

LEADING *With* LOVE

Teacher's Guide

About the Author:

Alexander Strauch has served as a teacher and pastor elder at Littleton Bible Chapel in Littleton, Colorado, for more than thirty-five years. He and his wife, Marilyn, have four children and eight grandchildren.

Other books by Alexander Strauch include:

*Biblical Eldership:
An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*

*The Study Guide to Biblical Eldership:
Twelve Lessons for Mentoring Men for Eldership*

*The Mentor's Guide to Biblical Eldership
Twelve Lessons for Mentoring Men for Eldership
(coauthored with Richard Swartley)*

*The New Testament Deacon:
Minister of Mercy*

*The New Testament Deacon:
Study Guide*

The Hospitality Commands

*Agape Leadership:
Lessons in Spiritual Leadership from the Life of R.C. Chapman
(coauthored with Robert L. Peterson)*

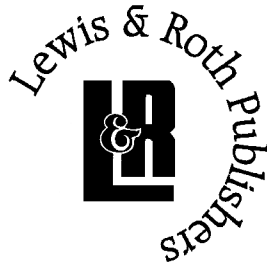
*Men and Women:
Equal Yet Different*

A Christian Leader's Guide to

LEADING *With* LOVE

Teacher's Guide

Alexander Strauch



Littleton, Colorado

Leading with Love: Teacher's Guide

ISBN: 0-93608-323-9

Copyright © 2007 by Alexander Strauch. All rights reserved.

Editor: Amanda Sorenson

Cover Design: Resolution Design

Scripture quotations are from THE HOLY BIBLE, ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing 2007

To receive a free catalog of books published by Lewis and Roth Publishers, please call toll free 800-477-3239 or visit our website, www.lewisandroth.org.

Lewis and Roth Publishers
P.O. Box 469
Littleton, Colorado 80160

Contents

Introduction	1
Lesson One: Love Is Indispensable to Christian Leadership	3
Connecting Love and Leadership	
Chapter 1 - Five Minus One Equals Zero	
Lesson Two: Love Is Indispensable to Christian Leadership	11
Chapter 2 - Love or Die	
Chapter 3 - The Motivating Power of Love	
Lesson Three: The Character and Behavior of a Loving Leader	23
Chapter 4 - Patient and Kind	
Chapter 5 - Not Envious or Boastful	
Lesson Four: The Character and Behavior of a Loving Leader	33
Chapter 6 - Not Arrogant or Rude	
Chapter 7 - Not Selfish or Easily Angered	
Lesson Five: The Character and Behavior of a Loving Leader	43
Chapter 8 - Not Resentful or Joyful over Evil	
Chapter 9 - Bears, Believes, Hopes, and Endures All Things	
Lesson Six: The Works of a Loving Leader	53
Chapter 10 - Expressing Love and Affection	
Chapter 11 - Practicing Hospitality	
Lesson Seven: The Works of a Loving Leader	63
Chapter 12 - Caring for People's Needs	
Chapter 13 - Laboring in Prayer	
Lesson Eight: The Works of a Loving Leader	75
Chapter 14 - Feeding Hungry Souls	
Chapter 15 - Protecting and Reprising Loved Ones	
Lesson Nine: The Works of a Loving Leader	85
Chapter 16 - Disciplining and Restoring the Wayward	
Lesson Ten: The Works of a Loving Leader	97
Chapter 17 - Managing Conflict a "More Excellent Way"	
Chapter 18 - Obeying Christ's Commands and Teaching Others to Obey	

Introduction

Connecting Love and Leadership

Pursue love....

1 Cor. 14:1

This guide is designed so that Christian leaders and teachers may study with other leaders and teachers of the book, *A Christian Leader's Guide to Leading with Love*. If you lead or teach people at any level in the church—as a Sunday school teacher, youth worker, women's or men's ministry leader, Bible study leader, administrator, music director, elder, deacon, pastor, missionary, or evangelist—this study is for you and your colleagues.

Jesus Christ, the master leader and teacher, trained his disciples as a group. Learning to work together in love was paramount to Jesus' training of his disciples. Indeed, he gave them a “new commandment” to love one another as he had loved them. By this community of love, the world would know that they were Christ's disciples (John 13:34-35).

In keeping with Christ's example, Christians learn about love from God's book, the Bible, and from interacting with one another—particularly in the context of the church, the family of God. Christlike love for others cannot be learned merely by reading a book in isolation from people. Math and history can be learned by reading a book, but not love. Love requires a minimum of two persons, the lover and the beloved.

By studying love in leadership in fellowship with other leaders and teachers, you will gain a more accurate understanding of loving leadership. Furthermore, and this is very important, you will create an atmosphere and mind-set among your local church leaders that will

continually reinforce the biblical principles of leading with love. As a result, you will help one another to become more loving, Christlike leaders.

A number of questions in this study requires that you explain the meaning of key Scripture passages. I encourage you to use Bible tools and commentaries to help you grasp the meaning of these significant passages. Other questions are designed to make you evaluate your ministry in terms of love and to help you apply the New Testament principles of love to your leadership. All the questions are meant to help you understand the (1) indispensability of love to Christian leadership, (2) the character and behavior of a loving Christian leader, and (3) the works of a loving Christian leader or teacher.

By studying together *Leading with Love*, you will in part fulfill the biblical injunction to “pursue love” (1 Cor. 14:1). But remember, learning to lead with love is a life-long process, not a single study.

This is the *Teacher’s Guide*. It will give you the right answers to the questions in the *Study Guide* along with many helpful suggestions for leading the study. It is best if the group leader completes the study guide first before looking at the teacher’s guide.

Lesson One

Love Is Indispensable to Christian Leadership

This lesson covers pages 1 to 17 of *Leading with Love*. Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Overview: This lesson covers the introduction and chapter one of the book, and 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 is the key text. The big idea is that love is absolutely indispensable to all that we (as Christians and, specifically, church leaders and teachers) do and that love is essential for the proper use of our spiritual gifts.

Questions five and six are two key questions. Don't rush over the verses in question five because they reveal the genuine heart of a loving leader. Christian leaders should know these verses well, but most important, they should live them (James 1:22)! Also emphasize questions ten and fourteen.

NOTE: Do not spend a lot of time on questions one and two. Focus your attention on questions five and six, which are more significant.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1 Cor. 12:31-13:3)

Let all that you do be done in love. (1 Cor. 16:14)

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly. (1 Peter 4:8)

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Col. 3:14)

Owe no one anything, except to love each other. (Rom. 13:8)

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8)

Connecting Love and Leadership

1. The author lists four reasons for applying the doctrine of love to Christian leadership. Which one of these four reasons do you find most stimulating to your thinking about the connection between love and leadership? Explain your choice.

This question is designed to help people begin sharing their experiences and concerns about love and leadership.

Points one and three were my primary concerns when writing the book, with one being my chief concern.

Chapter 1: Five Minus One Equals Zero

2. As you read D. L. Moody's account of his encounter with the biblical doctrine of love, which two of his statements most challenged your thinking about love? Explain your choices.

