yoga community, your church, mentors, as well as the ultimate source of support, the Holy Spirit.
Application: Throughout the course of this training, prayerfully consider what God is asking of you in terms of commitment, sacrifice and service as it pertains to your unique personal and ministry life. Write down initial thoughts, but be prepared to circle back and revisit following Session 9.

A. Time: Establishing your priorities.

B. Talent: Building the body through your spiritual gifts.

C. Treasure: What are you working for?

Promotion in God’s Economy

Worldly promotion: Advancement in rank or position. Usually accompanied by increased pay or compensation.

Biblical promotion: Becoming the person God designs you to be and accomplishing the things God desires you accomplish.

1 Peter 5: 1-3 (MSG): “I have a special concern for you church leaders. I know what it’s like to be a leader, in on Christ’s sufferings as well as the coming glory. Here’s my concern: that you care for God’s flock with all the diligence of a shepherd. Not because you have to, but because you want to please God. Not calculating what you can get out of it, but acting spontaneously. Not bossily telling others what to do, but tenderly showing them the way.”

Nehemiah 5:14-19 - The importance of acceptance.

Nehemiah never sought a promotion, only to do God’s will. His patience and prayer life, in addition to his excellence in holding each “office” demonstrate how God can use a willing and obedient leader to his full potential.
**Session 1: Finding Your Place on the Wall**

**Being a Good Steward of Success**
Redefining success:

1. Greatest joy is seeing Jesus planted in a heart.

2. Greatest ambition is teaching students to exceed what you, the teacher, are able to accomplish - physically (yoga) and spiritually (sharing the gospel).

1 Peter 1:13-16: “...be holy because I am holy.”

**Conclusion**
Leaders act, but they never act alone. God has equipped you with the ability to think on your feet, make decisions quickly and act in any capacity necessary to accomplish what needs to be done. He has provided the Holy Spirit for strength, knowledge and wisdom and the Holy Yoga team as a resource. **He desires to replace self-confidence with Holy Confidence.** In 1 Thessalonians 2:2 Paul writes that “God gave us the courage to declare His Good News to you boldly, even though we were surrounded by many who opposed us.” At times, you will be asked to risk your reputation, status and security. That’s the call - that’s what’s required of you.
Homework

1. Look up the following Biblical examples of servant leadership:
   - 1 Kings 3:9 (Solomon)
   - Luke 22:25-28 (Jesus to His disciples)
   - Matthew 25:21 (Parable of the talents)
   - Mark 9:33-37 (To be first is to be last)
   - John 5:19
   - Philippians 1:1
   - 1 Timothy 3:1-5
   - 2 Timothy 2:24
   - Hebrews 13:17

2. Answer the following questions:
   What leadership quality is God calling you to cultivate? Pray for opportunities to get uncomfortable in exercising these new “muscles.”

   Which Biblical leader can you relate to the most? Why?

   How do you define success for your ministry? What are three ways that your actions reflect your desire to succeed?

3. Review Chapter 4 “It’s Failing That Matters” from Leading with a Limp.
What are your expectations concerning leadership?

Counting the Cost: Six Realities of Leadership

A. Fear

Review Leading with a Limp, pp. 61-62:

Different faces of fear
1. Giants in the Promised Land (legitimate fears):
   Numbers 13

2. Bears in the Woods (triggers from past experiences):
   Nehemiah 4:10-12

3. Hurricanes on the Horizon (anxiety-driven fears):
   Nehemiah 6:10 - fear leads to sin

Common fears
1. Fear of Failure
   Antidote: dismantle your shortcomings in front of those you lead

2. Fear of Success
   Antidote: Succeed and give the glory to God. Trust in His ability to keep you humble!

3. Fear of Sacrifice
   Antidote: Give more of yourself than you want to or think you are capable of.

4. Fear of Rejection
   Antidote: “Freely assent to the mystery of our belovedness and accept our core identity as Abba’s child,” (Abba’s Child, p. 134).

Others?
B. Opposition and Betrayal

Throughout the Bible are stories of leaders enduring both opposition and betrayal, our Lord included. Allender writes that in either case, “the wound initially feels the same, and the scars remain even when there is confession and reconciliation” (pgs. 32-33). Leading Holy Yoga has proven to invite both - but those instructors who are prepared for the inevitability of opposition and betrayal and have the tools to face it, not only build a stronger ministry, but one that is a witness to God’s power and provision.

1. Four Truths
   a. Jesus experienced both.
   b. Expect it in proportion to your success.
   c. Sometimes intensified opposition calls for intensified response.
      Nehemiah 4:9: “But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night.”
   d. The only option is to carry on. Nehemiah 4:6: “So we built the wall.”

2. Outside the Walls: Opposed by the world and its ways
   a. Learn to recognize it.
      i. Intimidation/fear: Nehemiah 4
      ii. Lies/manipulation: Nehemiah 6
      iii. Criticism: Nehemiah 4:3 - “What they are building - if even a fox climbed up on it, he would breakdown their wall of stones!”
   b. Stay alert. Nehemiah 4:21-23: “So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out…Neither I nor my brothers nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water.”
   c. Learn to wait. Psalm 38
   d. Expect to overcome it. Nehemiah 4:14: “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”

Nehemiah 6:15-16: “So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in the fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.”
3. **Inside the walls: Betrayed by those who have your back**
   a. Abandonment or abuse
   b. Fearlessness and independence - the trap of self-protection
   c. Thick skin and a soft heart
   d. Practicing gratitude

**Inspiration to Endure**
1 Peter 4: 7-19

**C. Discouragement: Opposition from the Enemy**

Discouragement is the byproduct of opposition, but not necessarily opposition from the world. The enemy is far more insidious in blocking your kingdom energy. He knows exactly what buttons to push to discourage you, whether it’s one of the many faces of fear, a waiting period or lack of community. It may come from those who love you the most, your own friends and family if they fear the opposition. What are those buttons? Consider what you rely on for success in your ministry - what makes you feel capable, courageous and confident: Is it a full class schedule? A beautiful space? Lots of extra time to prepare? How about your home life? Is it enough sleep? An intense training schedule that keeps you in top shape? Healthy, happy kids? The following verses offer a scriptural approach to opposition:

1 Peter 3:8-17

Exodus 14:1-4

Do not be dismayed by “Soul Trouble.” The Bible promises in Christ that we will find “endless energy and boundless strength” if we put our hope in Christ and find our identity in Him alone - not our certifications, class size, appearance, ability or even past accomplishments. Remember, too, that discouragement cannot be overcome alone. Share openly your feelings knowing that there is no condemnation in Christ (Romans 8), no failure in spiritual fatigue and that your feelings are normal. I love the honesty of the passage from Lessons to My Students by Charles Haddon Spurgeon (from A Guide to Prayer, page 407 - emailed separately).

**A. Complexity**

1. God’s plan becomes completely clear only from the vantage point of heaven.

2. “I don’t know” versus “I don’t want to know (or act).”

3. Dancing with the chaos: “When we do attempt to impose order and control the situation, all we get is new disorder” (Leading with a Limp, p. 93).
What, then, is the antidote to complexity? The Holy Spirit:

James 1:1-8 - Read

Psalm 25:12 - “Those who fear the Lord will be revealed the way through the dark.”

E. Loneliness

1. Leaders don’t get to be “normal.” Any attempts at normalcy only exacerbate the distance.

Brennan Manning writes that, “The one great passion in Jesus’ life was His Father. He carried a secret in His heart that made Him great and lonely. The four evangelists do not spare us the brutal details of the losses Jesus suffered for the sake of integrity, the price He paid for fidelity to His passion, His person, and His mission.” We, too, face what Johannes Metz called, “The poverty of uniqueness,” defined by Manning as, “the call of Jesus to stand utterly alone when the only alternative is to cut a deal at the price of one’s integrity. It is a lonely yes to the whispers of our true self, a clinging to our core identity when companionship and community support are withheld” (Abba’s Child, p. 136).

2. Leaders are privileged with classified information, and exempt from small talk.

3. Leaders must put the needs of God’s Kingdom before friendships and alliances.

What then, is the antidote to loneliness?

- Tears and delight!! (Leading with a Limp, p. 123)
- Standing alone with Christ:

“The measure of our depth-awareness of Christ’s present riseness is our capacity to stand up for the truth and sustain the disapproval of significant others. An increasing passion for truth evokes a growing indifference to public opinion and to what people say or think. We can no longer drift with the crowd or echo the opinions of others. The inner voice, ‘Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid,’ assures that our security rests in having no security. When we stand on our own two feet and claim responsibility for our unique self, we are growing in personal autonomy, fortitude, and freedom from the bondage of human approval” (Abba’s Child, p. 137).
F. Failure

“Failure and loss as a leader are as inevitable as the rising and setting of the sun.”
- Leading with a Limp

1. God’s fondness for rebels and fools

2. Weakness is strength

3. From chaos to cohesion

The enemy is lurking all around. The closer we get to success in God’s economy, the more opposition we will experience. It’s essential to invite others into keeping one hand on the wall and the other on a weapon, the primary one being prayer. Nehemiah put swords in the hands of half his team, while they carried on God’s work with the other. Ask trusted friends, ministry partners and students to don the armor of God with you and stand firm in faith that Christ has already overcome and provided victory for the mission He has called you to.

Another essential weapon is the knowledge that opposition disintegrates in the face of success! When God completes His work, and He will, despite our fears and failures (Swindoll, p. 72), He will get the glory which will not only dim, but defeat the enemy that once stood so tall and strong.

Glory: The Leader’s Reward

Romans 8:17

“Glory is compelling. The more we taste, the deeper its hook in our souls and the harder it is to dislodge the hook and flee from leadership. With all the suffering and struggle in leading others, why would we not bolt? For one reason: God pours out enough of His presence to keep us hooked. And God allures us to the point we want to know how the next episode of the story will turn out. God is playing out His plot, and reluctant and limping servants, while being humbled as leaders, are lifted up to see his glory” (Leading with a Limp, p. 36).

Glory, however, can also be one of the most prevalent temptations leader’s face, leading to pride and collapse. Our next session, “The Idolatry of Leadership,” brings us face to face with our very human desires to be relevant, spectacular and powerful.
Session 2: Prepared to do Battle

Homework

1. Based on the “Realities of Leadership” listed above, what has been your experience in leadership? Is there one that stands out as particularly defining of your ministry to date? Spend 30 minutes journaling your response. Please be prepared to share with your small group.

2. Read 2 Corinthians. What are the most important leadership lessons for you offered through Paul's example?

3. What is your greatest fear related to leadership?

4. Review Swindoll’s section on Input versus Insight (Hand Me Another Brick, pp. 150 to 158). Make your daily prayer this week a relinquishing of your will in leadership and in life: “Lord, take over. Nothing in my life is private and I’m not proud. Here are the keys.”
Part 1: Setting the Stage

A. Definition of Terms

1. Leadership - the position or function of a leader, a person who guides or directs a group. - Romans 12:6-8 *proistēmi* to set or place before to be set over. To be over, to be a protector or guardian. To give aid, to care for, give attention to profess honest occupations.

2. Christian - Followers of Christ. Christ is teacher. 3 times in the NT. Term given by opposition to Christ as Christians would always refer to themselves as saints or brethren.

3. Idolatry - 1 Cor.10:14 *eidōlolatria* The worship of false gods, idolatry, of the formal sacrificial feats held in honor of false gods, In the plural, the vices springing from idolatry and peculiar to it.


B. Cultural Climate: Enlightenment, entitlement, lack of reverence for authority, virtues.

C. Why bother? We have a responsibility to the Lord in response to His ordering our lives.

“Character is formed by the thousand little choices one makes. The thousand little choices form people who are able to bring God’s order to a world full of chaos.” - N.T. Wright

D. God’s First Love 1 John 4:19.

“The unconditional and unlimited love of God is God’s first love. The love that often leaves us doubtful, frustrated, angry and resentful is the second love, that is to say the affirmation, affection, sympathy, encouragement and support we get from our parents, teachers, spouses and friends. We all know how limited, broken and very fragile that love is. Behind the many expressions of this second love there is always the chance of rejection, withdrawal, punishment, blackmail, violence and even hatred. Often beneath the pleasantries of daily life there are many gaping wounds that carry such names as abandonment, betrayal, rejection, rupture and loss. These are all the shadow side of the second love and reveal the darkness that never completely leaves the human heart.

The RADICAL GOOD NEWS is that the second love is only a broken reflection of the first love and that the first love is offered to us by a God in whom there are no shadows. Jesus’ heart is the incarnation of the shadow-free first love. From His heart flow streams of living water (John 7:37-38 and Matthew 11:28-29). From that heart come the words “Do you love me?” KNOWING THE HEART OF JESUS AND LOVING HIM ARE THE SAME THING. The knowledge of Jesus’ heart is knowledge of the heart. And when we live in the world with that knowledge, we can do nothing other than bring healing, reconciliation, new life and hope where ever we go. The desire to be relevant, successful and powerful will gradually disappear and our only desire will be to say with our whole beings to our brothers and sisters of the human race “…you are loved. There is no reason to be afraid. In love, God created your inmost self and knit you together in your mother’s womb. Fear not, for you are love.” - Henri Nowen, In the Name of Jesus
Session 3: Idolatry of Leadership

E. Appropriate attachment and non-attachment

F. Misplaced Authority We are created to worship. In our humanity, we fall prey to either becoming someone’s Jesus or making someone our Jesus.

G. Temptation “The devil tempts, that he may deceive, but God suffers (allows) us to be tempted to try us. Temptation is our trial of sincerity.” - Thomas Watson

How are we tempted? Lusts and Satan. 1 Corinthians 10:9 and James 1:12-16

Part 2: Three Temptations of Leadership
Matthew 4:1-11 NIV

1. Temptation to be Relevant
Definition of terms - Relevant
Biblical exploration - Matthew 4:1-4
Question born out of this temptation - “Do you trust Me?”
Discipline born out of this temptation - Contemplative Prayer

2. Temptation to be Spectacular
Definition of terms - Spectacular
Biblical exploration - Matthew 4:5-7
Directive born out of this temptation - “Prove Yourself.”
Discipline born out of this temptation - Confession and Forgiveness

3. Temptation to be Powerful
Definition of terms - Powerful, Humility
Biblical exploration - Matthew 4: 8-10, Genesis 3
Directive born out of this temptation - “Someone Greater than me will take you.”
Discipline born out of this temptation - Theological reflection

The Way out of Temptation
1 Corinthians 10:13

Part 3: Lead Like Jesus
A. Powerlessness

B. Love as you are Loved
Session 3: Idolatry of Leadership

Homework

1. We defined authority from the Old Testament and the New Testament. Did you glean any new insight as to its differences?

