

Discussion Questions

School of the Shepherds 102

Lesson 1: Becoming a Bible-Reading Leader

1. After listening to the message, how would you describe the Bible's unique nature in comparison to all other books?
2. What must every leader/elder know about [2 Timothy 3:15-17](#)? It is important that you list as many observations of this passage as you can. If you want, use a Bible commentary to help you master this passage.
3. List as many reasons as you can for why a church elder needs to regularly read Holy Scripture.
4. How does the consistent reading and study of Scripture "sanctify" ([John 17:17](#)) a church leader and protect him from the dangers of conforming to the philosophies of godless, secular society? Be specific.
5. What can you start doing now to get a better grasp on knowing "the whole counsel of God" ([Acts 20:27](#))?

Lesson 2: Becoming a Bible-Reading Leader (continued)

1. Of the many practical suggestions for being a more consistent, persistent Bible reader, which two were the most helpful to you personally? Explain why.
2. What do you think of the speaker's suggestion of reading (1) the New Testament epistles twice in a year, (2) the Old Testament over several years, and (3) only two gospels per year? What is his reasoning, and how would you adjust his suggestion according to your own ideas of Bible reading?
3. In what practical ways does having a regular place and time for reading and studying the Bible encourage good Bible reading habits?
4. What are the hindrances stopping you from becoming a consistent Bible reading leader? List them.
5. What are the ways you can overcome hindrances to consistent Bible reading?
6. What must every Christian leader/elder know about [James 1:22-25](#)? It is important that you list as many observations of this passage as you can. If you want, use a Bible commentary to help you understand this passage.

Lesson 3: Becoming a Memorizing Leader

1. Do you agree with the speaker's emphasis on the importance of memorizing the Word of God? Why or why not?
2. When you read about David, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah speaking about eating or tasting the Word of God, would that be a good description of your attitude toward the Word? Explain your answer.

3. What are your biggest challenges in memorizing the Word of God? What measures can you take to overcome these challenges?

Lesson 4: Becoming a Praying Leader

1. As a Christian leader or potential leader, what invaluable truths can you learn from [Acts 6:1-6](#) to guide your priorities as a Christian leader? List a number of these truths (or lessons).
2. What can you learn from [Ephesians 6:11-13](#) that you absolutely must know before you become a shepherd of God's people? List as many observations from this passage as you can.
3. What should you as an elder be doing personally that demonstrates that you take [Ephesians 6:18-19](#) seriously?
4. What specific ideas or suggestions did you learn from the speaker that could help you to improve your prayer life? What are they?

Lesson 5: Becoming a Praying Leader (continued)

1. The speaker spoke of prayer as warfare. Is such a statement irreverent? What are his reasons for making this extraordinary statement?
2. Realistically, how does one "pray without ceasing" and "give thanks in all circumstances" ([1 Thess. 5:17-18](#))? Give as many examples as you can in answer to these two biblical commands.
3. Elders often ask, what do I do as an elder? The speaker said that praying for the people under your pastoral care is one of the most important things that you can do for them. Even if you are not a potential elder, you are charged to pray for one another. How, then, will you begin to pray in a disciplined, organized way for the people under your pastoral care? What is your plan of action? Also, how will you also consistently pray for your missionaries and their gospel outreach? What is your plan to improve your prayer ministry for missionaries? Remember, even if you are not a potential elder, you also are charged to pray for the advancement of the gospel.
4. The speaker gave a number of practical suggestions for improving the elders' prayer time together. Which two ideas do you think would be most helpful for the elders' prayer time together?
5. Read the prayer quotations below and discuss with your mentor their impact on your life of prayer.

"What is both surprising and depressing is the sheer prayerlessness that characterizes so much of the Western church. It is surprising, because it is out of step with the Bible that portrays what Christian living should be; it is depressing, because it frequently coexists with abounding Christian activity that somehow seems hollow, frivolous, and superficial."

– D. A. Carson, *Praying with Paul: A Call to Spiritual Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), ix.

“The apostle wants [the Ephesians] to realize that a life of dependence on God in prayer is essential if they are to engage successfully in their warfare with the powers of darkness.”

– Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 484.

“When a man is speaking to God he is at his very acme. It is the highest activity of the human soul, and therefore it is at the same time the ultimate test of a man’s true spiritual condition. There is nothing that tells the truth about us as Christian people so much as our prayer life. Everything we do in the Christian life is easier than prayer.”