There is no "right" answer to this question. My two choices are:

First, "I tell you there is one thing that draws above everything else in the world, and that is love."¹ I like to connect this statement by Moody with Michael Green's statement on page 3: "Love is the most attractive quality in the world. And it lies at the heart of Christianity."² I choose these statements because love is a powerful evangelistic force (John 13:34-35). The self-sacrificing love of Christ for sinners and Christlike love among believers draws and attracts people to the gospel.

Second, "A doctor or a lawyer, may do good work without love, but God's work cannot be done without love."³ Chapter One explains why this is true. Without love, the gifts of leading and teaching are profitless—perhaps even destructive to others.

3. Apart from Jesus Christ, why is Paul the most important New Testament figure in regard to the Christian doctrine of love and leadership? List as many reasons as you can.

Paul writes the most about love. His life and letters provide more actual examples of loving leadership than any other New Testament author.

By calling Paul on the road to Damascus, God uniquely displays his love to undeserving sinners (1Tim.1:12-16). Paul is the paramount New Testament example of the life-transforming power of the new birth, the indwelling of a person by the Holy Spirit, and the life of love (1 Tim. 1:16).

Although Paul was brilliant, multi-gifted and totally dedicated, he teaches that without love he would be “a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor. 13:1).

God expects us to follow his servant’s example of loving leadership (2 Tim. 3:10, 14).

Paul was a divinely inspired writer and apostle of Jesus Christ, and we are to obey his many commands to love (1 Cor. 14:1; 16:14).

The answers to this question explain why I often quote Paul and frequently use examples of his leadership throughout this book. Be sure everyone understands the significance of the apostle Paul’s life and letters because this is a foundational concept for understanding Leading with Love.

4. Using the verses below, describe Paul’s leadership style and character before he was converted to Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-9).

- ◆ But Saul [Paul] was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. (Acts 8:3)
- ◆ But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1)
- ◆ And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities. (Acts 26:11)
- ◆ For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. (Gal. 1:13)
- ◆ I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. (1 Tim. 1:13)

Paul was prepared to kill for his religious beliefs. He was fierce, bold, uncompromising, violent, fanatically zealous, proud, religiously self-righteous, undiplomatic, and unrelenting in his persecution of Jewish Christian believers. He created the first Christian inquisitions. His pre-conversion behavior

reminds me of Pascal's famous statement: "Men never do evil so completely and so cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."

NOTE: Questions five and six are the two most important questions in this lesson. Don't rush over the verses in question five. They reveal the genuine heart of a loving leader.

5. What do the following verses reveal about Paul's leadership style and character after his conversion to Christ?

Paul's encounter on the Damascus Road with the glorified Christ transformed him from a proud, intolerant Pharisee into a loving evangelist and shepherd. He sacrificed his life for people who were once his most bitter enemies. The zealous, cruel persecutor became the outstanding example and teacher of Christian love. The wolf became the gentle shepherd. His patience, meekness, and gentleness were all a result of the love of God poured into his heart by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

The following verses should dramatically impact your thinking about Christian leadership.

Romans 9:1-3

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

Although Paul's fellow Jews tried repeatedly to kill him, he had "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" in his heart for their lost condition. He did not hate or despise them. Indeed, so great was his love for his "kinsmen according to the flesh," that he was willing to be "accursed and cut off from Christ" if they could be saved. He was ready to give his life for theirs. Of course, this was impossible, but it demonstrates his sincere love for them.

Moses also loved Israel, and in a similar way said, "But now, if you will forgive this sin [worship of the Golden Calf]—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written" (Ex. 32:32).

1 Corinthians 16:24

My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Paul knew the Corinthians might think that he despised them because of their problems and the grief they had caused him. So he ends his letter by assuring them that he doesn't despise them—he loves them: "My love be with you all."

2 Corinthians

Second Corinthians is one of Paul's most personal and emotional letters. Although the letter issues stern warnings, note that it is filled with expressions of love conveyed in deeply personal, fatherly tones.

2 Corinthians 1:24

Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

Paul wasn't a despotic leader like Diotrephes (3 John 9-10). He knew that Jesus Christ had strictly forbidden his disciples from acting like rulers over their fellow brothers and sisters (Mark 9:33-35; 10:35-45; Matt. 23:6-12; Luke 22:24-27). Leaders and teachers who follow the model set by Jesus Christ are humble, loving servants leaders, not lords, rulers, or dictators. See also 1 Peter 5:3.

This doesn't imply that Paul had no authority as an apostle of Christ, for he certainly did (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10). However, he used that authority not for "self," but for humbly building up and protecting the church.

Here he specifically states that he works with them so that "their faith may be of such deep genuineness that their joy, like his, may be full in the Lord."

2 Corinthians 2:4

For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

The problems in the church at Corinth and the relationship between Paul and the church had become so bad that Paul was forced to write a stern letter of rebuke to the church. (For a full explanation of this situation, see pages 154-156 of *Leading with Love*.)

Paul reveals that he wrote his stern letter out of love, not self-justification or anger. It was because of the "abundant love" he had for them that he faced them squarely with their sins. The whole situation had caused him "many tears" and much "anguish of heart." Paul was not a cold, aloof leader and teacher. He was a tender-hearted and loving shepherd.

2 Corinthians 6:4, 6

We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way...by...patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love.

In defending his apostolic ministry to the Corinthians, Paul presents to them his "credentials"—his suffering for the gospel and the qualities of "patience," "kindness," and "genuine love" that characterize the true

servant of God. This supernatural love attested to his authentic apostolic ministry, proving him to be a true “servant of God.”

False apostles (2 Cor. 11:13-14), on the other hand, have to fake love. Like actors, they act out the part of a loving leader. Paul, in comparison, had “genuine love” created by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

2 Corinthians 7:3

I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together.

Paul expresses his love for the Corinthians in the strongest love language possible. Paul “speaks with the utmost devotion of the true lover.” He reminds them that they are permanently embedded in his heart, thoughts, affections, and life. They are so bound together through Christ that nothing can pull them apart. His love for them encompasses death as well as life.

2 Corinthians 12:14-15

Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

James Denny refers to his passage as “one of the most movingly tender passages in the whole Bible.” Paul craved the Corinthians’ affections, not their pocketbooks. They, not their material possessions were Paul’s true treasure.

As their spiritual father in the gospel, he tells them: “I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.” In fatherly love, Paul will completely sacrifice himself for them—his money, his health, his time, his reputation, affections, and life. He couldn’t possibly give more.

Tragically, the Corinthian response was not reciprocal. “There is no limit to his love for them,” remarks F. F. Bruce, yet “it is sad that their love for him is so limited.”⁴ They doubted his love, and believed the slanderous accusations of false teachers. So Paul places the question before them, “If I love you the more, am I to be loved the less?”

Philippians 1:8; 4:1

I hold you in my heart.... For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Using intensely emotional language, Paul confesses to the Philippians that he carries them all in his “heart,” that is, at the deepest personal level

of his being (v. 7). He declares that his personal affection for them is nothing less than Christ's own love working in him for them (v. 8). His love is actually "rooted in a love that originates in and is fostered by Christ Jesus.... Paul loves them as Christ loves them and because Christ loves them through him."