2. Please explain. Who (if anyone) has inappropriate authority in your life? How did you get where you are in that relationship?

3. Is there anyone who has given you inappropriate authority? How do you plan on remedying that relationship?

4. In your own words, what is the role of a Christian Leader? What qualities does one possess? What role(s) does one play?

5. Define God’s first love.

6. We discussed Christian Leadership as both a desire and/or a calling. I believe we have a charge of both in our lives, and often times at the same time. Where are you right now in relation to desired leadership and called leadership? What roles are you playing in each?

7. If you are wearing both hats right now, what are the differences in those leadership roles?

8. We learned that the way of the effective Christian leader is to be led. Since we are led by His Spirit and His Word of Truth, what scriptures assure you of His plan for the roles of leadership you are playing today?

9. If an idol has been a long standing companion, we can reason that a relationship has been established with that idol. Consciously or unconsciously, depending on its root. If relationship is established, then we have learned how to cope, justify, relate, hide, manipulate, etc. around that idol. We have learned to live in relationship to the idol(s).

11. Of the three temptations we discussed, which hit you the hardest? Relevant, spectacular or powerful? Why?

12. Whichever temptation you chose, how disciplined are you (honestly) in the discipline born out of that temptation? (i.e. contemplative prayer, confession and forgiveness, and theological reflection)?

13. What do you need to ask the Lord for in order to be more diligent in that?

14. What are the ways out of temptation? Search the Word.

15. In your own words, what is the definition of an effective Christian Leader?

16. The Lord has great plans for you. Great plans. The Lord is creating in you a leader of epic proportions. There is only one you, strategically placed in your particular situation with your particular influence for such a time as this. Spend some time with the Lord and then finish this statement:

   When people remember my influence, they will say

   ______________________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________________
This is a journey into what makes us *us*. We will ask the question: what parts of our humanity (specifically in each of us) is most likely drawn out by our interpersonal relationships? God created us with both sufficiency and insufficiency. Every good gift comes from above. Gifts of the Spirit are not only the gifts that look good, they are the gifts that are designed to draw OUT good. They conform us to His likeness.

Since we are human, and He is God, we can assume His definition of good gifts may not always equate to ours. We know that His ways are higher than our ways. Sometimes, the gift(s) He gives, perhaps by way of rebuke or discipline, is not at all what we had in mind as “good.” I am reminded from Psalm 126...*those of us who sow in tears will reap sheaves of joy.*

Leadership is not for everyone. Leading means exposure. At least good leadership does. It's not the kind of exposure that heaps responsibility on others, but the kind that displays dependency on a God who is ready and willing to intersect our pride at every turn. He will strike down the prideful and lift up the humble. We will see today that pride is not always outwardly expressed ego. Pride is always self-obsession. Whether you go in with it or out with it, it needs to be addressed.

**Missional Community** - Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

**All Gifts From God** - James 1:17 NIV

**Introvert/Extrovert and Balance**

**Tension and Teachability**

**A. Tension Defined**
1. the act of stretching or straining.
2. the state of being stretched or strained.
3. mental or emotional strain; intense, suppressed suspense, anxiety or excitement.
4. a strained relationship between individuals, groups, nations, etc.
5. pressure, especially of a vapor.
B. The Dynamic Tension of God’s Love

Understanding this will help us to see how we experience tension with God and with others. Since God is love, His tension is that of love. Scripture’s two most basic commands are to love God and love others as yourselves. God is the initiator of love. It’s the tension He allows for in receiving His love that produces in us the ability to love. We love BECAUSE He first loved us.

Tension is unavoidable in an intimate relationship with Christ. In fact, I think the closer we get, the more tension there is. If God is always conforming us to the likeness of his Son, and His son is fully God, then His work in us will never be complete this side of glory.

1. Creation in light of the Creator - Romans 1:20-25 NIV

2. Jesus is Integrator - John 3:16 NIV

3. Authority of God - God’s power is only a slice of His being. His Authority is what creates, sustains and transforms. Colossians 1:16-17, Judges 1:25 NIV

   a. Power - Force, strength, might, dominion

   b. Authority - Power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases. Physical and mental power, Power of influence and of right (privilege), power of rule or government, authority over mankind, the leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man. Regal authority. A crown.

4. Law and Grace - Spirit of Religion and Spirit of Freedom - 2 Corinthians 3 NIV

C. Dynamic tension in Leadership

1. Vertical and Horizontal - Eph. 1:11 MSG

2. In the Body - 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4

   a. Investigative - Head (cautious)

   b. Enterprisers - Feet (moving the mission)

   c. Conventional - Hands (details)

   d. Artistic - Eyes (inspiration)

   e. Realistic - Back (work horses)

   f. Social - Mouth (cast vision and interpersonal)
What happens if a foot doesn’t know it’s a foot? Would it attempt to be an eye? How effective would a foot be at casting a vision? Or an eye in kicking down a door? If a foot only does what a foot does even when it’s been given the authority of an eye, or vice versa, what happens? Tension, and not the good kind. That kind of tension brings about a black eye. The foot is no longer effective and moving the body forward because it is too concerned with making the eye conform to its distorted sense of importance or authority.

But what if the foot knew what it was created for? What if it had spent time asking questions of its Creator? What if its Creator brought about an understanding of its worth and value as the foot? What if the foot’s desire to be something else intersected with God’s desire to love the foot as it is? What if the foot began to realize that there would be no movement to the body without it? That if the foot was not embracing its role, that there would be nowhere new for the eye to see. What if it realized that the eye’s vision, without the foot, would be inconsequential?

If the foot spent all its time wishing it were something else, it wouldn’t be conformed into the likeness of a strong, steady, sure, agile and steadfast anchor. It wouldn’t find itself with much value to the body if it were weak in its intended creation.

3. Gifts of the Spirit

   a. Acts 2 - Beginning of Christian Spirituality

   b. Christ empowers the gifts already given

   c. No gift more important than the other - Pray, Repent and Confess

D. Tensions Mount (We will know it when we see it because we DO IT)

The more we know ourselves in light of who God has created us to be, the more we are able to know others. To truly know others is the ability to experience tension with them without the need to change, correct, convince or corrupt them.

We will do some stronghold work next week. We will explore how our strongholds (if unrecognized and avoided) can be a hindrance to effective leadership. We have already discussed the importance of tension. It brings health and vitality to the body. The body works because there are different parts with different roles and different perspectives.

Internal tension (when His Divine Spirit rubs up against our human nature) is what moves us forward in expression. The question is, what do we do with it?

Session 4: Missional Community


E. Tension and Conflict

1. Difference between the two.

2. Ask questions.

3. Independent, co-dependent and interdependent.

4. Rules for communal participation in resolution.
   a. Allowed to admit to personal participation with sin and personal insight into circumstance only.
   b. Avoidance is not a solution. It’s active participation in perpetuation.
   c. Your side of the street.

F. Inarguable Areas of Agreement

- **Jesus must literally be Lord.** Luke 6:46-49 NIV. Unity is the practical working out of Jesus being on the throne of your life: He is Master, He is Lord. Everything we do must be in reaction to His Lordship.

- **We give testimony and thanksgiving always.** We are to give thanks and praise to Him in all circumstances, for He dwells in those praises.

- **Repentance is essential.** We must agree to live a life of laying our hearts bare before God. This means Godly sorrow (remorse) for sin, and genuine repentance AND turning from it. When convicted, we must confess, repent and walk in the opposite spirit of the sin that was confessed. We must be serious about dismantling any strongholds we have allowed the enemy to build in our lives.

- **Kingdom minded instead of earthly minded.** There is fruit of kingdom ambition in our lives as opposed to worldly ambition. Our lives reflect the fruit, not merely the words, of a desire to expand the kingdom of God.

- **Our life, time and money is not our own.** All of our decisions are made in submission to the headship of Christ.
Kingdom ministry is for today. There is a faith in the restoring power of Jesus. We unite and believe in the authority of Christ and His anointing power for today. Healing is for today. Salvation is for the masses.

The Lord is going to restore His Bride.

Compassion and Mercy. Our tendency is to cross people off “our list” if they oppose or reject us. However, as followers of Christ, we must have compassion and mercy on everyone we meet.

We agree to not take offense. Thick-skinned and soft-hearted. Unoffendable.

The Word of God is Authoritative. We agree that the Word of God is inerrant. It is our guide and the only sure word of prophecy.

Mutual submission and interdependence. We must agree to submit to one another in godly meekness and servanthood. No one in the church is a self-sufficient entity. Without interdependence we are only an appendage, not a body.

Holiness and purity. Commitment to integrity, pure mouths, blessings of others and encouraging others in their pursuit of holiness.

Jesus Ministry “In order to lead, we must be led.”

Receiving and advancing in Jesus-ministry is all about the heart. This is where it begins and ends. When we observe Jesus as He trains His twelve disciples, it is interesting to note that Jesus does very little “how to” instruction. Jesus’ training centered on developing their hearts, and character, to carry out His ministry. How often did He address their hearts of unbelief, pride, preeminence, insensitivity, exclusivity, prejudice, worldliness and more? When He was through training them concerning their hearts, they were men of compassion and power!

Jesus’ ministry did not end with His ascension - it carried on in an even greater measure as His presence, compassion and power was unleashed in His disciple’s lives, and it spread throughout the early church. The world was rocked by the power of Jesus in the early church during the first century. There is a certain heart condition that is necessary to receive revelation from God. Many can hear truth but not receive revelation. Jesus said many have ears but cannot hear, many have eyes but cannot see. So what is the foundation for Jesus-ministry? The condition of our hearts.

Luke 4:18-19 NLT The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.
In Jesus’ intercessory prayer to His Heavenly Father for His apostles, and for all those who would become His followers in generations to come, He stated this:

John 17:18 NIV As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

Therefore, the mission of the Church (all who are true followers of Jesus Christ) is to continue Jesus’ assignment here on earth as described in Luke 4:18,19 and other verses so succinctly.

**Jesus-Ministry is one of Salvation.**

Luke 19:10 (NIV) For the Son of Man came to seek and to SAVE what was lost.

The English term “save” in Luke 19:10 is a translation of the Greek work sozo. Various forms of sozo communicate the full picture of salvation as deliverance, restoration, protection, preservation, healing and making whole. This definition helps us understand what Jesus had in mind when He came to minister salvation.

Jesus ministers sozo in various ways. In Romans 10:9, He does for spiritual salvation. In Luke 8:36, for demonic deliverance and in Mark 10:52 for physical healing.

**Jesus-Ministry is one of Restoration.**

Luke 19:10 (NIV) For the Son of Man came to seek and to SAVE what WAS LOST.

The English term for “lost” in Luke 19:10 is a translation of the Greek word apollumi. This is the same word translated “destroy” in John 10:10 (NLT), where Jesus states, “The thief’s purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.” The word apollumi is translated to “destroy” over 25 times in the NT, and the word “lose” or “lost” over 30 additional times. The word communicates to destroy, ruin, render useless, to be put to death.

In John 10:10, we read that Jesus came to give life in all its fullness. This is in contrast to Satan who can and does steal, kill and destroy. Jesus’ life and ministry sought to give new life where Satan had stolen, destroyed and killed life. Again, the imagery is that of restoration and recovery.

**Teachability** “Teachability is the key to accelerated growth.”

Fully entering into Jesus-ministry turns our paradigm and values system upside down. The core of this type of ministry is a teachable heart. A teachable heart is always marked by a genuine desire to receive from the Lord through His Scriptures, His Spirit and other believers. The person with a teachable heart longs to change and knows that he or she will not find the means to do so within themselves. Our religious forms (often) tell us that God desires us to
have it all together and that we can never fall short in our knowledge by needing someone else to teach us. Religious forms are all about how much information we can pack into our heads. It is simply deception. Jesus’ desire is actually the opposite. This is how He concludes His Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:24-27 (NASB) Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell - and great was its fall.

Jesus conveyed a crucial truth. He does not look for people who have it all together. He looks for people who will do this, all day, every day: “Hear and obey.” He graphically describes in verse 26 how those who hear His words but do not act upon them are fools. According to the Bible, a fool is not someone who is mentally deficient. It has nothing to do with intellect, test scores, or degrees of education. The Bible defines a fool as a person with a propensity to ignore correction and continue in his own way. Jesus clearly teaches that to rebel against His word, continually making the wrong decisions, is to be a fool. We do not even have to rebel overtly against Jesus to act as a fool; sometimes we do not even hear His word because our filters and defenses get in the way. Again, it is a religious form that teaches us, “You are a fool if you need correction.” This is a deception that keeps us un-teachable. According to Scripture, we all need correction. It is the one who refuses to receive correction that is the fool.
Deconstructing Defensiveness

As we begin to touch on the treasures of teachability, we find that God’s values stand righteously opposed to the world’s ways of thinking and our own “comfort zones.” Some of us may be surprised at the battle that rages as we fight to move to the center of the teachability circle. The enemy hates teachability! Uncovering the injustices that hinder our teachability opens our eyes to how hard the enemy works to keep us from having soft, teachable hearts. He knows how joyful and fruitful a life of teachability is for us. Would the devil not prefer a church full of fools rather than a church full of the wise? We have such incredible victory and fruit on the other side of this battle; we cannot stop short. Let’s look to David for further insight into teachability so that we can walk in the significance and favor that he enjoyed.

David actively examined his heart to see if there was any sinful, hurtful way in his life. He was willing to have God reveal his heart to him through any means. An interaction between David and an unruly dissenter in 2 Samuel 16 highlights this truth. David was in the midst of a major insurrection; his own son Absalom was rebelling and trying to seize his throne. The nation of Israel was in a very precarious position, and David was on the run. A rebel named Shimei, whose allegiance stood with Absalom, came out while King David was fleeing Jerusalem to seek protection. He began to taunt and curse David. One of David’s men pleaded with David to allow him to take off Shimei’s head (in the most literal sense). David’s response was amazing:

2 Samuel 16:10-11 (NRSV) But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the Lord has said to him, ‘Curse David,’ who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’ “ David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “My own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord has bidden him.”