– D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 2:46.

Lesson 6: An Elder’s Personal Life and Growth

1. The speaker believes [Acts 20:28](#) is one of the principal texts for understanding biblical eldership and the work of the elders. Write out as many observations of this extraordinary text as you can. There is much more in-depth teaching in this passage than appears at first sight.
2. Many potential or new elders ask: “What do I do as an elder? What is my first duty as an elder, and where do I start?” How would you answer these questions? What verses of Scripture would you use to support your answers? How would you help them understand their first duty as an elder, based on examples from your own life?
3. According to [Hebrews 12:1](#), what is a “weight”? What are some weights in your own life that are hindering you in the Christian race and keeping you from effective, positive growth as a Christian leader?
4. The Scripture charges all believers to think of themselves as athletes in spiritual training for godliness. How would you practically apply the metaphor of an athlete in continuous training to your personal, daily training in Christlike growth? Give specific ideas.
5. Discuss together the two quotations by Douglas Smith and Bobby Clinton. In what ways do these two quotations both warn you of danger and encourage you as a potential new shepherd of God’s people?

Lesson 7: An Elder’s Personal Life and Growth (continued)

1. Of the five main verses the speaker listed in this lesson, which one most directly spoke to you about the necessity for continuous learning and growing as a Christian leader? Explain.
2. Read carefully [Hebrews 5:11-14](#). What must every church elder/leader learn from this significant passage that would protect them from failure and make them more effective leaders with people? List both the negative and positive lessons you glean from this passage. Use whatever Study Bible, commentary, or online tools you have to make your list.

3. What was the missionary from South America saying about the leaders with whom he once worked? Be specific. How does the missionary's evaluation of these leaders in his field of ministry relate to the point of the speaker's overall message?
4. What specific reasons can you give for why too many church elders have little passion for learning, growing, reading, study, or life change?
5. What specific changes do you need to make in your life to be a growing Christian and an influential leader among the Lord's people? What is hindering you from pressing forward for God?

Lesson 8: An Elder's Personal Life and Growth (continued)

1. Read [Acts 17:10-12](#)a. What invaluable lessons (plural) do you learn from the Bereans that will make you a more biblical and effective leader among God's people?
2. Paul charges the Ephesian elders to "be alert" to the many dangers surrounding them because of false teachers ([Acts 20:31](#)). What can you do practically to prepare yourself to "be alert," to be awake and watchful, in order to protect the church and especially the young people from the many false voices and philosophies this world is aggressively promoting? The speaker gave some suggestions.
3. Which of the ideas suggested by the speaker for continuous personal growth will you use to help you to consistently and persistently grow in your faith and the knowledge of the Scriptures?
4. As a church leader, why should you be concerned about world events, changing moral values, and new cultural trends? List as many reasons as you can.
5. What are some of the common distractions that are adversely affecting our potential, future church leaders so that they are not preparing themselves for future leadership of God's church?
6. It has been said, "You cannot be too busy driving to stop for gas." How does this statement apply to your shepherding task and personal life?

Lesson 9: An Elder's Motivation

1. Read Paul's apostolic prayer for all the Lord's people in Ephesian 3:14–21. From this passage, list all of Paul's prayer requests. Use whatever study Bible, commentary, or online tools you have to answer this question. Explain how you can use these prayer requests to enrich your own personal prayers for yourself and the people you pray for regularly.
2. Read Paul's magnificent explanation of the driving force of his life and ministry in [2 Corinthians 5:14-15](#). Explain the development of Paul's logic and his profound conclusion (judgment) that he wants us to understand about the motivating power of his life and reason for his many self-sacrificing actions.
3. What are the motivating reasons Paul gives the Ephesian elders to do their duty to guard God's flock from danger and to shepherd his church ([Acts 20:28](#))? What reasons did the speaker add that

motivate you to shepherd God's flock wholeheartedly? How have these reasons educated and motivated you to shepherd God's flock more diligently?

4. How has your view of the local congregation changed as a result of this lesson? How have you changed?
5. Francis Schaeffer said, "In God's sight there are no little people and no little places."* What kind of impact do those words have upon your thinking and work of shepherding God's people?

*From Bryan A. Follis, *Truth with Love: The Apologetics of Francis Schaeffer* [Crossway, 2006]