At the end of the letter to the Philippians, he again uses the most endearing language, in what commentator Gordon Fee refers to as "the flood of affectionate terms."⁵ He calls them "my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown...my beloved" (Phil. 4:1). Paul reminds the Philippians that they are his "beloved" brothers and sisters, the prized objects of his love and equally brothers and sisters in the divine family of God. Thus he longs for them as any family member would long for a family member separated by distance. Finally, he tells them that they are his joy and crown and his delight and honor, both presently and in the future presence of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

Be sure to stress these verses. Using the language of family love, Paul reminds them how he had treated them when he was with them. He likens himself to a nursing mother who gently cares for her children.

Next he lays bare his tender affection for the Thessalonian believers: "being affectionately desirous of you." Paul wasn't just a professional preacher or scholar; he shared his very life with them. His life was wrapped up in theirs, thus they are "very dear" to him.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Paul uses beautiful, vivid, intimate family images to describe his leadership style. Like a father who wants only the best for his children, he exhorted, encouraged, and challenged them to live "in a manner worthy of God." Like a gentle mother (v. 7) and strong father (v. 11), he cared for his converts.

Reflections

Much work within the local church (and among local churches) is done in group settings: elders' and deacons' meetings, staff meetings,

board meetings, committee meetings, and all-church meetings. The longer we work together, the more we get to know one another's faults and annoying personality traits, which can make life together frustrating. Understanding the New Testament principles of love will significantly enhance healthy group leadership, group meetings, and congregational life as a whole.

Leading with Love, page 2

6. In light of what we have seen of Paul's change of character and style of leadership, what change would you like to make in your ministry with people?

Here is the place to apply personally the above verses to one's own leadership and teaching ministry. Some key responses should be: (1) prayer for deeper love for those we lead or try to reach with the gospel; (2) greater willingness to sacrifice our time, money, and energy to serve others; (3) less self-ish or defensive behavior; (4) more gentle and patient responses to people; (5) not be afraid to openly express our love for those we lead; (6) use leadership authority with humility; (7) allow the love of Christ to shine through us to others.

7. First Corinthians 13:1-3 is considered to be one of Paul's most skillfully written passages. What is the main point of this literary masterpiece?

The main point is that love is indispensable to all that we do. No matter how extraordinary one's spiritual gift or how sacrificial one's service, if it is not motivated and colored by love, it is profitless. In God's eyes, gifts and acts of service equal zero if love is not the controlling power behind them. There is no compromise on this point. As Moody said, "God's work cannot be done without love."⁶

8. Scripture teaches that spiritual gifts are divinely bestowed upon believers. According to the following passages, what are God's purposes for giving his people these gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:7, 25

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

That there many be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

A diversity of gifts is given for the "common good," that is, the good of the church community as a whole, "not merely self-affirmation, self-fulfillment,

or individual status. The Spirit produces visible effects for the profit of all, not for self-glorification,”⁷ writes A. C. Thiselton.

In verse 25, Paul uses the body image for the church. Each member of the body is gifted to serve each other in love. So that there is no division in the body, each member is to be equally concerned for one another’s needs and for the unity of the body. What a wonderful plan!

1 Corinthians 14:3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 19, 26, 31

The key word is “build up” or “edification.” Gifts are nothing if they do not build up the body of Christ. Gifts also are to instruct and encourage others. Thus Paul says, “strive to excel in building up the church” with one’s spirited gift (v. 12).

Emphasize verse 26. It provides the overarching principle for all church activity: “Let all things be done for building up.” Remember, God gives gifts to put us in the construction business, not the destruction business.

Ephesians 4:11-16

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith...to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine....

The five gifts listed in verse 11 are all gifts involving speaking the Word of God. These gifts especially “prepare” or “equip” believers for effective Christian ministry. These gifts also help believers grow into Christlike maturity and protect them from the many evils of false teaching. As a result, the body of Christ is built up. The point is, spiritual gifts involving speaking the Word are to equip, protect, and help the saints mature. They are not for prideful self-display or making personal profit.

1 Peter 4:10-11

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ

For serving one another, not self; for speaking the oracles of God; so that God may be glorified.

9. In what way(s) did the Corinthians misunderstand God’s purpose for spiritual gifts and err in practicing those gifts?

Instead of using their God-given gifts to build up their fellow believers and to unite the church family, they “used their gifts for personal ego gratification”

(page 10). Rather than serving others, they drew attention to themselves. Rather than thinking of the good of all within the church, they thought independently and selfishly. As a result, they caused strife and division within the church.

10. As a Christian leader or teacher, how can you protect yourself from repeating the same sins and mistakes that the Corinthians made in regard to the practice of spiritual gifts and one's service to others?

Be sure you know what the Bible teaches about the purpose of spiritual gifts.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict you of misusing your gifts or using people for your own sinful ends.

Immediately confess prideful displays of "self" over others as sin.

Be part of a leadership team that is willing to confront sinful, unloving behavior among its members.

Be humble! We all have a lot to learn about ourselves, and God uses others to teach us. When people complain about your behavior, listen, don't justify. They might be God's instruments to correct and improve your character.

11. List some reasons why "knowledge" without love is dangerous to the local church and the whole body of Christ.

Christians with heads full of knowledge but lacking love suffer from pride and self-deception. They inevitably elevate themselves and demean others, thus creating division and setting a bad example of the true knowledge that "builds up" others, not the self.

Read to the group 1 Corinthians 8:1-3, 11-13, which shows a church that is full of knowledge yet is tearing itself apart, not building itself up. The problem was knowledge separated from love, which has too often divided the body of Christ. Read also John Short's powerful quotation on page 11.

12. Explain how it is possible for a person to give away all his or her possessions to feed the poor and yet fail to make that sacrifice as an act of love. Can you give a biblical example of loveless sacrificial giving?

Even sacrificial giving can be done without love. A person can give away everything but be wrongly motivated because of a craving for recognition and praise that is stronger than the need to grasp one's possessions. The desire of some Christians to be known as spiritual giants and sacrificial givers is motivated by serving self, not serving others. For a biblical example, see Acts 5:1-11: "Ananias and Sapphira gave in order to enhance their personal prestige in the sight of the church. They gave to receive the praise of people" (page 13).

13. What do you think the Corinthians thought when they first heard Paul's letter read in the congregational meeting? Use your sanctified imagination.

Silence must have fallen over the congregation as chapter 13 verses 1-3 were read publicly. The Corinthians must have been shocked. Some must have felt shame and deep conviction of soul upon hearing of their selfish behavior and worldly attitudes. Others, however, persisted in their self-deception and prideful ways as the book of 2 Corinthians reveals. Religious pride is not easily broken, and a church divided is difficult to mend.

14. How has *Lesson One* on 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 changed your way of thinking about yourself and the ministry God has given to you?