David believed it was possible that Shimei was a tool in God’s hand, and he was willing to listen to what Shimei had to say, believing that even in the midst of the cursing, God could speak through Shimei. He was willing to receive what was said to him in case even a tiny bit of it was legitimate. What an incredibly humble posture. Imagine listening for something from the Lord, some word of correction, in the cursings of a rebel - on one of the worst days of your life. While the enemy hurled curses, hoping to finalize David’s defeat, David pressed through to victory, believing that God was in control. He believed that God had something good for him even in what seemed like a disaster. The harder things were, the more desperate he was to hear from the Lord, in any form. Let me say that again...HE WAS WILLING TO HEAR FROM THE LORD, IN ANY FORM. His utter lack of defensiveness arose out of his confidence in God’s love, mercy and power.

This is the posture we must choose, living in such a way that people can freely speak into our lives. We are the ones who will benefit in every way possible, especially from those who have our interests at heart. We cannot be people who resist others’ speaking into our lives. We need to yearn to hear the voice of the Lord in any form that He chooses. We need to be a
people who have a readiness to receive, and then test! It is imperative that we invite others to speak into our lives. Simply stated, this must be the principle we live by: **Others are free to speak into and minister to my life in exhortation, prayer and admonishment without any fear of my response.**

This humble posture toward others is crucial for teachability. It is impossible to be truly teachable toward the Lord and not toward His people. This is a deception rooted in pride. We will never experience growth or the full fruit of a submitted life in isolation, especially isolation from correction and instruction. It is a recipe for failure and frustration, because God designed us to be submitted to Himself and others.

**James 5:16 (NLT)** *Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results.*

Note: True teachability is not a lack of discernment. The enemy wants us to believe that teachability equals vulnerability to deception. Actually, that is the deception. God commands teachability and promises (John 16:13) that if we have a teachable heart, the Holy Spirit will “guide [us] into all truth.” So if teachability were likened to physical hunger, to be un-teachable because deception could happen, is like refusing to eat because poison exists. The fact is, when we are teachable we are listening for the Lord’s voice, and it is His voice that keeps us from deception. When we are un-teachable, we are already deceived.

**Octopus Ink**

God created the octopus with an incredible defense system. Instead of having claws and teeth to fight with, the octopus has ink it uses to survive. When a predator approaches, the octopus discharges a thick blackish or brownish inky fluid, stored in its body. The ejected ink does not dissolve quickly; it floats in the water in a cloud shaped somewhat like an octopus. This tactic confuses and wards off its enemies, covering its escape and it works. The attacker is left hungry and confused. Did he imagine the octopus? Where is it?

When it comes to receiving instruction, admonition or correction, we have defense mechanisms much like the octopus. We eject ink that discourages, disorients and makes others “pay a cost.” We do not have to blatantly reject others’ words in order to actively dissuade them from speaking into our lives. We have all sorts of ways of doing it; often we do not even realize what we are doing.

Imagine a great tennis coach who finds a young woman of incredible, untapped talent. The coach sees what no one else can see: her hidden potential. This coach paints a picture for the young lady of the greatness that she could achieve, and the young woman agrees to train. But when it comes time to go into the gym and exercise, the young woman resists. At each machine, she has a different reason that she cannot do what she is told. At first, she complains that she cannot see how training those muscles would help her to hit the ball better. Secondly, she shows the coach her past injuries, and describes how painful it would be for her to exercise in that way. At the third machine, she tells the coach how tired and
hungry she is. At the end of several weeks, she is frustrated with her lack of progress, and wonders why she loses her matches. This is how the octopus ink functions in our lives. It is marked by blindness, frustrates those who would try to develop us, and seems to be unintentional. With the octopus ink functioning, we find ourselves saying with confusion, “I do want to reach that goal of having Jesus’ heart,” but not understanding what hinders us. The ink masks what is really going on and hides a deeply rooted resistance to teachability.

In the example above, each instance of resistance seems unrelated to the other, and each time it wears a mask of legitimacy.

That is how the ink functions. We need the voice of the Lord to open our eyes to see how we have built a wall that is impenetrable to His voice when spoken through others. The ink seems legitimate in many circumstances, and it takes revelation, determination and incredible humility to admit our resistance and repent. We know we are ejecting octopus ink when someone who should speak into our lives becomes confused and reluctant to do so due to our disposition.

Some examples of ink include:

- **Illness, injury or physical limitations**: You seem justified in all your actions by your pain or difficulty. The person speaking feels that they cannot add to your burdens.
- **Schedule demands**: You are simply too busy for anyone to see what’s really going on with you.
- **Disabling circumstances**: Things are so hard for you that it seems as though the only appropriate response for others is to pity and help you, not correct you.
- **Leadership/responsibility**: There is so much on your plate or your position is so important that others are intimidated. You portray the “hero” image, and no one would think they have the place to speak into your life.
- **Troubled past**: You portray to people how far you have already come, and convince them that they should be satisfied with the growth you’ve achieved.
- **Prove it to me**: People who speak into your life are on the defensive, needing to present an air-tight legal case that proves conclusively that they see something in your life. You want examples, dates, quotes, etc.
- **Confusion/martyrdom**: “I’m really trying to understand what you’re saying, but I just don’t see it.” In actuality, you do not believe that you could be blind to something in your life that is visible to someone else.
- **Two-way street**: You cannot take ownership of your sin without pointing out something about the person speaking into your life.
- **Religiosity**: You claim to have already had revelation of what they are speaking to and point out how you have already dealt with it.
- **Presenting your credentials**: When confronted with something, you display your knowledge or accomplishments to invalidate anything that might seem like a weakness.
Session 5: Defensiveness

- **False humility**: You are completely comfortable talking through what the speaker may bring you, but there is no result of change. You take a humble posture with your speech, but there is no conviction or repentance.

- **Defeat**: You take a specific word of correction and interpret it as a judgment of deficiency superimposed over your entire life, communicating to the speaker that they have crushed you as you “realize” how useless you are in your current state. The speaker finds themselves struggling with guilt, and they try to encourage you.

- **Shame/condemnation**: You strive so hard to do everything right that it is crushing to hear any word of correction. The person speaking into your life fears how you will “beat yourself up” if they bring something to your attention.

- **Pride/superiority**: You respond with such confidence that the speaker finds they feel “stupid” and somehow cannot express themselves well enough.

Besides being a blind spot, the difficulty with the “ink” is that, in and of itself, it may not be sinful. One cannot repent for being sick, for instance. The repentance comes at a deeper level when we see that whether or not the ink is a sin issue, there are strongholds that are hiding behind it. We must decide to rise up and throw off every form of self-justification. What naturally results from this posture is true teachability. Like David, we become so hungry for the Lord’s voice leading us to freedom that we listen for it in all circumstances from any agent the Lord might send. This is what it means to move into the center of the teachability circle.

Below are some more generalized ways in which we throw out octopus ink. Others pay such a cost to speak into our lives that they hesitate or refuse to minister to us in this life-giving way. We must ask the Lord to open our eyes to how we respond when we feel defensive. Think of the automatic reactions we have when someone confronts us. Consider this in the context of your marriage, your family relationships, your job and your discipleship relationships.

**How we make others pay a cost when they speak into our lives:**

**Passive Ink**
- Silence
- Victimization/emotional manipulation: communicates that we’ve been deeply wounded, rather than edified.
- Isolation/running.
- Avoidance.
- Body language.
- Others have to work hard or wait a long time to renew intimacy after speaking into your life.
- Withholding.
- Passive/aggressive response.
- Shut down: Emotionally, relationally, etc.
Aggressive Ink

- Defensive posture.
- Blame and/or deflection.
- Retribution.
- Comeback/competition.
- Cutting people off before they can finish.
- Body language (crossed arms, scowls, etc.).
- Denial.
- Obstinate until the speaker is deflated and defeated.
- Anger.
- Intimidation.
- Justification of self instead of taking ownership: “You don’t really understand the circumstances.”
- Disqualifying the speaker from speaking into your life by pointing out his or her sin or weakness.

The Four R’s

Repent
Lord, I repent for walking in defensiveness in these ways. I confess that I have resisted Your correction through others. I call this sin and turn in the opposite direction. I welcome your voice through others in my life, and I abandon these defenses. (Specifically confess each stronghold and the ways they play out).

Receive
Lord, I receive your forgiveness for all defensiveness and the sin of (specific strongholds). I receive your great love for me and the truth that You are always working for good on my behalf. I receive that You always correct out of love, and I welcome Your loving voice in my life. Thank You for Your great passion to speak gentle correction to me and save me from sin and foolishness.

Rebuke
I rebuke and bind the lies of the enemy right now. In the name of Jesus Christ, I rebuke every form of defensiveness and every spirit attached to these strongholds and tell them to break from my life completely. I refuse to defend myself from correction, because I know that God is my defender and I can trust Him fully. (Rebuke each strongman specifically).

Replace
I replace the deception of the enemy with the truth of God’s love. I replace the image of those who have corrected me in the past with that of my ever-loving Father, whose love never fails. I declare that I will walk radically in the opposite spirit of every pattern of defensiveness.
Digging Deeper: What is at the core of our defensiveness?

Have you asked yourself why this is such a battle? Why all the blindness and hidden defensiveness? What is truly at stake? **The answer is control.** If we could hear Jesus speaking to the church and to each of us individually, we would hear Him say, "I want more control of your life." But here is the problem: when our defenses are in place and block teachability, the Holy Spirit cannot be in control. Defensiveness is all about retaining control. This is what drives our defenses and keeps the strongholds in place. Recall the example of the young tennis star. At every stage of her training, she did not trust that the coach knew the best way to prepare her for what lay ahead, or train her for her destiny. In her heart of hearts, she did not believe that the coach knew better than she did, so she resisted almost every training opportunity. Through various means (the octopus ink), she controlled every situation (without even knowing she was doing so). As a result, she stunted her own growth.

The enemy works constantly to convince us that our circumstances (and particularly those voices that bring correction to us) are outside of God’s sovereignty and have nothing to do with our training. We are deceived into forgetting that we have the ultimate Coach who carefully crafts each of our circumstances so that we can be trained for the incredible destiny He has prepared for us. David knew that God was sovereign over all his circumstances, even the hard ones, which is why David could listen for His voice even in the midst of curses from an irate rebel. When we do not trust that God constantly speaks to us and trains us, and that He is totally concerned for our development, we walk in control and shut out every training opportunity. We resist the very people God has chosen to use to speak into our lives.

The opposite of control is the posture of desperation and hunger for God, His Word and His Holy Spirit. This posture does not come naturally to the human heart, and the process of releasing the control we hold onto through our defensiveness is a violent one. Right now we are deconstructing the defenses we have built up. This requires radical passion and determination on our parts, and it will not be accomplished if we are half-hearted.

**Proverbs 2:1-6 (NIV)** *My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

Only the supernatural hunger and desperation that arises from brokenness can bring us to the place of “calling out for insight” and “crying aloud for understanding.” This is a beautiful picture of relinquished control and abandoned defenses. The person described in this Scripture is ready to hear any correction and any word from the Lord, through any means.

**God is for you!** He is passionate about your heart, your development and your destiny. He truly desires your best and is constantly reaching out to train and develop you for a powerful
Session 5: Defensiveness

calling. Control is a stronghold, standing in opposition to God. Read the following diagnostics and cry out for the Lord to open your eyes. Unless you are under the complete control of the Holy Spirit and walk in perfect submission like Jesus did, revelation of control needs to occur. In other words, do not be deceived. We all have strongholds of control. Completely own everything you connect with as your sin. Within our small (but MIGHTY) group, ask for further revelation about how control plays out in your life. Remember that this process is, and should be, disruptive. You are asking to see what you have been blind to. This will not take place without a posture of humility. You can trust that He has given you all that you need to ask these very hard questions.

Be very strong and courageous. Your God will fight for you, you only need to be still. That means when revelation comes, you sit tight. No running. No escaping. Just hearing. Perceiving. Receiving understanding in the heart space. The giants you face today, you will never see again. Let God do this for you. In the name of freedom.

Control marked by self-pity and inadequacy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key identifiers:</th>
<th>Insatiable need for affirmation before any kind of action is taken. You have to be filled with, “You are __.” Then, finally, a baby step will be taken.</th>
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<td>Dependence on leaders for motivation, direction and encouragement. Not only to get going, but to keep going.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A withdrawal and isolation when affirmation and/or encouragement are not received. Blame enters in the form of not feeling supported.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inner thoughts:</td>
<td>“I do not see how I could do that.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I see others that could do it a lot better than me.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“This is not really my calling,” or, “It does not fit my gifting.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I am really comfortable doing what I am doing already. Why do something any different?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intimacy with the Lord marked by:</td>
<td>Comfort with my current level of intimacy; there is no thought that it could be deeper.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Peaks and valleys. Camp highs. Prayer highs, then lows. Inconsistency marks the relationship: it is actually way high or way low. This person can be marked by depression.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Seeing the Lord as unfair at times. “Why am I in this situation?”</td>
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<td>Murmuring and complaining. “Why do I have to do this?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masks that hide the control:</td>
<td>Self-diminishment.</td>
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<td>Fear of failure.</td>
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<td>Entitlements.</td>
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<td>False comfort through attention and affirmation.</td>
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### Session 5: Defensiveness

#### Control marked by striving and performing

| Key identifiers: | I run so hard that no one can see me for who I really am.  
|                  | Significance in roles and relationships is overly important.  
|                  | I measure others by my own standard versus God's standard. This includes spouses, friends, roommates, etc. |

| Inner thoughts: | “Why can't they just ____!” 
|                 | “How can I make this work?” There is an anxiety with this statement versus normal consideration of details.  
|                 | “I have to say, ‘Yes.’ If I say no or do not succeed, I will be looked upon poorly.”  

| Intimacy with the Lord marked by: | A “works-based” mentality.  
|                                  | Condemnation over what I perceive as a lack of discipline in others.  
|                                  | Rare glimpses of how much the Lord loves me. |

| Masks that hide the control: | “It is just my personality.”  
|                             | Fear of failure.  
|                             | Fear of rejection. |

#### Control marked by drama and emotionalism

| Key identifiers: | “You don't understand how hard I’ve had it.”  
|                 | I tend to live in the past.  
|                 | I seek attention through frailty and sorrow  
|                 | A seemingly endless stream of calamity and bad luck.  
|                 | I have a pessimistic view of everything going on around me. |

| Inner thoughts: | “I just need someone to help me through this.”  
|                 | “My circumstances have got to change.”  
|                 | “I wish someone knew how hard this is.”  

| Intimacy with the Lord marked by: | I get more excited about input from other people than input from the Lord. I tend to want to get together with a leader or another person over the Lord.  
|                                  | I feel like the Lord is not there…that the Lord has missed what has happened to me. A part of me believes that God is absent and is really not compassionate.  
|                                  | I want someone else to feed me spiritually and do not want to feed myself. |

| Masks that hide the control: | Self-pity.  
|                             | Sorrow.  
|                             | Emotionalism and drama.  
|                             | Highs and lows: “How could this happen to me,” or “Life is great!”  
|                             | Victimization. |
### Session 5: Defensiveness