I have found the text of 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 to be deeply convicting. It puts Christian ministry into proper perspective and sets out clearly the priority of love in everything I do (1 Cor. 16:14).

I have learned that whatever spiritual gifts God has given me must be used for the good of all: to serve others, not self, and to build-up and unite the church.

I have been made painfully aware of how easy it is to use my gifts for selfish ends.

Finally, I have seen that the loveless sins of the believers at Corinth are alive and well in my own life and church. Thus I and my fellow believers are in need of repentance and genuine confession for our lovelessness and stubborn selfishness.

Reflections

Without love, our most extraordinary gifts and highest achievements are ultimately fruitless to the church and before God. In Paul's way of thinking, nothing has lasting, spiritual value unless it springs from love.

Leading with Love, page 16

End lesson one by reading to the group "A Modern Paraphrase" on page 16, and then close in prayer.

Notes

1. William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: Revell, 1900), 139.
2. Michael Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 97.
3. Richard Ellsworth Day, *Bush Aglow: The Life Story of Dwight Lyman Moody, Commoner of Northfield* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1936), 146; see also D. L. Moody, *Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1895), 87.
4. F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1971), 250-251.
5. Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 388.
6. William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 139.
7. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 936.

Lesson Two

Love Is Indispensable to Christian Leadership

This lesson covers pages 19 to 35 of *Leading with Love*. Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Overview: This lesson covers chapters two and three of the book. Revelation 2:4, an extremely significant passage of Scripture to every Christian leader and teacher, is the key text. So make sure your group grasps the importance and meaning of this Scripture passage. The lesson addresses the motivating power of love in a leader's life, specifically the threefold motivating power of love: Christ's amazing love for us, our love for Christ and love for others.

This lesson is long, so don't get bogged down in questions one through three. Questions four and seven should be given adequate discussion time. Questions eight through ten are key questions that cover two life-changing passages of Scripture (2 Cor. 5:14-15; Eph. 3:17-19). Question thirteen could take up your entire group discussion time, so set limits on how much time you will devote to discussion. The question is designed to stimulate people to think about practical ways they can develop their love relationship with God through Christ.

NOTE: This is a long lesson, so don't get bogged down in question one.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.... But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. (Rev. 2:2, 4-5)

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Cor. 5:14-15)

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets. (Matt. 22:37-40)

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)

Chapter 2: Love or Die

1. The church in the city of Ephesus had many commendable qualities. What were these positive qualities (see Rev. 2:1-3, 6)?

Quickly move through these commendations. Remember, these qualities should characterize every church. The list can be broken into three major groups.

FIRST GROUP

“Your works:” An overarching statement referring to general activities and conduct.

“Your toil:” As a church body, they were hard-working, busy Christians, not lazy, passive ones.

“Your patient endurance:” It wasn’t easy being a church in a hostile, pagan city like Ephesus (Acts 19:8-40), but they had staying power. They didn’t give up or go back on their faith. They persevered in their labors, in trials, and in persecutions.

SECOND GROUP

“You cannot bear with those who are evil:” The church was intolerant of evil people who professed the faith but were heretics (v.6) who lived morally sinful lives.

“You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false:” They were faithful to the truth and courageous. When self-proclaimed apostles came to the church, they tested their claims of apostolic authority against Scripture. The church found these teachers to be agents of Satan, not Christ’s representatives. Therefore, they rejected them and their teachings. Here is a doctrinally serious church that actively protected the purity of the gospel and the life of the church. No wonder they hated “the works of the Nicolaitans” which Jesus “also hated” (v.6). See also Acts 20:28-31.

THIRD GROUP

“You are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake and you have not grown weary” (v.3) Most likely this refers to bearing up under trying conflicts with the false teachers. They persevered for the purity of the gospel; indeed, they had “not grown weary.” What a fine testimony to their loyalty and dedication to the gospel and Jesus Christ.

2. Despite all its commendable qualities, something was dreadfully wrong in the church at Ephesus. In your own words, clearly describe the problem. Be as specific as possible.

Be sure the group answers this question accurately and thoroughly. The missing quality in this church was love, the Christlike love described in the New Testament (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16-18). The pulse of love was weakening and something needed to be done urgently or death awaited the church.

Read carefully pages 21-22 for a thorough answer. Also read to the group D.A. Carson’s quote on page 25.

3. a. Using biblical terminology, describe the kind of love God requires of his people toward himself.

According to Deuteronomy 6:4-6, God is to be loved with the totality of our being: with all our mind, emotion, and strength. He is to be loved with undivided loyalty. Jesus Christ is to be loved supremely above all other people (Matt. 10:37).

b. Describe the kind of love God requires among believers toward one another.

The kind of love we are to exhibit toward one another is the selfless, self-sacrificing love of Calvary. First John 3:16 best describes the degree of love we are to display toward one another: “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” This passage is based on John 13:34 “love one another as I

have loved you.” Jesus and his cross set the standard for our love for one another. Read to the group B. B. Warfield’s quote on page 32.

c. Describe the kind of love God requires of believers toward unbelievers.

Use the example of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) and Paul’s love for Israel (Rom. 9:1-3) to answer this question. Note the degree of love and emotion expressed in both of these examples. See also Col. 4:5-6; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 Thess. 3:12.

Reflections

Unlove is deadly. It is a cancer. It may kill slowly but it always kills in the end. Let us fear it, fear to give room to it as we should fear to nurse a cobra. It is deadlier than any cobra. And just as one minute drop of the almost invisible cobra venom spreads swiftly all over the body of one into whom it has been injected, so one drop of the gall of unlove in my heart or yours, however unseen, has a terrible power of spreading all through our Family, for we are one body—we are parts of one another....

If unlove be discovered anywhere, stop everything and put it right, if possible at once.¹

Amy Carmichael

4. List the three remedies Jesus prescribes for the loveless church (Rev. 2:5, 7) and explain how a local church could implement each one.

The three remedies are:

- ◆ *Remember from where you have fallen*
- ◆ *Repent*
- ◆ *Do the works you did at first*

Here are some general ideas: When a person or group within the church recognizes the problem of a loss of love, the first thing to do is to make this realization a matter of prayer. If the person or group sensing a lack of love is not the pastor, an elder, or a deacon, the person or group should go to the leadership of the church to humbly and tactfully present the problem.

When the problem is acknowledged, the next step is to teach Revelation 2:1-7 and other key New Testament passages on love. Let the Word of God convict and move hearts. During this teaching time, reflections on better days and practices can be made.

Next, a call to congregational prayer and repentance needs to be made. This will include a call to a change of behavior and thinking.

Finally, a practical plan for renewing love should be laid out before the congregation. Jesus says, "do the works you did at first." These works need to be identified and practiced.

Remind the group that it is our natural tendency to weaken in our love for Christ and others. Therefore, renewal and revitalization of love will not be a once-in-a-lifetime act but will occur repeatedly in the life of the church.

End question four by reading Nathaniel Vincent's prayer on page 25.

5. How would you answer someone who accused Jesus Christ of not being loving because of his severe threat of judgment on the church at Ephesus? (For help, see Acts 20:28; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 3:19.)

Jesus Christ is not a passive lover. He loves the church and gave his life for her (Eph. 5:25-26). He proved his love by action, not just empty, pretty words. It is because he loves the church that he is jealous for her and must correct and discipline her for her own good. Jesus Christ is also the church's Lord and Master and as such has the right to demand proper love from his blood-bought people. Jesus is not the mild-mannered humanist that liberal theologians have imagined. He is judge as well as Savior (2 Cor. 5:10; James 5:9), and he will judge his people.

6. What kind of responsibilities does Revelation 2:2-6 suggest should be a part of a Christian leader's and teacher's work load?

Christian leaders must always be alert to the ever-present dangers of false teachers and the natural tendency of believers to weaken in love and spiritual fervency. They should diligently protect the church from false teachers who claim to be accredited teachers of God but are not. This means they should at all times be prepared to defend the truth of the gospel. When needed, they should lead the congregation in repentance, prayer, and renewal of love. Moreover, they should see themselves as examples to the people of hard work, service to others, and patient endurance in the face of trials and persecution. As such, they should always be teaching and modeling the "new commandment" (John 13:34-35).

7. How should the truths of Revelation 2:4-5 profoundly affect a Christian leader's and teacher's personal spiritual life?

As leaders and teachers of God's household, we must understand that our first priority is to protect and cultivate our love relationship with God and Christ (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 10:37; Luke 10:38-42; John 21:15-17). Read to the group C. H. Macintosh's quotation on page 24 of Leading with Love. This is a significant quotation for those who serve the Lord in leadership positions. To better understand how to cultivate a deeper, more intimate relationship with God through Christ, see pages 18-19 in the Study Guide.

We also need to protect ourselves from being self-satisfied with religious externalism or doctrinal rightness. We do not want to fall into the same trap as the Pharisees and miss the true, inner heart of love for God (Luke 11:42). See pages 24-25.

We need always to be aware of our need for personal spiritual renewal and revitalization. This includes personal confession and repentance for our lack of love for God and others. We cannot breathe the life-breath of love into the church if it isn't in us. We can't help others love God if we don't love God as we should.

Reflections

In a sin-saturated world, repentance and spiritual revitalization are never-ending tasks. So let the leaders and teachers of the church be prepared to lead the congregation in repentance for lovelessness and hypocritical love (Rom. 12:9). Love can be revived and grow afresh (Rev. 2:5). The fire can be rekindled. Lives can be rededicated to Christ and one another. The fresh life of love can be breathed into prayer, Bible study, evangelism, worship, and fellowship with others. To that end let us continually pray and work.

Leading with Love, page 25

Chapter 3: The Motivating Power of Love

NOTE: Questions eight to ten emphasize two extremely significant passages of Scripture. Know them well. Hit hard question 8. e. and the explanation of this segment of Scripture. Be certain that everyone in the group can explain 2 Corinthians 5:15.

8. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, Paul explains the “driving, motivating force of his life:”

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

It is essential that you understand this highly significant passage of Scripture. Give a brief explanation of each of the following key words and clauses. If you can, use a good commentary(s) or any other Bible tools.

a. What does the word *control* (Greek, *synechō*) mean in this context?

The verb *synechō* is translated in 2 Corinthians 5:14 as “control.” The verb conveys the idea of conforming, constraining, or restricting. Christ’s love directed all that Paul did. It was the controlling force behind Paul’s thinking, motives, and sacrificial service to people. It restrained Paul from living life for himself. Some translations render the verb as “compels” or “urges on” (NIV; NRSV). This is possible, but on the whole, “control” seems to be a better rendering.

b. “For the love of Christ controls us”

Knowing that Christ loved him enough to die for his sins upon the cruel cross of Calvary controlled and directed all of Paul’s life decisions. In the words of the songwriter: “Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.”

c. What does the word *concluded* (Greek, *krinō*) mean in this context? What point is Paul making by means of this key word?

This is an autobiographical statement. The word “concluded,” from the verb *krinō*, conveys here the idea of making a careful, thought-out judgment or conclusion based on the facts of the case. At the beginning of his Christian life, Paul concluded “that one has died for all, therefore all have died...that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him.”

d. “Therefore all have died”

In Adam “all sinned” and through Adam’s disobedience “sin came into the world...and death through sin, and so death spread to all men” (Rom. 5:12;

also 18-19; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-48). All people “in Adam” are spiritually dead and will experience eternal death as the penalty for their sin. But “in Christ,” all who place their faith in him are in a faith-union-relationship with him and thus have “died with Christ” (Rom. 6:8; also Col. 3:3) to the penalty of sin, which is death. Furthermore, those who are “in Christ” have died to the self-centered life and now live in the supernatural power of the resurrected life (Gal. 2:20; 6:14; Rom. 6:1-11).

e. “Those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sakes died and was raised”

Verse 15 repeats the statement “he died for all” and then adds a twofold purpose clause, both negative and positive.

“Those who live” are born-again Christians who have died and been raised with Christ to new life. They have the resurrection life of Christ in them through the indwelling Holy Spirit and, therefore, are truly alive “in Christ.”

“No longer live” shows a crucial turning point in life. There is the old, unregenerate life and the new life in the Spirit. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Negatively, we no longer are to live for ourselves. Positively, we now live our lives for our Lord Jesus Christ—the one who for our sakes died and rose again. This is fundamental teaching for understanding Christian living and sanctification. The Corinthians really didn’t understand how Paul no longer lived for himself and, therefore, was able to live a self-sacrificing life for them.

9. How would a proper understanding of 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 improve your leadership and teaching ministry?

NOTE: Don’t rush over answering this question. Be sure the group understands the logic of 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and its application to leadership ministry.

C. T. Studd answered this question when he said, “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”²

Understanding Christ’s love-motivated death for us provides the best motivating power for all leadership ministry. It moves us to gladly sacrifice our time, money, and lives for those we lead and teach. It leads us to become more Christlike leaders who are more pleasing to God.

Reflections

If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.

C.T. Studd

10. In Ephesians 3:17-19, Paul prays to the Father that we might be empowered by the Holy Spirit of God to comprehend the amazing “love of Christ:”

that you...may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of Christ’s love], and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

Why is it essential for you as a Christian leader to understand the amazing love of Christ and to continue probing its depths throughout life?

The amazing love of Christ gives us a greater love and appreciation for the gospel message and for God himself. It deepens our worship of God, service for others, and love for preaching the gospel. Continual growth in the knowledge of Christ’s love matures us as leaders and teachers. We must teach this knowledge to others so that they can grow in the knowledge of the amazing love of Christ, but we can’t excite others about Christ’s love if we are not excited about it.

In his commentary on Ephesians, Andrew T. Lincoln expands on the vastness and incomprehensible nature of knowing Christ’s love:

It is simply that the supreme object of Christian knowledge, Christ’s love, is so profound that its depths will never be sounded and so vast that its extent will never be encompassed by the human mind. That which it is absolutely necessary to know, in fact, surpasses knowledge. There is a note of ultimate mystery about the divine intervention of which Christ’s love is the manifestation, yet, as Caird says, “the attempt to know the unknowable is a paradox which is at the heart of all true religion.”³

11. Of the four examples of people who were motivated and transformed by “the love of Christ,” which one most touched your heart and mind? Explain why.