#### Control marked by domination

| Key identifiers: | Dissatisfaction with circumstances and the performance of others. |
|                 | Anger at the perceived domination of others. (I do not like to be told what to do). |
|                 | Thriving on competition: I am considered “naturally competitive.” |
|                 | Relationships with authorities are marked by fear and/or contempt. In the same way, I either “butts heads” with, or intimidate, those I try to lead. |

| Inner thoughts: | “I know what to do. If I were in charge, this would not be a problem.” |
|                 | “Leadership should be given to those who merit it, and my leaders do not.” |
|                 | “It’s not okay for me to be without an answer. It must be someone’s fault.” (Blame others when situations are not controllable). |
|                 | “To the victor go the spoils,” i.e., if I displayed more skill in getting something, then I have the right to have it. |

| Intimacy with the Lord marked by: | Abandonment: I feel like I have to do it all on my own. |
|                                 | Difficulty spending time with the Lord one-on-one because there is no standard to meet or competition to motivate. |
|                                 | Eager to speak, slow to listen. |

| Masks that hide the control: | “I’m just getting the job done.” Or “That’s just the demands of leadership.” |
|                             | Unbelief that the Lord will speak to a situation. |
|                             | Fear of someone else’s failure: “I’m just trying to help.” |
|                             | Stubbornness in the face of opposition that may be from God. |

#### Control marked by distrust

| Key identifiers: | I need an explanation of all courses of action. I need to understand “why” at all times. |
|                 | I question whether the course of action really applies to me. I am marked by a continual need for more information before obedient action is taken. |
|                 | I move hesitantly once I am finally convinced to do so. |
|                 | My service is marked by a lack of joy or thankfulness for the opportunity. |

| Inner thoughts: | “This just doesn’t feel right.” |
|                 | “I don’t think this is what I am meant to do.” “I don’t feel peace about this.” (The key word is “feel”). |
|                 | “I don’t think they really understand me. |
|                 | “It is me and Jesus against the world.” In other words, people can not be trusted only the Lord. |

| Intimacy with the Lord marked by: | Understanding or experiencing God’s love is an impossibility, because love and distrust are not compatible. |
|                                 | Religion: doing all the right things without inner transformation. |
|                                 | Struggle with sorrow. “It is always going to be hard” The Lord is just out of reach. |

| Masks that hide the control | Self-pity. |
|                           | Fear of failure. |
|                           | Victimization and/or blame. |
|                           | Confusion. |
Prayer:

**Repent:** Lord, I repent for holding onto control of my life and circumstances through defensiveness. I confess that I have not trusted that You are 100% for me and in control of all my circumstances. Forgive me for trusting myself more than You and for shutting out your instruction. I call this rebellion, and I repent of it completely. (Repent for all the specific ways in which control is evident in your life).

**Receive:** Lord, I receive your forgiveness for the sins of control, distrust, and defensiveness. I receive Your great love for me right now, and I claim the truths of Scripture which tell me that You are sovereign, that You do speak to me, and that You correct all those You love. I completely abandon control of my life and circumstances to You.

**Rebuke:** In the name and authority of Jesus Christ, I rebuke the spirit of control from my life completely. I will no longer cooperate with you, and I sever your lies of distrust off of my life right now. Control, distrust and defensiveness, I command you to the feet of Jesus and declare that He has complete control over my life and development.

**Replace:** I reject control and replace it with radical trust in Jesus Christ. I replace every form of defensiveness with eagerness to hear His correction in whatever form He might choose. I will seek the Lord for any way that my rebellion is at the root of my difficult circumstances, and receive that it is His love that causes Him to discipline me and His kindness that leads me to repentance through my trials. I believe that He desires to push me forward, not hold me back, and I will submit to Him immediately and see fruit in my life.

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Psalms 3:1-8 (NIV) Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, “God will not deliver him.” But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy mountain. I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side. Arise, Lord! Deliver me, my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked. From the Lord comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.

Genesis 15:1,8 (NIV) After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.8 But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?”

The Bible is the best recovery book ever written. It is THE HANDBOOK for feeling and healing. Modern psychology would say of emotional distress, “let’s just talk about our feelings.” Religiosity would say, “let’s not talk about feelings. Let’s just suppress the natural self into spiritual submission.” The life of Christ and God’s Word teaches us the principle of feeling and then healing.

Modern day American psychologists call our age the “Age of Anxiety.” So what is the difference between fear and anxiety? Rollo May was a Psychologist in the 1950’s and 60’s and was one of the first American doctors to separate the idea of fear and anxiety. He wrote in his book The Meaning of Anxiety, that there are essentially two layers of fear. The more superficial and “natural” is fear itself. The deeper, more underlying and less definable experience, is anxiety. I am not sure it can be separated so easily Biblically. In scripture, the two experiences can be seen, but the words for each experience in both the Greek and the Hebrew are the same. For our purposes, we will define fear and anxiety both, and look at scripture to see how each level play themselves out. By May’s definition, fear is when the existence of life and security is threatened. Anxiety is when the existence and essence of self is threatened.

Fear can be healthy in order to survive or exit danger. Fear turns on our autonomic nervous system. Our autonomic nervous system allows for a supernatural ability to avoid, avert and remedy immediate life-threatening danger. This is where fear can be healthy. We have been created with the ability to identify specific threats to that which is good and then summon all of our physical capacity to stimulate us for action in order to protect that which is good.

Anxiety, however, is a different beast. It is a deeper kind of fear. Anxiety, unlike fear, is not specific. It's diffuse. It’s generally undefined. When anxiety is present, we don’t know what it is attached to or defined by. The what, where and why is often not defined. While fear prompts us to action, anxiety is debilitating and paralyzing. In general, it makes one unable to act or make decision because the problem is undefined.

Deeper anxiety that is abiding, diffuse and non-attached goes into your roots, is physically debilitating because the autonomic nervous system never shuts off. You are always a little
restless, scared, nervous or agitated. It is bad physically because our autonomic nervous system is given to us for fight or flight responses. If it is always on, it literally eats you up from the inside out.

Fear is like a thunderstorm; anxiety is like Seattle.

Anxiety is a threat to your human personal self, not just your human existence. With anxiety, you feel your personal identity is at risk. Fear and anxiety can be present together. If together (like David in Psalm 3), you are in the pit. Let’s look at David in Psalm 3. “I'm scared...BUT.”

In verse 3 of Psalm 3, David says BUT. That has to be the posture of our hearts when faced with either, and/or both, fear and anxiety. We already identified that when one or both are present for any length of time, we find ourselves in a pit. Looking at Psalm 3, there are four steps out of that pit.

**Step 1: Forward, not back.**
In verse 3 David calls His God a “shield around me.” The commentaries speak of two shields for battle. One is a small shield used for hand to hand combat. The second one is a large shield, one that is the size of a door and that wraps around you. These shields are not easily wielded, as they are specifically used for protection in FORWARD movement only. These types of shields are ill fitting to anyone not used to maneuvering them. They are used specifically and exclusively for following a general into battle or horrible danger. It is not a shield that gets you out of danger, but the one that takes you into the heart of danger. Because of its design, it only works if you are moving forward. If you turn around to go back, you become fully exposed and an easy target for take out. If Jesus is calling you forward, you have only one option. Get moving. This is where (and it will happen over and over and over again) to obey seems nuts. It will take us into the heart of danger, but it is the only place God’s protection works. This is where we realize to back out or disobey is the only thing that we really have to be afraid of.

**Step 2: Relocate your Glory.**
In the second part of verse 3, David is literally saying in Hebrew, “You are my glory and the lifter of my head.” He would not be saying to God, “you are my glory,” unless something else had been. He has experienced now this deeper level of fear (anxiety) because the things he built his identity on are gone. His popularity, sovereignty, power, morality, kingdom and his family are all gone. Not just that, his emotional and psychological security had been taken away. None of the above in David’s life were inherently bad. In fact the Lord had given them all to him. David had just placed his glory (Hebrew word - weight and significance) in them, and not in God. He had placed his value, security, significance and worth in finite and fleeting things. If we (like David) place all of that in things that are subject to time, space, change and circumstance, we will perpetually live in a space of anxiety. Tim Keller says that “our anxiety is smoke, and if you follow the smoke it will lead us to the fire and the fire is something that has become way too important to us.” We must investigate the source of our anxiety. No stuffing or muscling. When we do that (BECAUSE WE DO THAT) we need to relocate our
glory and get new help. It’s a new Godly acceptance and assistance. We get a new perspective and alignment with the One who DOES NOT CHANGE. The result? He lifts our heads. A lifted head is a sign of pride, confidence and assurance. A LIFTER OF HEADS is one that says, “I am proud of you. I have confidence in you. I am with you and you are my namesake.” When we relocate our glory, He shows us His and we get ourselves back.

**Step 3: See the Substitute**
How does David know that God has lifted His head? After all that he has done, how does he know who He is in Him? The answer is in verse 4: “His Holy Hill.” Let’s look at Genesis 15. David is familiar with in Genesis 15 and recites it in Psalm 3. In Genesis 15, God is dealing with Abram’s fear and tells him He is his shield and glory. Abram asks of God, ‘how do I know you are to me who you say you are?’ God says, take a bunch of animals for a sacrificial vow. Abram understands God is looking for a promise covenant and Abram is expecting he would be the one making it. Except that night, God comes in a smoking torch and takes the covenant oath on behalf of Abram and tells Abram that His covenant love is for him and all his descendants for all eternity. God was saying, “I promise to take this vow even if it costs me everything” (Foreshadowing of Christ as the Messiah). David remembers Genesis 15 in his despair and BELIEVES it. David didn't even know what we know, that Christ has come and we are saved. Take heart, lovelies! That is good news! Isaiah tells us that Christ would be “cut off” from the land of the living. He was the promised substitute. Jesus is how we know that God loves us. How we know that He is proud of us. Christ is the way that He lifts our heads and says we are worth it. To the degree we locate and see the substitute for our glory, is the degree in which we will be immune to debilitating fear and anxiety.

**Step 4: Remember the People**
In verse 8, David says ‘may your blessing be on your people.’ It’s not enough to receive freedom from fear and anxiety for ourselves. We have to get in the game with community. We have to take what we know and LIVE IT OUT for the betterment of those around us and those who we have the privilege of influencing. David knew that Absalom was NOT the king God wanted for His people. He said essentially, “God, I got my peace back now let’s do something for the people and work for justice.” The opposite of fear is love. 1 John 4:18 says ‘perfect love casts out fear.’ The opposite of love is not hate, it’s fear. Fear is self-centeredness and love is self-giving. This means we can never really deal with our fear all by ourselves. We have to love someone else to get our minds off of ourselves. Stop thinking on you. Start thinking on others. When we have been released of our own fears it is IMPERATIVE to pursue loving in community.

In closing, I suppose it’s important to say that if Jesus followed His Commander into the tomb, afraid and alone, we too can follow our Commander into whatever He asks. Since Jesus is our atoning sacrifice and our binding covenant, we can be assured of our resurrection from fear and anxiety. If we have fear, we have to suck it up, relocate our glory, see our Savior and remember His people. God will heal us of our fears THROUGH our fears.
Rebellion

Rebellion is ingrained in the heart of humanity. You can see this throughout Biblical and secular history. Since our fall in the garden, we have continually rebelled against our Creator, having the strong desire of placing ourselves as the ultimate authority of our lives. At its worst, a heart of rebellion denies the goodness, provision and existence of God.

Rebellion runs through the Bible from start to finish. Humankind, left to its own devices, will turn to other gods - to all kinds of depravity, sin and self-worship. No one is above this tendency. We all have fallen short of the glory of God. Even God’s own chosen people continually turned to other gods throughout Biblical history. God repeatedly sent prophets to warn of coming judgment and exile if repentance was not embraced.

The result of rebellion is, ultimately, death. The fruit of rebellion can be closely aligned to the kingdom of Satan. He has been rebelling against God since the beginning. As the father of lies, his kingdom has these three fruits: theft, murder and destruction. Whenever we align ourselves with the kingdom of rebellion, we will eventually reap its fruit. The theme of rebellion is constant in Scripture and in history year after year.

**Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV)**  The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

**Proverbs 14:12 (NIV)**  There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

**Joel 2:13 (NIV)**  Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and He relents from sending calamity...

**Galatians 5:16-17 (NIV)**  So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.

**1 Samuel 15:22 (NIV)**  ...To obey is better than sacrifice…

**Definition:**

1. opposition to one in authority or dominance.
2. a: open, armed, and usually unsuccessful defiance of or resistance to an established government.
   b: an instance of such defiance or resistance.

**Synonyms:** revolution, uprising, revolt, insurrection, mutiny - meaning an outbreak against authority. Rebellion implies an open, formidable resistance that is often unsuccessful. Mutiny applies to group insubordination
As believers in Jesus Christ, we no longer need to be slaves to rebellion. We have been given the living hope of Christ, and we are commissioned to be His ambassadors. In order to be an effective witness for Him, we cannot live in a continual pattern of rebellion. It is common to hear in Christian circles, “I feel stuck,” or, “I feel like I am in a rut.” Many times the advised remedy is to change our job, take a vacation, buy something new, or simply try harder. But very rarely would we ask the question, “Have I done what God has asked me to do?” How often are we asking ourselves the question, “Is my heart the problem?”

In our western Christian culture, rebellion is often times seen as something that “sinners” do. To us (very “together” people), rebellion is drugs, sex and rock ‘n’ roll; rebellion is occult activity; rebellion is overt sin. In the Christian life, however, rebellion can be defined very simply as not obeying God. When rebellion is defined in such a fashion, we can no longer align rebellion just with “overt” sinful activity. As we will find in this study, overt sin is not so much the problem because it can be seen clearly and dealt with immediately. Where we fall short most is in the category of “hearing and obeying” as discussed last week. Immediate obedience is often our area of greatest spiritual struggle.

We have to clearly and practically learn how we can begin to hear and obey God. “Hearing and obeying” is a practical way of describing the principle of immediate obedience. God is not just interested in religious activity, but in a heart of radical obedience. A heart that acts upon guidance from the word of God without qualification or complaint.