I found the quotation by the pioneer missionary to North America the most moving (pages 28-29). It most succinctly reveals the motivating power of Christ's love to move a person to make radical sacrifices for others. As the missionary states, "Only the love of Christ is competent" to make him leave wife and children for long periods of time to preach the gospel in dangerous and uncomfortable situations.

12. What are the connections between our leadership ministry and the "great and first commandment" to love God with the totality of our being? List as many answers as you can.

Loving God first and foremost:

- ◆ ***provides the correct motivating power for leadership;***
- ◆ ***demonstrates personal obedience to the great and first commandment;***
- ◆ ***enhances our effectiveness in ministry to people;***
- ◆ ***helps us to endure with joy the many hardships of leadership;***
- ◆ ***aids us in teaching others to love God;***
- ◆ ***makes us better examples to those we lead;***
- ◆ ***draws people to God;***
- ◆ ***pleases God:***

"Ministry for ministry's sake does not please God; rather, it is ministry born of love for him that is pleasing and acceptable (1 Cor. 13:1-3)" (page 30).

Reflections

We should, of course, seek to continually improve our skills in leadership, personal discipline, time management, interpersonal relationships, and teaching. But above all these things, we should seek to increase our knowledge and enjoyment of Christ and deepen our love for him (Phil 3:8-14).

Leading with Love, page 30

13. Below is a list of ways to help develop and maintain *a deeper love relationship with God through Jesus Christ:*

- (1) by a personal commitment (with the Holy Spirit's help) to obey "the great and first commandment" to love God unreservedly and to love the Lord Jesus Christ preeminently above all others (Deut. 6:4-5;

13:3; Jos. 23:11; Ps. 27:4; Matt. 10:37; 22:37-38; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28; 14:26; John 21:15-17; Phil. 1:21; 3:13-14).

(2) by living in obedience to Christ's commands: "For this is the love of God [love for God], that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3).

(3) by not loving the world and its idols: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father [love for the Father] is not in him" (1 John 2:15; also James 4:4).

(4) by loving and serving God's people: "For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother" (1 John 4:20-21; also 11-12; James 1:27).

(5) by reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word, the Scriptures, in order to know him as the great God that he is (Deut. 17:18-20). "For consider what great things he has done for you" (1 Sam. 12:24). D. A. Carson doesn't hesitate to say,

but I doubt that it is possible to obey the first command without reading the Bible a great deal.... How on earth shall we love him with heart and mind if we do not increasingly know him, know what he likes and what he loathes, know what he has disclosed, know what he commands and what he forbids?⁴

(6) by communing regularly with him in prayer: "Be constant in prayer" (Rom.12:12). This will include confession of sin, praise, and intercession for others.

(7) by worshiping him in song, praise, thanksgiving, and "in remembrance" of his substitutionary death through the elements of the bread and cup (1 Cor. 11:23-32; Rev. 5:9-14).

a. Of these seven ways to deepen your love relationship with God through Christ, which two are the most difficult for you to practice consistently? Explain why.

For me, it would be (2) and (3). The fast-paced, busy demands of Western society makes quiet time with God a struggle. In order to pray and read God's Word, I must resist many distractions that fight for my time.

b. Of these seven ways to deepen your love relationship with God through Christ, which two help you most to maintain your relationship with Christ? Explain.

For me, it would be (5) and (6). These are fundamental daily disciplines that draw me into daily contact with Christ: The Word of God increases my knowledge and appreciation of him, and prayer lets me talk to him.

c. Of these seven ways to deepen your love relationship with God through Christ, which one needs your immediate attention? Describe several steps you can take to improve.

For me, it would be (2). I need to continue cultivating a heart that delights in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. This requires daily, honest confession of disobedience, which is sin, and seeking, through his Word, to know and love him more.

Reflections

If I allow my work to get between my heart and the Master, it will be little worth. We can only effectually serve Christ as we are enjoying Him. It is while the heart dwells upon His powerful attractions that the hands perform the most acceptable service to His name.... The man who will present Christ to others must be occupied with Christ for himself.⁵

C. H. Mackintosh

14. It is important to your leadership ministry that you understand the “new commandment” of John 13:34-35:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

- a. In light of the Old Testament commandments to love God and neighbor (Deut. 6:4-5; Lev. 19:18), what is “new” about the “new commandment” of Jesus?

THE NEW COMMANDMENT ESTABLISHES A NEW STANDARD OF LOVE

The Old Testament law required love for God and love for neighbor, so love is not new. What is new is the scope and depth of this love: “love one another: just as I have loved you.” Jesus’ display of humble, self-sacrificing love on the cross is the new standard of love (John 15:13).

THE NEW COMMANDMENT PROVIDES A NEW MOTIVATION TO LOVE OTHERS

What was true only of Jesus’ love while he was on earth is now to be true of his disciples’ love for one another. John writes, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” (1 John 3:16). “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11). “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Christ’s self-sacrificing love should motivate us to self-sacrificing love for others.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT DEPENDS ON THE NEW POWER

The new commandment is new because it is tied to Jesus’ promise of the coming the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18), a central element of the new covenant era. Only by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit can the disciples possibly carry out the new commandment. As Carl Hoch remarks, “The Holy Spirit is the great motivator for the church. He works to produce the fruit of love in Christians so that they can fulfill the new commandment.”

THE NEW COMMANDMENT VALIDATES THE NEW MESSAGE

The new commandment is tied to the witness of the gospel and is meant to be a powerful evangelistic tool. In the words of Christ, “By this [love for one another] all men will know that you are My disciples.” The love relationship among the believers is to be the observable evidence of the reality of the gospel message and of the mutual love relationship existing eternally between the Father and the Son (John 14:31). “Our churches,” remarks Bruce Milne, “are to be ‘love centres’ where relationships between members are a persuasive reflection of the mutually supportive, utterly loyal and eternally accepting love of the Father and the Son.”⁶

b. What are the chief characteristics of a leadership style patterned after the “new commandment” (John 13:34; see also 1 John 3:16; Eph. 5:2, 25-26)?

It is selfless and self-sacrificing. It is giving one's life in the service of others and a willingness to die for those we serve.

15. The verses below express Paul's self-sacrificing love for his converts. Read them carefully and prayerfully.

- ◆ I hold you in my heart.... For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 1:7-8)
- ◆ Therefore, my brothers whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. (Phil. 4:1)
- ◆ But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (1 Thess. 2:7-8)
- ◆ For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you. (2 Cor. 2:4)
- ◆ I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. (2 Cor. 7:3)
- ◆ Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? (2 Cor. 12:14-15)
- ◆ My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! (Gal. 4:19)

◆ I am sending him [Onesimus] back to you, sending my very heart.
(Philem. 12)

a. Choosing from the entire selection of verses, write down the four statements that you think most powerfully demonstrate Paul's selfless, self-sacrificing love for his converts.