Our focus this week will be primarily on “will of man” issues. This means we can, through our own thoughts and actions, promote or oppose obedience. For fear of legalism or self-obsession (I think), self-control is a fruit of the spirit that has lost popularity in Christian circles. Our sheer will cannot accomplish what God has called us to do (it takes Holy Spirit empowerment), but it is an essential ingredient. We must agree with God for His purposes and power to be released. We must actively seek out every area in which we have said, “No,” to God, and realign our actions with His truth.

Deconstructing Rebellion
Biblically, there are many ways to approach rebellion. Outlined below are four phases. There is a natural progression out of rebellion, and looking at the phases will help us to understand where we are when we find ourselves in it.

1. **Rebellious**
   People stuck in rebellion are in a cycle of sin that they are currently unwilling to break. To be in rebellion is to live in opposition to the authority and word of God. Rebellion is a condition of either open or subtle hostility and/or disobedience toward God.

   **James 4:7 (NIV)** Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.
2. **Entitled**
   People stuck in entitlement have had breakthrough in the area of rebellion. Certain areas of their lives are submitted to Jesus. They have even denied themselves old sin patterns and have worked to remove overt rebellion from their lives. BUT progress is slow and they are still unwilling to submit in many areas. They pick and choose which areas they will obey God. They live with “entitlements.” They look at the cost of following Christ and are unwilling to give up certain “sin luxuries.”

   **Matthew 10:38-39 (NKJV)** *And he who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*

3. **Overcoming**
   In this phase, all known entitlements have been surrendered to Christ. Individuals here are actively looking for any blind spots that might hinder their progress in obeying God. This person is focused on destroying entitlements. They are wise to the process of them and are now working to avoid them. There are still obstacles and dangers along the way, but their heart is to follow Jesus, NO MATTER THE COST. They still have areas of struggle, but are overcoming hindrances.

   **1 John 5:4 (NKJV)** *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith.*

4. **Hearing and Obeying**
   Hearing and obeying is the phase where all the people of Hebrew 11 lived. It is the residence of the “Hall of Faith.”

   **Hebrews 11:33-34 (NLT)** *By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to fight.*

**Recognizing Rebellion**

So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. *Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.”*  

   **1 Samuel 15:22-23 (NKJV)**

Satan’s kingdom was founded on rebellion, and it wars against the kingdom of God. When Christians live in rebellion, they are in agreement with Satan in his opposition to Jesus. In this way they bring honor to Satan and his kingdom through their hearts of rebellion. Sinful
actions flow out of a wrong heart. Saul purposely rebelled against the command of God, even though Samuel told him that obedience was the sacrifice the Lord desired.

Instead of obedience, pride leads us directly to independence. It causes us to rebel against God and His authority. Satan started a heavenly rebellion against God and His authority. Isaiah 14 makes it clear that Satan was given a free will and exercised it five times, stating, “I will” against the established authority of God. God responded to Satan and those with him by hurling them out of heaven to earth (Isaiah 14:13-14).

Like Satan, we are also given free will, the ability to choose our own way. Like Satan, we too can rebel against God, or we can choose to submit to His established authority. God does not toy with rebellion. As the above verses state, rebellion is witchcraft, iniquity and idolatry.

Not only do we need to know what rebellion is, we need to understand how it functions in our human will. There are several reasons why understanding rebellion is so important. First, we want to get it out of our lives! Second, we need to grow in discernment, rightly judging between good and evil. Lastly, rebellion disconnects us from God and shuts down our ability to hear His voice! Living a life in Christ is to live like Christ. His will was completely submitted to His Father.

John 14:21 (NLT) *Those who obey My commandments are the ones who love Me. And because they love Me, My Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them.*

Jesus commands all who know Him to live a life consistent with His character, bearing the fruits of righteousness. Jesus always lived and carried out His ministry according to the will of the Father. He followed, at all times, the Father’s direction, will and authority. Even in near death, Jesus was heard saying, “Not My will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42). Take a look at how rebellion expresses itself practically. Do you recognize these symptoms in your own life?

**Rebellion expresses itself in:**
- Speech that is critical of those in authority.
- A person’s life being ruled by their own opinions and convictions.
- Anger as a result of not receiving “deserved” treatment.
- Relationships that lack depth.
- Significant relationships marked by control, manipulation, power struggles.
- Division and manipulation.
- Blaming everyone else for one’s lack of fruit when the real issue is rebellion.
- Caring only for self, not for the benefit of others.
- Passive resistance to particular people in authority or to any established authority structure.
- Thoughts or efforts to discredit those in authority.
Here are some common fruits of a person functioning in rebellion:

- Loss and ruin.
- Broken families and relationships.
- Immaturity - strongholds of sin still fully in place.
- Rewarding themselves out of impatience. Seizing opportunities for ourselves rather than waiting for God to hand them to us.

The following characteristics typically mark a person who is living in rebellion:

- **They function in confusion.**
  In fact, they may state repeatedly that they are confused when others are able to hear the same information clearly and move forward in obedience. In many instances, they believe that their circumstances are different from everyone else’s and that the truth of God’s Word does not apply to them in the same manner.

- **They have disregarded previous instruction.**
  Confusion has resulted from a disregard of God’s direction and conviction. God might have spoken about a matter (selfishness, passivity), but obedience was delayed or ignored. This disobedience may not have been blatant, but the evidence is the fruit in their lives. If a marriage is involved, the relationship may be characterized by inner confusion, turmoil and tension; disobedience has caused the marriage itself to be “stuck.” We may believe that “if I only knew what to do, I would be fine,” when in fact we already know what to do, but refuse to do it. (A clear understanding of James 1 sheds light on the process of confusion).

- **They ignore repeated counsel from credible sources.**
  They have received plenty of council, advice and prayer, yet refuse to put into practice anything they have learned. For example, someone who struggles with unbelief and receives helpful input does not need more information on unbelief; they simply need to get rid of it. In other words, the Lord has spoken to them many times on this issue, but there is no breakthrough or change.

- **There is minimal application of truth.**
  Significant growth occurs when outside counsel or help is obtained, but it is short-lived. Though the individual or couple may express a desire to grow, the old patterns reemerge very quickly. Biblical instruction is also resisted. A person may listen (and take notes), but genuine application of truth is short-lived.
The fruit of rebellion is seen and defined throughout scripture:

The word “rebellion” often appears in the Bible in conjunction with the words listed below. It is so important to understand this, as these actions mark those who function in rebellion.

- stubborn (Deuteronomy 21:18, 20; Jeremiah 5:23; Psalm 78:8)
- hurt, grieve (Isaiah 63:10; Psalm 78:40)
- refuse (Isaiah 1:20; Nehemiah 9:17)
- transgress (Lamentations 3:42)
- scorn (Psalm 107:11)
- sin (Psalm 78:17)
- test (Psalm 78:56)
- rebel (Nehemiah 9:26)
- reject and to profane (Ezekiel 20:13)
- press and arrogance, presumption (1 Samuel 15:23)

Moving out of the rebellious phase requires true repentance with honest changes that are evident in action(s). If we recognize that we are living in rebellion, help is available. But it is vital to understand that moving out of rebellion requires a very sober approach to life change.

“It is hard for you to kick against the goads…”

Acts 26:14 (NIV) We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

In the first century, oxen were used to till the soil. In order to better manage the ox, the farmer would position a wooden shaft (called a goad) on the ox in such a way that, when necessary, he could use to exert pressure on the ox, by pressing the end of the shaft into the ox’s flesh. Sometimes the ox would kick out against the goad, and when that happened, the goad would be pressed deeper into it to the animals flesh as a result of his rebellion. **


Insubordination

A revelation of authority comes with conviction. If we have been present to the truths we have looked at so far, we will have felt like a light has turned on and exposed the darkness of our hearts. In our nature (not to mention what our culture teaches us), we are wired to resist the truth about rebellion and submission. Whether we have been in ministry for two months or 25 years, the truths we are studying are the key to a radical transformation in our authority. Moving in repentance for rebellion and into submission is like walking through a doorway that leads from mediocrity and frustration to earthshaking empowerment. We can leave every
Session 6: Rebellion and Insubordination

current of our old ministry experience behind, because the power of God to move through a submitted you is limitless! Today we are going to uncover and dismantle hidden enemies that poison our attempts to move into God’s authority. We will uncover where they function in our lives, and we will continue to move into a whole new way of living.

Insubordination describes an attitude of the heart that deceives our minds into believing that we are submitted, while our hearts are actually still rebellious. Insubordination can take the form of outward compliance, partial agreement, or blatant rebellion, but it will always believe it is justified. That is why in order to hunt insubordination, we again look at our heart attitudes, thoughts, and the words we speak, rather than simply our actions. Let us look at a couple of fundamental truths about practical relationships between delegated authorities and those under them.

1. Submission takes great faith.
The greater the faith in God, the greater is our ability to submit.

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewar der of those who diligently seek Him.

Submitting to any human means submitting to an imperfect leader. Sometimes it means submitting to an evil leader. Often times, though, we are in situations that hit closer to home, with an authority that is not wicked or evil, but immature and flawed. The Scripture calls us to submit to these leaders not according to their current level of maturity or leadership but according to their position over us, as described by the Bible. Insubordination finds it impossible to offer respect or obedience beyond what has been “earned.” Insubordination takes on the right to judge a leader, decides when a leader is disqualified, and feels entitled to lead itself. Take a look at this verse, written to wives:

1 Peter 3:1-2, 5-6 (NKJV) Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear... For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Whether one of us is a wife, a husband, or unmarried, the principle here is the same: submit because that is our God-ordained role in the relationship, not because the leader is an all-star. Peter knew that this was scary! He was not insensitive to the hearts of women, especially those whose husbands were disobedient, whom he was instructing! He spoke straight to the heart of the struggle and told them: do not fear! Have great faith! This is where your power lies! He knew that in our carnality, we turn to our own powerless words and efforts, but they do not work. Peter is not putting these women down.
He was empowering them after the very pattern of Jesus Christ! Do we want husbands to be won? We cannot do it, but God can. Here is how: We must fully submit, because our faith will move mountains. Peter could write this because he knew God always comes through! He handed these women the key to walk out of the frustration and futility of insubordination and into the empowerment of submission. He handed them the secret to having Jesus’ power move in their marriage! This is true empowerment! This principle is true in every relationship of submission.

Characteristics of insubordination marked by futility and unbelief:

- Mechanical submission with resentment toward the perceived insignificance of my role, as opposed to awareness of the power I exercise through submission. Statements such as “Well, I have to submit to him...” “He is my authority, so I had better...” “I’m not allowed to do that...”
- Withholding my heartfelt agreement; offering passive resistance: “He’ll see that this won’t work...” “I’ll do it, but I don’t expect much...” “I told you so.”
- Distancing myself from the failures of my authority. True submission puts its full weight into supporting its authority’s goals. Submission says, “I want you to win! I’ll do my best to see it happen!”
- Criticism of methods, style and approach. Demanding to be “in on the planning” in exchange for my support.
- When I receive a clear directive, do I find myself:
  1. Rewriting it with certain conditions.
  2. Obeying it in part, dismissing the rest.
  3. Reducing the importance of it (not my top priority).
  4. Dismissing the entire directive due to circumstantial reasons (personality differences, exceptionism, “They don’t understand...”).

2. True submission flows out of brokenness.

It does not come easily to our nature! At the very root of insubordination, we find pride and self-reliance. True submission is something to fight for, and the trials we face in doing so are the very instruments God uses to eliminate pride. The Scripture says this about Jesus:

Hebrews 5:8 (NKJV) ... though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Insubordination says, “I know something my authority figure does not,” but what lurks behind that is the belief that we know something God does not. Insubordination is confident that “my abilities will get it done,” and resists waiting, suffering and trusting. An even deeper deception of insubordination is, “God has ordained me to do this in spite of my delegated authority; the rebellion is theirs for not supporting me.” God does not authorize special exceptions to the Scripture! Insubordination convinces us that we do not need the training and brokenness that
comes from submitting to an injustice or that a situation requires God’s power. When we are insubordinate, we do not believe that God has plans (of which we have no knowledge) to glorify Himself through the situation. We feel that we see the whole situation more clearly than anyone else.

**Characteristics of insubordination marked by pride:**

- Excusing insubordination when I am not “understood.” (The truth is that no one will ever be able to fully understand us or our circumstances).
- Dismissing authority if I perceive hypocrisy or character weakness.
- Demanding that authority “treat me as an equal.”
- Resentment of forceful leaders; ease with passive or needy ones.
- Inability to submit to a delegated authority who is younger or has less experience.
- Offense when my expertise is unrecognized and I am not shown the proper respect.
- Need for validation and affirmation before I submit. I have to be spoken to in glowing terms in order for an authority to win my allegiance.
- "Unwillingness to look under a rock.” In other words, unwillingness to equate the struggles in my marriage and/or ministry to my own insubordination.

3. **God has ordained peace and protection through the covering provided by submission.**

Insubordination is marked by anxiety and overburdening, but submission is a ticket into protection, provision and interdependence. Ruth and Boaz are an amazing example of God’s design of provision through covering. Ruth asked Boaz to cover her with the corner of his garment, lying at his feet. It was the picture of a submitted attitude, and he took her under his care. The story demonstrates how submission is a doorway from poverty to provision and from isolation to security.

**Psalm 68:6 (NKJV) God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.**

Insubordination blocks provision, brings confusion and frustrates progress. But submission brings peace! Imagine walking into a huge corporation where every person you speak (from the receptionist to the director of human resources) is wringing their hands and worrying about the quarterly finance report. No one is able to do their job because they are taking on the burden of a job that is not theirs. They are not authorized to make decisions in regard to the finances, so they do not make any progress. And the CFO is too busy dealing with everyone’s interference to move forward! That company is doomed to failure. In God’s orderly kingdom, roles are ordained to bring peaceful, prosperous functionality, caring for every member of the body. Insubordination is marked by fear-based self-protection, so we cannot trust another to function on our behalf. *It convinces us to take on every role and live in utter anxiety.*
Session 6: Rebellion and Insubordination

**God calls us into submission to meet our needs, to care for us and to provide for us.** It is a demonstration of His love. We cannot experience this loving care when we are fearful and insubordinate.

Insubordination “lurks.” While a rebel may know and glory in his rebellion, the insubordinate is often convinced that they are submissive. There is a strong sense of blame, shoving every situation and problem onto the lap of someone else. Once again, we have to cry out to the Lord so that our eyes may be opened to our own hearts. The Lord is not using this word to convict us about the sin of others, but to set us free from our own sin.