My choices are:

"We were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves" (1 Thess. 2:8).

"You are in our hearts, to die together and to live together" (2 Cor. 7:3).

"I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Cor. 12:15).

"I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19).

b. What in the above passages of Scripture will help you improve your teaching or leading ministry with people?

The example of Paul's deep love for those he led is a powerful reminder of what every church leader and teacher needs to be. Paul's love for his converts was really Christ's love flowing through him: "I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:8). They were in his heart; they were his joy and crown. They were his spiritual children and his beloved brothers and sisters.

If time allows, close your meeting by reading Robert Dann's description of Anthony Norris Groves on pages 33-34. You might also want to read John Arulappan's acknowledgment of Groves, page 34.

Reflections

"Not yours, but you" is the motto of every minister who has learned of Christ.⁷

James Denny

Notes

1. Frank L. Houghton, *Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur: The Story of a Lover and Her Beloved* (1979; reprint ed., Fort Washington, Pa., Christian Literature Crusade, 1992), 219.
2. Norman Grubb, *C. T. Studd: Cricketer and Pioneer* (Fort Washington, Pa.: Christian Literature Crusade, 1933), 132.
3. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC (Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1990), 213.
4. D. A. Carson, *Love in Hard Places* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2002), 32.
5. C. H. Mackintosh, *Genesis to Deuteronomy: Notes on the Pentateuch* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1972), 155.
6. Bruce Milne, *The Message of John*, BST (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1993), 248.
7. James Denny, *The Second Epistle of Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 365.

Lesson Three

The Character and Behavior of a Loving Leader

This lesson covers pages 39 to 53 of *Leading with Love*. Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Overview: Lessons three to five of this study guide cover part two of the book and expound 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. The emphasis is on understanding and developing the qualities that the Bible says are to characterize Christian leaders and teachers. Lesson three covers chapters four and five and focuses on 1 Corinthians 13:4.

The first two positive qualities of a Christlike, loving leader are patience and kindness. Questions seven and nine are the key discussion questions regarding patience and kindness. This lesson also addresses the first two of eight negative statements describing what love doesn't do. Emphasize questions thirteen and sixteen as you discuss the description of loving leaders as being those who are not envious or boastful.

NOTE: Questions one and two should not be rushed. They set the tone for this and the next two lessons.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way...by...patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love. (2 Cor. 6:3-4, 6)

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. (1 Thess. 5:14)

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. (2 Tim. 2:24-25)

Chapter 4: Patient and Kind

1. What does the author mean when he says, "in Christian ministry, character is everything" (page 41)?

Christian leadership cannot be successful without integrity of character because godly character is what influences people for God and eternity. Godly people follow leaders of high moral and spiritual character. This is why the Scripture lists moral and spiritual qualifications for the church's elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Many problems in our churches today exist because of character failure on the part of leaders.

Reflections

One of the most important chapters in the Bible for life in the local church and for Christian leadership is 1 Corinthians 13. It defines how we should behave in marriage, friendship, church, and society.

Leading with Love, page 41

Review Paul's fifteen descriptions of love:

1. Patient
2. Kind

3. Not envious	Delights in the successes and talents of others
4. Not boastful	Promotes others
5. Not arrogant	Is humble and modest
6. Not rude	Displays proper decorum
7. Not selfish	Is self-sacrificing
8. Not easily angered	Calm
9. Not unforgiving	Forgives
10. Not joyful over wrongdoing	11. Rejoices with the truth

12. Bears all things
13. Believes all things
14. Hopes all things
15. Endures all things

2. Which two of the fifteen qualities do you, as a leader or teacher, need to be most concerned about in order to improve your character as a Christian leader? Explain your answer.

Challenge the group to memorize the fifteen descriptions of love listed on page 24; it is an easy assignment.

“Not selfish:” Selfishness is a subtle, deep-rooted vice that can never be truly rooted up and destroyed. It is the great enemy of every shepherd of God’s precious flock, and it must be fought on a daily basis.

“Not joyful over wrongdoing:” Our natural reaction is to be secretly joyful over the sins or misfortunes of those we don’t particularly like or with whom we disagree. Yet such rejoicing has no place in the heart of a true shepherd.

Encourage the group to take this question to heart and be serious about identifying weaknesses of character and love. Improvement in these areas, of course, is a life-long task.

3. What does the word *patience* mean as used in 1 Corinthians 13:4?

In this context, the verb means long-suffering with people, not just life’s afflictions. People will hurt their leaders and treat them unjustly. However, those of us who lead are to not to be short-tempered in our responses or to seek revenge. Instead, a leader is to forebear and endure or, as the old King James translation says, “suffer long.”

4. What do the following verses teach you about patience?

1 Thessalonians 5:14

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

We are to be patient with “all” people, not just family, friends, or nice people.

2 Corinthians 6:3-4, 6

But as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way...by patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love.

Patience is one of the credentials of a true servant of God. We best represent our Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel when we deal patiently with people.

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Patience is one of the delicious fruits of the Spirit. Patience is a mark of a Spirit-controlled Christian while impatience is a sign of the flesh. Under the supernatural control and power of the Holy Spirit, a leader can deal with difficult people and problems patiently.

Ephesians 4:1-2

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.”

The divine high calling of the Christian life requires living a life characterized by patience. This patience is elaborated upon in the clause, “bearing with one another in love.” There is no way to maintain Christian relationships in our churches without a spirit of “long-suffering” toward the weaknesses and failures of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke; and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

It is natural to be angry and short-tempered with those we rebuke, but this only repels people. So as Christian leaders, we are to rebuke and exhort those we lead with “complete patience.” By being patient, we have a far greater chance to win people’s hearts and minds to make life changes according to the truth.

People can tell if their leaders are impatient or patient with them. They know if we love them or if we are just taking out our frustrations on them. Jesus was patient in rebuking and exhorting his disciples, and we should be the same.

5. List three reasons why patience is a critically important element to leading and teaching people.

God, our example, is patient with us, so we need to act the same way toward others. We need to be examples of patience to those we lead.

The Bible requires us to “be patient with them all” (1 Thes. 5:14; 2 Tim. 4:2).

Patience is essential in dealing effectively with people’s weaknesses and failures. If we are not patient with people, we will hurt them, not help them.

One cannot be in a position of leadership without eventually being attacked, unjustly treated, or hurt by people. Without the grace of long-suffering under such circumstances, we would quickly become bitter and vengeful of those we lead and teach.

If we really desire to see those who oppose us or who have fallen into error repent and come to the truth, we must deal with them patiently (2 Tim. 2:24-26). Impatience when dealing with people’s errors drives away all hope of correction.

Reflections

If we were to ask our Lord, “What is a loving Christian leader like?” he would first answer, “patient and kind.” So Paul begins and ends his love catalog with the patient, enduring nature of love (1 Cor. 13:4, 7).