**Characteristics of insubordination marked by anxiety:**

- I have a difficult time trusting that authority has my “best interests in mind.” I do not believe the Lord will reward my submission.
- I spend most of my time around people who are less mature than me.
- I avoid leadership or those who challenge my standards in favor of those who are easy on my insecurity or inadequacy.
- I have fear (spoken or unspoken) of my authority’s decisions. This can be expressed by silence, a look or a seemingly submissive statement: “Are you sure about that?” This causes my authority to question their ability to lead.
- I worry about the decisions my pastor/husband/leader makes instead of prayerfully entrusting their roles to them.
- I worry about provision. I cannot imagine being provided for without having to make it happen myself.
- I get angry when decisions are made without me.
- I think it is more important to get everyone’s opinion (or for me to offer my opinion) than for something to be accomplished in a timely manner.
- Nothing ever goes smoothly or turns out right. Life is one challenge after another.
- I tend to think and worry about what I should do rather than just asking an authority. It is foreign to me to voluntarily seek instruction.
- I have to tell people what I think because I am afraid that things will go wrong otherwise.
The Acts Church

Matthew 18:19 (NLT) I also tell you this: If two of you agree down here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you.

John 17:21-23 (NLT) I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one - as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

Looking at the Church today, there is much talk of unity, but do we really see it in action? A wise question for us to pose in our pursuit of unity is: “What is it that we do not understand about unity, about agreement or about prayer and unity?” Reading Matthew 18:19, it is easy to miss the power in it. What is it about the truth of Matthew 18:19 that we do not understand? These are the questions we must wrestle with in order to have a change of mind and heart. Often we try to force a form of unity on situations and people instead of focusing on Biblical truth and humility. The latter are the principles which lead naturally to unity.

The best course of action in wrestling with important questions is to search the scriptures. A quick survey of the book of Acts shows us what the Church should look like in action. Here are a few things that marked the Church in Acts:

1. The people were desperate for God.
2. Repentance was radical (active turning from sin and demonstrated fruit).
4. Healing of the emotions and heart.
5. Physical healing.
6. An acute awareness of God’s holiness.
7. A need to testify.
8. A sense of urgency.
10. God-centered versus man-centered priorities.
11. Great authority upon God’s teachers and ministers.
12. Hearts softened by God’s presence and the outpouring of gifts as a result.
13. Constant prayer: saw prayer as the difference between life and death.
14. A strong dependence on the leading of God’s spirit.
15. Strong focus of equipping to sending out for missions.
17. Spirit of worship.
18. Presence of the Holy Spirit is carried out of the church.
19. There were massive crowds to minister to, with reduced ability to give people individual attention.
20. Confidence in speech, evangelism, exhortation, through the power of Christ.
When we look at the above list of twenty characteristics of the early church, how does our experience match up to the Scripture? If we are honest, most of us are separated from the reality of the church living in power and Christ moving through us in power. In order for our hearts’ desire to become the Church moving in power again, we must seek agreement in humility. We need to agree in prayer (Matthew 18), but we also need to agree on how to steward the answers to those prayers. The Lord is not going to dump these twenty things onto a group of people who are not living in radical agreement and unity.

Here is a practical example (from Freedom 2):

When we pray for the sick, unity is essential. This has played out practically at New Song City Central in Washington. A person on a prayer team struggles with unbelief, or a deep lack of real Biblical love and compassion, so there was no real power in the prayer time. This person might have just wanted an incredible experience of the miraculous or a story to tell. Once this person was removed from the room, the presence of the Lord to restore and heal moved mightily. This made everyone present aware of the critical need for greater restoration and real heart transformation in our own lives, before we would dare minister to others. It is not that we are asked to be perfect, but to have a heart that is honest and willing to obey the Lord.

When the Lord first began to challenge us as a church to move in greater agreement, we would often take hours in prayer simply to “clear the way” (through corporate repentance prayer) for greater unity. It would take less and less time as we lived our daily lives in greater obedience to Christ out of a desire to please Him.

Everything in the Kingdom of God is about the heart. We can have the appearance of deep agreement, but the Lord sees our hearts (Matthew 5-7). In the upper room they were in “one accord.” When the Lord challenges us in Holy Yoga in the area of agreement, a great desperation must begin to birth in us to understand what “one accord” really looks like.

I believe that our revelation for unity and agreement will come in the process of being in communities that are not afraid of “breaking times.” The times of fire when God’s holiness presses the impurities from our hearts. How much more of God’s heart will we have after having been purified seven times versus just one?

**Principles of Unity and Agreement**

We can say we are in agreement, but what does the Lord say?

1. **Unity appears when independence shifts to interdependence.**

   *Isaiah 61:4 (NKJV)* And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.
2. Everyone hears and obeys together (Nehemiah 1-4).

Participation requires we all hear and obey what the Lord is telling us to do in true interdependence with others. Nehemiah rebuilt physical walls around Jerusalem; in Isaiah 61:4, He speaks of spiritual restoration, which may also have physical dimensions.

Let us continue with the theme of rebuilding a wall as found in Nehemiah. The need is for the entire wall to be constructed (the wall being whatever God has asked us to do). Each of us must be willing to take whatever role is required to get the wall built. The flesh will come in and destroy agreement and unity when our desire is to have a piece of the wall for ourselves. We want to rebuild that portion of the wall because it is our portion of the wall, then turn around and say, “Look what I did.” We compare our section of the wall to others.

The Lord does not think like us in this matter. What the Lord would say is, “One day I want you to hammer on this section; another day I want you just to deliver nails to everyone who is building on the walls. Another day I want you to bring water.” We must have the right heart attitude and motivation for God to be glorified with the whole wall. True unity means there is a great desire for others to succeed. Extravagantly blessing one another is an obvious component of genuine unity. We cannot withhold words of blessing for one day longer!

3. True agreement means locking arms and giving no concession to the enemy.

The devil does not change his mind regarding his mission. He is set on our destruction. How mission-minded are we? How much do we really want to be interdependent? Does it outweigh the enemy’s want of our destruction? We concede to the enemy when we want unity on our terms. We do this when we hold things (relationships, ministries) loosely in case something better comes along or we are offered more recognition somewhere else. To move forward we must say in our hearts, “I will not lightly hold your hand as long as it benefits me or serves me, but I interlock hands and move forward in faith towards the mission.”

4. True unity means everyone has the heart of a shepherd, not just a few.

True unity means moving together. If someone lags behind, we go get them. Imagine a body of believers that has been freed from a life of injustices and the anger and sorrow that resulted from these injustices. Those people would be free to move ahead as a body. But if even one person in that body has not sorted out his own issues, the others must not leave them behind or determine that they “missed the opportunity.” It is up to the others to look back, to encourage those lagging behind, and to help them move forward.

There are two important considerations in discussing moving together:

1. We must guard against striving to move faster and push harder than anyone else. When we strive, we are essentially saying, “Look at my endurance and my capacity to serve. Aren’t I great? Approve of me!” Striving declares prematurely that God’s work in us
is finished, and that we have attained the measure of freedom that He desires. It does not consider the needs of others or have time to stop and help. Our drive must be seeing others win. There is a real danger for self-preoccupation to hinder our restoration. When we are angry and exasperated with those around us, we are preoccupied with our feelings, instead of having a focus of love to see other people restored!

2. We want to pursue sanctification, the process by which God changes us and draws us into greater intimacy with Him. The pure heart cries out for change. Men and women with pure hearts desire their life to be molded by God's hand. They constantly want God to show them their heart. They agree with David by declaring; “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalms 139:23-24 NIV). Too often we only examine our hearts when someone confronts us versus pressing into God ourselves with great initiation. We must come into agreement that each of us will pursue the Lord in holiness and examine our hearts every day for the rest of our lives.

Seven Characteristics of Unity and Agreement

1. Motivation.

Our motivation is to honor God, and doing so requires faith. Faith propels agreement and the cleansing of our motivation. Fear and unbelief hinder unity; they are the opposite of faith. Fear seeks to control people, events and circumstances to avoid whatever we fear. Unbelief keeps us from moving in radical obedience to God. Our heart motivation of faith or fear determines whether our unity is true or false.

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

2. Shared purpose and shared vision.

Imagine a circle of people standing and holding hands, swaying rhythmically back and forth as they shift their weight from one foot to the other. What happens if one person leans to the left instead of to the right? What would that look like on a worship team? With a prayer team? At an outreach? With a missions team? What would it feel like in a house? In a marriage? In a dorm room?

When we live out our own agendas versus moving together, we can say all the right words, but our hearts eventually show us for who we really are. When unity is mouthed, but the motivation is false, you can almost sense it in the air, your own spirit will experience the resistance, sorrow, hopelessness, jealousy, competitiveness, arrogance and belittling of the words that are not said, but reside in the heart. The fruit of a body is weak and bitter when hearts are resistant to interdependence. We start asking, “Where is the fruit?” But if two or three agree...the people of God, and the works of God blossom and bear fruit.
Session 7: Unity and Agreement

James 3:13-4:1 (NKJV) Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

3. Death to personal ambition.

Personal ambition is often masked by religious activities and serving God. The body may be quite active, however, the question in everyone’s mind is, “What can God do for me?” When our ambition is dead, the question changes to, “How can I serve you, Lord?” as we consider the Lord’s assignment instead of our own.

James 4:1-4 (NKJV) Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

4. Giving preference to others.

If we obey Romans 12, we will not think of ourselves more highly than we ought. In our minds, it is easy to elevate a person according to their livelihood instead of their identity (as a person created by God). The heart we seek is exemplified in how Mother Teresa looked at the poor: “When I see the face of a poor man, I see the face of Christ.”

Consider this: we can even use negative manipulation to elevate ourselves above others. “My day was so hard;” “My situation is so difficult;” “You do not even know…” Judging our own lives as more difficult than others’ can cause them to feel that we are judging them, causing separation and disunity through our own arrogance. The heart of Christ is that we live to minister to Christ and then others. We are not to elevate ourselves.

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
5. Transferable.

The fire of God and of unity is always transferable. Think of it like a torch. As the fire grows dim, someone comes along and refuels the torch, causing its fire to grow hot again. That red hot fire can now be used to light any other torch that has gone dim. Agreement has to do with pursuing our brothers and sisters and truly encouraging and exhorting them in their walk with Christ. Self-preoccupation is the death of agreement.

It is possible to say “yes” to ministry, but “no” to developing and shepherding the very people God is calling us to train. Agreement comes when we fan into flame the calling and purpose of those with whom we minister. Note: It is critical to understand that encouragement always speaks to the doubts and fears of those we encourage. To encourage is to “give courage.” We want to fight with our friends in overcoming strongholds so they can run into their true destiny!

Hebrews 10:25 (NLT) And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of His coming back again is drawing near.

6. A bond of peace exists where unity exists.

We gain peace - the peace of God - as a benefit of unity. As individuals, we gain personally when the body gains corporately. Roy Hession, in his book Calvary Road, writes that when we are not at peace with others, the issue is our pride. Instead of blaming others for our problems, we must look within our own heart. The idea is to be like Jesus - truly unoffendable.

Ephesians 4:3 (NLT) Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace.

Romans 8:6 (NKJV) For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Philippians 4:7 (NKJV) ...and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

7. Agree to Disagree, but Still Stay at the Table
Definition of a minister
- person acting as the agent or instrument of another (Christ)
- to give service, care or aid; attend, as in wants or necessities

The Ministry of Standing By

“One of the fruits of solitude is an increased capacity for compassion - the ability “to suffer with” another’s pain. It comes about as the result of an increased sense of solidarity with the human family of which we are a part. When Paul talks about ‘suffering with those who suffer,’ he is talking about compassion, that supreme gift without which we are less than fully human. It might well be that the greatest threat to human survival now confronting us is not the loss of energy or the increase of pollution, but the loss of compassion. We are confronted daily with the pain of human tragedy - the breakup of a family or the sunken face of a starving child - to such an extent that we soon learn to turn off what we see. In order to cope with our feelings of helplessness, we teach ourselves how not to feel. The tragedy in this response, which is probably more widespread than we dare to believe, is that we also deaden our capacity for love. For Christians, the cross stands as an ever-present reminder that love and suffering are two sides of the same coin” (from The Mutual Ministry, by James C. Fenhagen)

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” - Jesus

It’s not our job as instructors to heal those sick in body and soul. However, we can have tremendous influence in pointing those struggling with grief and loss towards the healer by simply being willing to be present to their suffering. While we may not be ordained pastors with professional training, there is a tremendous amount we can learn as lay people to intentionally offer this service in our Holy Yoga ministries.

My Utmost for His Highest, November 15, says that in our compassion we can even interfere with God’s work by “being an amateur providence.” Such interference can even result in “spiritual stagnation” for the minister, which can only be remedied by returning fully to our vertical and waiting there until the Holy Spirit clearly reveals an action or advice we are to impart to another: “Your part is to maintain the right relationship with God so that His discernment can come through you continually for the purpose of blessing someone else,” Chambers writes.

A. Sorrow-Bearing is the Center of Christian Discipleship

Matthew 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”

The Greek translation of the word mourn, hoi penthountes, implies active grief - crying, wailing and the like. “It is difficult, if not impossible, to comfort someone who does not mourn” (All Our Grief/Losses, p. 166).
On the other hand, we must respect those who choose not to mourn, and allow a space for both situations in our classes. How do we do this?

B. **Principles of Christian Leadership (from The Wounded Healer)**

“Indeed, the paradox of Christian leadership is that the way out is the way in, that only by entering into communion with human suffering can relief be found. As John was invited to enter into Mr. Harrison’s agony and wait for him there, every Christian is constantly invited to overcome his neighbor’s fear by entering into it with him, and to find in the fellowship of suffering the way to freedom” (The Wounded Healer, p. 77).

1. Personal Concern

2. Faith in the Value and Meaning of Life

3. Hope

Christ carries the caregivers: Bearing one another’s burdens cannot tire us out nor cause us to break down, because Jesus provides the necessary comfort. “In dynamic terms the meaning [of Matt. 5:4] is straightforward: we can bear another’s grief fully as long as it does not become our grief, but belongs to God who suffers with us” (All Our Losses, All Our Griefs, page 167).

C. **Sympathy over Empathy**

One of our first instincts in listening to hearts dealing with loss is to come alongside with our own understanding and experiences saying things such as, “I know how you feel,” or “I’ve been in that exact space.” Or, “You’ll be stronger when this is over,” and the scripture “God works in all things for good.” Yet, while intentions are good, such comments can sting and be perceived as careless, even false. Everyone’s experience of grief and loss is different, therefore it’s more helpful to say

- “I’m so sorry for your loss.”
- “I’m praying for you” or better yet, “Let’s pray.”
- “I’m so glad you came to class today.”
- “I’m here if you need me.”

D. **Redefining a Sense of Self**

Any loss, large or small, tinkers with one’s identity, creating anxiety - a hallmark emotion of grief. Reminding those suffering of their identity in Christ reorients and offers substance to fill the empty spaces.
By using God’s Word to redirect, a mourner’s attention moves from “Why me?” to “What’s next?” and identity can once again be relocated appropriately to one’s place in the eternal kingdom. God has a plan and the future, no matter how uncertain, and He promises to have our best interests at heart.

**Jeremiah 29:11** “I know the plans of I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

**E. Respect Defenses**

We don’t violate an individual’s freedom even for the sake of their health. While we provide a safe place for mourning, the choice is up to the student.

Furthermore, everyone mourns differently, depending on their personality, the type and magnitude of the loss and the circumstances surrounding it. Allow Jesus to enter into the process with individuals while you remain alongside.

**Creation and Finitude**

“It is finitude that makes completeness possible. Therein lies judgment. It is a sobering moment when a parent of a middle-aged child dies, but the awareness of finitude is also a gracious moment. All our achievements are finite but so are our failures. Our lives are finally judged according to limited possibilities. We are free to live and love and learn in the confidence that the God who ordained the boundaries of life will accept our finite completeness” (All Our Losses, All Our Griefs, p. 173).

**The Ministry of Teaching**

**Isaiah 55:11**

**James 3:1**

Teaching is considered to be a spiritual gift as well as a ministry calling, along with apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors (Ephesians 4:11). Unlike spiritual gifts, which are bestowed throughout one’s life and can be prayed for, ministry callings are given to men and women before birth. You may possess this call if you are extremely burdened to teach the Bible, love the Bible, and have a passion for the lost, for truth, and for loving the saints. In some way you likely possess an unquenchable desire to share Truth. This call is suited to Holy Yoga instructors, although this role is best served when coupled with other spiritual gifts that are more “people-friendly” - including leadership.
A. The Teacher’s Roles and Responsibilities

1. 2 Timothy 2:2 - Teach each other God’s truth, not your own.
   New life is conceived through the Word of God (1 Peter 1:22-25). A good steward of the Truth spends time in the Truth. Practically speaking, know how to study the Bible to arrive at God’s intent, not merely your interpretation (good hermeneutics). Also, allot adequate time for preparation, remembering your time is not your own. As we discussed, it comes down to Godly priorities.

   Isaiah 55:11 is true, that God’s Word has been sent and will accomplish His purposes, give Him glory, regardless, but it’s equally true that if we deliver it only partially, or through our filters, or with apology, it will lose some its power for those hearers. We must also, as instructors, encourage students to come with open, willing hearts that in listening to God’s Word they will experience the fruit of it - peace and joy (Isaiah 55:12).

2. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 - Be patient as you teach God’s truth to others.
   Our role is to deliver the Truth that God puts on our hearts for each class, not to chastise our students for lack of application. Remember your role - which comes down to remembering God’s role.

   Teaching requires living out the lessons we deliver. Paul combined the need to be vigilant about our belief system with our lives. That is because they both teach. Our students pay far more attention to what we do than what we say - both on and off the mat.

   When students see a discrepancy between what a teacher says and what he/she does, it becomes confusing for them about what to believe. A teacher can become a stumbling block even though he/she is accurately speaking words of truth. The Apostle Paul told Timothy, “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:16). The same lesson occurs in Nehemiah 4:12 - we must walk/lead in the fear of God in order to be above reproach from our opposition. In other words, our actions must always give God glory. It’s not about us.

4. 1 Peter 2:9-10 - Teach what you know.

B. Guard Your Heart Space

Scripture is very clear that what is in your heart will eventually come out in what you say. “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45). If a teacher's heart is not rooted in truth, the teacher could misconstrue God's Word. If a teacher's heart is not rooted in love, the teacher could get bad attitudes toward students. If a teacher's heart is not rooted in righteousness, the teacher could lack integrity.
The best way to guard your heart is to

- **understand your need for God's help, that apart from the grace of God you can't do it.** For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “no” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age... *(Titus 2:11-12).*

- **yearn for the Word of God and let it saturate your being by meditating on it and memorizing it.** “They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward” *(Ps. 19:10-11).*

  “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” *(Ps. 119:11).*

- **yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life.** When the Spirit works IN a teacher, not merely THROUGH a teacher, the heart from which he/she speaks is filled with “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” *(Gal. 5:22-23).*

### The Ministry of Prayer

#### Nehemiah 4:12

Charles Swindoll, in *Hand Me Another Brick*, cites a powerful prayer life as non-negotiable in any leader's personal and professional life:

“Of all the disciplines a leader must maintain, nothing - let me repeat, nothing - is more important or vital to success than prayer...Leaders who don’t make a priority of prayer don’t know what they are missing. Whatever is accomplished would be far greater if he or she approached each decision, each challenge, each critical juncture from a kneeling position...The discipline of prayer will do more to equip you than any leadership manual or seminar, more than any new insight or impressive strategy.” *(Chapter 12, *Four-Dimensional Praying)*

Nehemiah offers a valuable portrait of a leader who relies on prayer.

### Key Points

1. Prayer is not our attempt to gain the Lord’s favor or to get Him to help us achieve our goals.
2. Prayer is not the means by which we tap into a limitless reservoir of power to ensure success.
3. There is no magic formula to prayer.

As leaders it's easy to forget that God needs nothing from us. Our prayers don't change God, but they do change us by aligning our thinking with His so our decisions glorify Him and accomplish His perfect will.
Intercessory Prayer - a GET TO!

A. Embracing unknowing
Romans 8 reminds us that the Holy Spirit is already interceding on behalf of ourselves and others, and simply being willing to come alongside and experience our own groaning and the presence of the Lord in the situation is enough.

B. Overcoming being overwhelmed
As leaders it’s easy to feel overwhelmed when asked to pray for so many people and situations. Therefore, don’t walk away from a prayer request. Stop and pray for the person or situation immediately. If you don’t have words, trust the Spirit to intercede.

Rather than reading through an entire prayer list, hold the list in your hands and with eyes closed, ask God to bring to mind those individuals or situations in need of prayer. Rather than attempt to propose a solution, simply hold them in love in that place where God’s Spirit meets your spirit in love. Listen. If there is a specific need God gives, pray for it. It might just be a word God brings to mind. Trust that the Holy Spirit’s presence and power are all that is needed and your participation is governed and guided by God, as are the outcomes.

C. Overcoming Unwillingness - praying vs. other preferred responses
Exodus 33:8-11

Four Dimensional Praying From Nehemiah 9:5-38

1. Looking Up: Praising, verses 5-6
2. Looking Back: Remembering that God is faithful despite human failure, verses 7-31
3. Looking In: Bring to God all of the situation and all of yourself, verses 32-37
4. Looking Ahead: Commitment and Holy Confidence, verse 38

The Ministry of Listening

Proverbs 20:19

Proverbs 18:13
“The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love to God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them. It is God’s love for us that He not only gives us His Word but also lends us His ear.

So it is His work that we do for our brother when we learn to listen to him. Christians, especially ministers, so often think they must always contribute something when they are in the company of others, that this is the one service they have to render. They forget that listening can be a greater service than speaking.

Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because these Christians are talking where they should be listening. But he who can no longer listen to his brother will soon be no longer listening to God either; he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God too.

This is the beginning of the death of the spiritual life, and in the end there is nothing left but spiritual chatter and clerical condescension arrayed in pious words. One who cannot listen long and patiently will presently be talking beside the point and be never really speaking to others, albeit he be not conscious of it. Anyone who thinks that his time is too valuable to spend keeping quiet will eventually have no time for God and his brother, but only for himself and for his own follies.”


The Three Basic Listening Modes

1. **Competitive or Combative Listening** happens when we are more interested in promoting our own point of view than in understanding or exploring someone else’s view. We either listen for openings to take the floor or for flaws or weak points we can attack. As we pretend to pay attention, we are impatiently waiting for an opening or internally formulating our rebuttal and planning our devastating comeback that will destroy their argument and make us the victor.

2. In **Passive or Attentive Listening**, we are genuinely interested in hearing and understanding the other person’s point of view. We are attentive and passively listen. We assume that we heard and understand correctly, but stay passive and do not verify it.

3. **Active or Reflective Listening** is *the single most useful and important listening skill*. In active listening, we are also genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting or what the message means, and we are active in checking out our understanding before we respond with our own new message. We restate or paraphrase our understanding of their message and reflect it back to the sender for verification. This verification or feedback process is what distinguishes active listening and makes it effective.
Benefits of active listening

- Sometimes a person just needs to be heard and acknowledged before the person is willing to consider an alternative or soften his/her position.
- It is often easier for a person to listen to and consider the other's position when that person knows the other is listening and considering his/her position.
- It helps people to spot the flaws in their reasoning when they hear it played back without criticism.
- It also helps identify areas of agreement so the areas of disagreement are put in perspective and are diminished rather than magnified.
- Reflecting back what we hear each other say helps give each a chance to become aware of the different levels that are going on below the surface. This helps to bring things into the open where they can be more readily resolved.
- If we accurately understand the other person's view, we can be more effective in helping the person see the flaws in his/her position.
- If we listen so we can accurately understand the other’s view, we can also be more effective in discovering the flaws in our own position.

Listening Tips

- Usually, it is important to paraphrase and use your own words in verbalizing your understanding of the message. Parroting back the words verbatim is annoying and does not ensure accurate understanding of the message.
- Depending on the purpose of the interaction and your understanding of what is relevant, you could reflect back the other person’s account of the facts, thoughts and beliefs, feelings and emotions, wants, needs or motivation, hopes and expectations.
- Don’t respond to just the meaning of the word - look for the feelings or intent beyond the words. The dictionary or surface meaning of the words or code used by the sender is not the message.
- Inhibit your impulse to immediately answer questions. Code may be in the form of a question. Sometimes people ask questions when they really want to express themselves and are not open to hearing an answer.
- Know when to quit using active listening. Once you accurately understand the sender’s message, it may be appropriate to respond with your own message. Don’t use active listening to hide and avoid revealing your own position.
- If you are confused and know you do not understand, either tell the person you don’t understand and ask him/her to say it another way, or use your best guess. If you are incorrect, the person will realize it and will likely attempt to correct your misunderstanding.
Active listening is a very effective first response when the other person is angry, hurt or expressing difficult feelings toward you, especially in relationships that are important to you.

Use eye contact and listening language. Avoid looking at your watch or at other people or activities around the room. Face and lean toward the speaker and nod your head, as it is appropriate. Be careful about crossing your arms and appearing closed or critical.

Be empathic and nonjudgmental. You can be accepting and respectful of the person and their feelings and beliefs without invalidating or giving up your own position, or without agreeing with the accuracy and validity of their view.

Adapted from: http://www.drnadig.com/listening.htm

The Ministry of Discerning

“Post this at all the intersections, dear friends: Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue, and let anger straggle along in the rear.” James 1:19 (MSG)

Discernment

Romans 12:2 Be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good, acceptable and perfect.

King Solomon prayed for a “listening” heart when given the opportunity to ask for God for anything he desired as leader. In Hebrew, listening is translated as understanding or discerning. He clearly believed that to lead well he must learn to hear with his inner ear - and we must do the same in every aspect of leadership. We discussed listening as a skill in communication and presentation, but discerning is different. It's being available to know and do the will of God as our ultimate authority and instructor in Holy Yoga.

We have one call and a similar calling - to serve God by developing disciples through the vehicle of Holy Yoga. YET, our ministries will look dramatically different based on our communities, gifting, opportunities and God’s purpose for each of us, which may remain hidden. Therefore, discernment is necessary to stay in His will in the day to day and to remain obedient to broader goals and visions.

A. Definitions

1. Webster’s: to separate [as in “harvest’"] a thing (mentally) from another or others; recognize as separate or different.
2. R.H. Barton: Discernment is the capacity to recognize the presence and activity of God.
3. T. Challies: the skill of understanding and applying God’s Word with the purpose of separating truth from error and right from wrong.
**B. Purpose**

To see things through God’s eyes through the Bible and thus to see things are they really are.

**C. How do we develop discernment?**

1. **Practice**: It is a skill. There exists a cause and effect relationship between our commitment to the process of spiritual transformation and our ability to discern and do the will of the God.
2. **Study**: The more we know of truth, the more our ability to discern will increase.
3. **Separate**: Use God’s Word to highlight the light and the dark, truth from lies. Know what we believe.
4. **Act**: Apply what we believe.
5. **Stop**: Allow space in silence for God alone, in small groups, in meetings, etc.
   - Test for indifference: Are you indifferent to anything but the will of God? Ask God what needs to die in order to make room for the will of God?
6. **Release attachments**: Without judging yourself, place all wants on the altar.
7. **Start again**: Eventually we come to the end of the wisdom given and we are propelled back into discernment mode. Relax into the sacred rhythm of ministry: discerning and doing, and then discerning again.

**D. Inquiries to facilitate discernment for self and others**

1. **Direction and Calling**: How does this choice fit with the overall direction and calling of God upon my life?
2. **Consolation and Desolation**: Which choice brings the deepest sense of life, inner peace and freedom?
3. **Scripture**: Is there a particular scripture that God is bringing to me relative to this choice? What is God saying through it?
4. **Life of Christ**: Is this choice consistent with what I know about the mind and heart of Christ and His redemptive purposes in the world? Is there some aspect of the life of Christ that speaks to the choice I am facing?
5. **Character Growth and Development**: How will this direction nurture the fruit of the Spirit in me - particularly the fruit of love? What does love call for? What is God doing in my character and spiritual growth and will this choice continue to nurture this growth?
6. **Eternal Perspective**: Does this choice value what is eternal and permanent, and holds the deepest value rather than what is transient and impermanent? If I imagine myself on my deathbed, which choice would I wish I had made?
7. **Community**: How does this choice fit with others’ observations of who I am and what God is doing in my life? Am I willing to open up every facet of this decision to a trusted spiritual friend for their wisdom and insight? Is there anything in the overall tradition of the Christian faith that might inform my decision?
Homework

Spend time on your mat, listening and in prayer, searching your heart as to what your greatest desire is for God to give you as a leader for Holy Yoga. Ask God to give you a discerning ear. Be led.

Which of the five ministries are you most drawn to? Spend time journaling your response, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you into greater understanding of your gifting, desires and fears related to stepping out for God.
Staying at Your Place on the Wall

Nehemiah faced nearly every leadership challenge, yet remained committed to his place on the wall, literally and figuratively. He was a leader who was led, through many trials and many roles. Your degree of success depends on your degree of commitment.

A. Make a Commitment

Commitment: a pledge or promise; obligation
Greek/Hebrew: Not found in the Bible
Synonyms: promise, pledge, vow, obligation, assurance, binder, word, guarantee, warrant
Antonyms: indifference

Vairagya: a steadfast awareness of one’s infinite nature that is not disturbed by the polarities of success for failure, pleasure or pain.

Vairagya is one of the most significant (and least understood) concepts in yoga philosophy, yet correlates beautifully with discipleship (which is also difficult for the world to grasp). Rather than dispassion or disengagement, which has disastrous consequences for the soul, vairagya is the practice of impartiality, or faith, while being fully engaged in the world and our responsibilities. Basically, anchoring our identity in Christ - power versus force. It’s the “ultimate attachment,” but not to the “self” as classical yoga implies, rather to the triune God.

Martin Luther contended that even if he were told the world would end tomorrow this would not stop him from planting a tree today. In other words, we strive to remain firmly seated in our experience of joyous connection with Christ while relinquishing the fruit of our actions/work. It is through our commitment to cleaving to this place of inner stability and calm that we will be able to endure whatever else comes our way in our ministry and our life - for the storms of our life do and will threaten our work probably more, and more often than the challenges of the work itself.

Commitment takes discipline. Discipline isn’t about shutting out joy or other opportunities; it’s about opening ourselves to our godly potential and the joy that only comes from focusing on our unique gifts and calling, which go hand in hand. Discipline born of kingdom commitment can disguise itself as confinement, or be presented by the enemy as “control.” Yet, the truth is, that through the narrow road of discipline, we experience freedom, which is our inheritance if we are willing to claim it. God never quits!!!!

B. Extend the Invitation

If your ministry grows stagnant, not only will the wall not get built, but you'll open yourself up to increased opposition. Pursuing God and His kingdom means chasing after His plans and purposes for your ministry. He is in charge, but He also expects you to be a good steward of the opportunities He has given you, which equates to proactive, persistent hard work. I had
dinner with a friend who has been on staff with Young Life for 25 years. He said that YL leaders can offer the most exceptional Club meetings with the best music, presentations and message, and still have low attendance. The key is building relationships and extending invitations…

**to students**
- Know names
- Recognize disinterest versus discomfort
- Forego expectations that your flock will mirror your preferences or practice
- Keep the door ajar
- Touch every student: physically or emotionally

**to potential instructors**
- Embrace community over competition
- Redefine your definition of excellence

C. Avoid Burnout

While we are barely beginning this venture and are filled with energy and enthusiasm, it’s important to address burnout. Allender writes that weariness isn’t about stress and fatigue so much as it is about our “core struggle to hope despite the circumstances and our limitations.” At the heart of burnout are expectations: of ourselves and ministry. Most of the time, we simply need a reminder that we are running a race and it demands all we can give, and sometimes more. However, in certain situations, change is necessary. Henri Nouwen discerned his current life teaching in prestigious institutions was no longer feeding his soul, resulting in spiritual disconnect. He made the dramatic switch to serving the mentally ill, which took him out of the limelight and into the heart of Christ. Most leaders don’t realize they are heading toward emotional, physical or spiritual collapse until it happens. In that quitting is never an option, we must learn to develop an *enduring spirit* through the following (adapted from Hybels, Courageous Leadership):

- **Learn to say “NO”**. Make your calling sure and stay focused. In other words, fulfill your ministry and learn not to do things.
- **Depend on the Holy Spirit for clarity re: your calling**. He is the potter; you are the clay.
- **Develop the courage to change**. Examine yourself and examine your life. Then change whatever you can change that will lighten your load and help you prevail in your calling (paraphrase of 1 Tim. 4:16).
- **Accept things you can’t change**. There are “thorns” in all of our lives. Talk to God with authenticity. Claim His grace (2 Corinthians 12:9). Take one day with God at a time.
- **Define your posse**. Find people who will bear your burdens, and whose burdens you are willing to bear. Even Jesus relied on His “people” (Galatians 6:2; Matthew 26:38).
- **Adapt an eternal perspective**. Decide now to be steadfast, immovable, courageous and trusting. Keep serving, proclaiming, discipling, shepherding and hugging the midline. REGARDLESS. Don’t wait till the storm hits (1 Corinthians 15:8).
Paul reminds us that if we press on we will see fruit. Weariness is nothing to be ashamed of or surprised by. Our companions are here to remind us of the prize that we are all pressing forward to receive, and the rest our souls can take along the way through the knowledge that we aren’t alone in our efforts - rather we are yoked eternally to our savior!

D. Deal with Doubt
Brooke taught me that doubt as a leader does not disqualify. In fact, it’s another avenue the enemy can use to discourage. In times of doubt pray the honest prayer of the father in Mark 9, “I believe, help me with my unbelief” and spend some time in the appropriate spiritual disciplines below. Doubt is a normal opportunity to reconnect with Christ in an even more powerful way, as well as become a more empathetic and wise leader.

Hebrews 4 speaks directly to doubt and its counterpart, belief. Through it we find rest, versus the restlessness and angst of wondering and worrying. Make belief a practice in and of itself. Choose to believe by showing up to build relationships, prepare for classes, extend invitations and maintain a personal practice with the Lord that includes prayer, worship and wellness. He WILL provide.

Finally, doubt doesn’t remove you from the mission - Matthew 28:16-20 speaks to the disciples that were unwilling to “risk themselves totally” by worshipping Jesus post-resurrection. The NIV version says, “some doubted.” Regardless, Jesus was undeterred and sent them out into the world to make disciples of all nations through baptism and teaching. You, too, are called by our Lord to take part in the great commission. Don’t be hindered by your doubt.

E. Establish Boundaries
Boundary issues generally occur early in our development, but can have mild to devastating effects on our lives and ministries. James 1:8 (MSG) indicates the results of “keeping all your options open,” trying to work without clear personal parameters: not only does God not provide direction, we are robbed of our peace of mind. It’s paramount we understand three lessons when it comes to boundaries to grow healthy ministries so everything is done with a “cheerful heart” (2 Cor. 9:7).

1. Walls have Gates
   This can be a good thing and a bad thing. Learning to set healthy boundaries and maintain them is a fluid process of inviting in the good and holy, and ushering out the harmful. Consider Nehemiah rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. The walls allowed for healthy safe community within and protection from without.

   Reflection: What are some examples of things that need to flow in and out of your gates on a regular basis?
Session 9: Growing Your Ministry God’s Way

2. **Count the Cost**  
   **Luke 14:28 - 30**

   Sacrificing for Jesus does not mean we leave our gates wide open to anyone and every opportunity that comes knocking. It’s not a matter of quantity as in “the more I do, the better.” The sacrifice Jesus asks for is doing things we’d rather not - whether emotional, financial or even in terms of our time. The point is, if He asks we have the time. It just might mean giving up something else that’s we would rather continue. Don’t forget, however, that service is not always a sacrifice. Oftentimes it’s our greatest joy and peace.

   “Boundary - injured individuals make promises and then do one of two things: 1) They resentfully make good, or 2) they fall on the promise. Boundary - developed people, however, make good freely and gladly. Or they don’t promise at all.” (Boundaries, p. 284)

3. **Guilt is on Your Property**

   Other people don’t make you feel guilty. If you are often experiencing guilt it’s likely your emotional brain was conditioned by a controlling parent. Guilt isn’t an emotion like sadness or anger. It’s something legal, and before it gets better, it’s likely to get worse. Ask God to help you recognize it for what it is and praise Him when you begin to discern what belongs outside of your walls.

   Our ministries should be motivated by love, period. Otherwise when we fail, we will experience “worldly sorrow,” which results in guilt and death, versus “godly sorrow” (2 Cor. 7:10), which looks at the hurt we have caused others rather than how “bad” we are (Boundaries, p. 264 - 265).

**Soul Care and the Four Paths**

Bill Hybels, author of Courageous Leadership, recommends that Christian leadership spend approximately half their time in worship and study - alone with God.

Leadership as a Holy Yoga instructor carries significant responsibility because the Lord has given you a position of influence. There will be times you face divine doubt, self-doubt, loneliness and burnout. You will also be tempted by achievement and power, among other things. Such times mirror Moses’ 40 years in the wilderness developing a relationship with God following his call to lead (see Oswald Chambers 10/13). **Learning to abandon oneself to God is far more important than personal holiness.** Being with God in the wilderness teaches us to hold open a heart space versus relying on “doing” for God - a key purpose in practicing the disciplines. They are critical to preempting such moments/periods and to delivering you safely through them.
Which disciplines you practice depends on your unique personality. This information applies to your students as well - by developing a strong practice for yourself, you will remain rooted in Christ and a sound resource for helping them develop a stronger vertical and horizontal in their lives.

Classical yoga names four paths, based on four basic temperaments, to pursuing “enlightenment.” They are

1. **Jnana Yoga**: The path of wisdom and knowledge. Appeals to the philosophical and intellectual temperament.
2. **Bhakti Yoga**: The path of love and devotion. Appeals to the emotional temperament.
3. **Raja Yoga**: The path to self-control and mastery, particularly as it relates to mind control through meditation. Can relate to physical practices as well. Appeals to the mystical and scientific temperament. Renewing vs. emptying. Well known as the 8-limb path of yoga described by Patanjali in the Sutras.
4. **Karma Yoga**: The path of selfless service. Generally able to see God in all people. Appeals to the active temperament.

**Spiritual Pathways**

In a similar vein, there are numerous Spiritual Pathways to help maintain the primary line. Within these pathways are innumerable practices or disciplines, in addition to practicing Holy Yoga, that you can employ to abide in Christ versus the world, some of which I have listed under the pathways; others can be found in Calhoun’s *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook.*

Jesus says in John 15:5: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.” The more you know about yourself and different paths of worship, the better leader you will be. Furthermore, you will have a better understanding of the students you work with, which will heighten your effectiveness as an educator. Based on his personal experience and a highly recommended book titled *Sacred Pathways* by Gary Thomas, Hybels lists seven pathways that, depending on our temperament, can bring us closer to God and help us become stronger leaders:

1. **The Relational Pathway** (common for leaders)
   - Group Bible Study
   - Hospitality
   - Mentoring
   - Group prayer
   - Communal worship services
   - Serving on a team
   - Retreats
2. **The Intellectual Pathway** (jnana) - enormous potential for influence
   
   *Paul, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Chuck Colson, Lee Strobel*
   
   - Bible Study
   - Journaling
   - Writing
   - Speaking

3. **The Serving Pathway** (karma) - the doers
   
   Any activity or task that directly serves the Kingdom

4. **The Contemplative Pathway** (raja) - lovers of solitude, often misunderstood.
   
   *Henri Nouwen, Thomas Merton, St. John of the Cross*
   
   - Prayer
   - Silence
   - Solitude
   - Meditation
   - Private worship
   - Discernment
   - Creative pursuits

5. **The Activist Pathway** - seekers of challenge who love a fast pace and leaving it all on the playing field. *John Wesley, George Whitfield, D.L. Moody*
   
   - Missionary work
   - Starting/running ministries

6. **The Creation Pathway** - lovers of nature; receive direct spiritual meaning from nature
   
   - Retreat
   - Simplicity
   - Unplugging

7. **The Worship Pathway** (bhakti) - greatly moved by the presence of God
   
   - Music
   - Spirit-lead/focused services
   - Celebration
   - Holy Communion
   - Gratitude
   - Sabbath

As Christ-followers it is our joy and delight to stay in step with the Spirit, to keep company with Jesus, and to tend to God’s gentle nudging within us. The presence of our Emmanuel *With Us* God is the fullness of joy offered to us (Psalm 16).
Proverbs 4:23 and Matthew 6:21 invite us to guard our hearts (souls) and check our motives. Our souls (hearts) will determine our motivation for leadership and willingness to be open to God. Caring for our souls is essential to following Jesus. The soul is the conduit through which our callings and spiritual gifting will flow. Reflecting upon our soul’s restrictions or constrictions allows us to fully realign ourselves to Christ. When we listen with the ear of our hearts to the movement of the Spirit within, we (as leaders, in this case) are less likely to go through spiritual/ministry burnout or engage in the practice of religiosity. We’re less likely to throw a band-aid on the souls of those given to us and are instead more likely to engage in contemplative listening and sincere compassion where grace abounds. Soul care allows us to see our shadow places with unveiled eyes and grow in hospitality and joyful expectancy that God is up to something.

“A soul is healthy to the extent that it experiences a strong connection and receptivity to God.” - Mindy Caliguire

In Leadership, soul care means asking (both of oneself and others) and clearly articulating an answer to the question “how is it with your soul?” We will teach what we will practice. Holy Yoga’s aim is to deepen people’s connection to Christ, on and off the mat. Teaching students to live a whole and holistic life with God means first exploring and practicing this ourselves. We can’t teach what we don’t know.

Fruits of Soul Care
- More alive in Christ; renewed vision; anchored more deeply in call.
- Growing awareness of spiritual gifting and an increased ability to live out of that gifting.
- Strengthened relationships, increased compassion and hospitality to the Spirit in others.
- Greater vitality and stamina in ministry; self-knowing; living out of boundaries.
- Increased ability to discern God’s voice and wait joyfully.

Don’t lead with your gifting or your natural inclinations. Your S.E.R.V.E. profile (see Jesus on Leadership by Gene Wilkes) is useful, but the Lord defines your service and effectiveness in all things for all time. Relying on gifting can block relationship with Christ and hinder development in other areas of your life and leadership. Lead by relying completely on His Spirit, will and way - including stepping into the uncomfortable, awkward tasks.

Conclusion
Remember, your obedience in being a leader who influences for Christ may be part of a much larger story you will never comprehend this side of heaven. While your obedience will produce fruit in your life, it’s likely it’s ultimately not about you. Furthermore, experienced leaders learn by…EXPERIENCE. Seek God’s will in any given situation, then take action. You have a family to advise, support and celebrate with you as we build this wall together.
Homework

*Must be submitted to Katie in order to receive your certificate of completion.*

We have covered an enormous amount of material related to your vertical and horizontal. Spend some time in prayer asking God to show you YOU, your place on the wall (gifting), the cracks in your wall (boundary issues). Revisit Session 2, Stewardship, and write a one page response as to what God is asking you to include or eliminate concerning your time, talent and treasure as it relates to your personal life and ministry.

Thank you!