Leading with Love, page 41

6. What is meant by the statement that patience is “not passivity?” Provide an example for your answer.

Loving patience is the spirit in which we deal with problems and people. It doesn’t imply cowardice, inaction, or refusal to confront problems or sinful behavior, nor is it an excuse for running from problems. Loving patience is active leadership while passivity is an enemy of good leadership.

For a good leadership example of patience that is not passivity, see Paul’s handling of the sins of the church at Corinth on pages 42-43. Also be sure you understand the story of Robert Chapman and John Darby.

Don't move on to the next question until everyone in the group understands the distinctions between Spirit-empowered patience (Gal. 5:22-23) and harmful passivity.

7. In church leadership, we have to deal with many different types of people. What practical steps can you take to help develop patience in your dealings with people, especially difficult ones?

NOTE: Be thorough in answering this question. It is relevant to every member of the group.

We develop patience by remembering that:

- ◆ ***God is patient with us, so who are we not to be patient with those we teach and lead?***
- ◆ ***Patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, so we can pray regularly for the Spirit to develop patience within us.***
- ◆ ***God uses difficult people to teach us love and patience, so welcome difficult situations as God's school for developing patience.***
- ◆ ***The Bible teaches and convicts us about patience, so study what the whole Bible teaches about patience.***
- ◆ ***We can learn from the experience, wise counsel, and example of older, godly leaders who have demonstrated patience with people.***
- ◆ ***We can learn much from our mistakes, so be quick to confess and apologize to those you have dealt with in an impatient or unloving manner.***

8. a. Define the word *kindness*. Use a dictionary if needed.

"Kindness is a readiness to do good, to help, to relieve burdens, to be useful, to serve, to be tender, and to be sympathetic to others. It has been said, 'Kindness is love in work clothes'" (p.44).

Because of its close association with long-suffering, kindness is to be expressed even to those who hurt us emotionally. Read to the group the powerful quotation about Thomas Cranmer on page 45.

b. For a beautiful story of God's kindness displayed through one of his servants, read the account of King David's kindness to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, King Saul's grandson (2 Sam. 9). List the ways in which David showed kindness to Mephibosheth. Read 2 Samuel 9.

First of all, David knew God to be kind and had experienced God's kindness many times. Note, in verse 3, how David desired to show the "kindness of God" to another person.

- ◆ *David sought out Mephibosheth (verses 4-5).*
- ◆ *David restored to him to his grandfather's land (verse 7).*
- ◆ *David made Mephibosheth a permanent guest at his table (verses 4, 11).*
- ◆ *David gave him all his grandfather's possessions (verse 9).*
- ◆ *David ordered Ziba and his family to farm the land for Mephibosheth (verse 10).*
- ◆ *David treated Mephibosheth like a son (verse 11).*

9. The book states:

Acts of kindness impact people in big ways and capture their attention: a card sent to one who is sick, a concerned phone call, an invitation to dinner, a readiness to help relieve a burden, a caring voice, a gentle touch, a thoughtful gesture, a simple expression of interest in another's concerns, a visit. (*Leading with Love*, page 46)

a. Of the list of acts of kindness in the above paragraph, which two do you find easy to do for others? Explain why.

Encouraging phone calls: These conveniently put me in contact with people without a lot of time commitment.

Invitations to dinner: I love people to come to my home to eat. I get to know people better, and it deepens brotherhood and sisterhood in the church family.

b. Identify areas in your leadership or teaching ministry in which you should improve your acts of kindness toward others. What exactly would you do to improve?

Don't rush through this question. Allow time for people to share their suggestions and ideas for helping one another grow in kindness. As you gather various ideas and suggestions for improving in this area of leadership, it would be helpful if someone in the group listed the suggestions and made copies to share with everyone in the group.

Chapter 5: Not Envious or Boastful

10. Below is a list of the sins and problems in the church at Corinth. In your thinking, which sins most demonstrate the believers' lack of love for one another? List them and explain your choices.

- ◆ party rivalries over teachers,
- ◆ love for worldly wisdom,
- ◆ lawsuits among believers,
- ◆ neglect of church discipline,
- ◆ sexual immorality,
- ◆ egotistical displays of spiritual gifts and knowledge,
- ◆ disorderly conduct in the congregational meetings,
- ◆ social snobbery and discrimination against the poor at the Lord's Supper,
- ◆ drunkenness at the Lord's Supper,
- ◆ conflict over food offered to idols and participation at pagan feasts,
- ◆ arrogant individuals criticizing Paul's ministry and teaching,
- ◆ denial, by some, of the bodily resurrection and a false view of spirituality, thinking they were presently living in an exalted spiritual state.

NOTE: Allot only a short period of time to answer this question.

My greatest concerns would be:

Lawsuits among believers: They were greedy and self-centered, thinking more of their own personal interest than the good of the whole community or God's testimony among the unbelievers of Corinth.

Neglect of church discipline: They didn't love a brother enough to confront his self-destructive behavior and the damage he was doing to the church family.

Egotistical displays of spiritual gifts and knowledge: In pride they were putting certain weaker believers down with their knowledge, liberty, and spiritual giftedness rather than building them up or caring for their conscience (1 Cor. 8:9-13). They were full of themselves, not the Holy Spirit.

Social snobbery and discrimination against the poor at the Lord's Supper: Some in the church demeaned their poorer members by eating the finer foods and wine before the poor arrived (1 Cor. 11:21-22, 34). This was pure selfishness.

Arrogant individuals criticizing Paul's ministry and teaching: How ungrateful they were of all Paul had done for them. They thought too much of themselves, not enough of others.

Reflections

These eight vices are totally incompatible with love. In brief, they express the self-centered life that tears apart relationships and spoils the unity that should characterize every local church. Paul's list serves as an objective standard to correct our selfish behaviors and to guide us on the "more excellent way."

Leading with Love, page 48

11. Define the word *envy*.

Envy is the evil desire to have what another possesses. In fact, it resents what others possess or achieve. Read to the group Nathaniel Vincent's quotation on page 48.

12. To overcome the destructive spirit of envy in his own life, George Muller wrote:

When in the year 1832, I saw how some preferred my beloved friend's ministry to my own, I determined, in the strength of God, to rejoice in this, instead of envying him. I said, with John the Baptist, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John 3:27). This resisting the devil, hindered separation of heart.

What does John 3:27 teach that helped George Muller overcome his envy of his multi-gifted friend Henry Craik? Be sure to consider the full context (John 3:22-36).

John the Baptist's disciples tell him that "all are going to him [Jesus]" for baptism and the message of the kingdom (John 3:26). John could easily have been envious of Jesus' greater success and popularity, but John rests on the great theological truth that God allots to each person ministry gifts and successes. It's our duty to fulfill what has been allotted to us and to be content with God's gifting. John recognized and rejoiced in the fact that he was the herald of Jesus, and that "He must increase, but I must decrease" (verses 29, 30).

13. Whenever you sense the destructive sin of envy arising in your heart toward another, what steps does the author recommend you take to deal with this sin?

Since envy or jealousy is widespread and divisive to the church family, be certain the group clearly understands how to practically deal with this sin.

First, identify envy for what it really is: sin, petty selfishness, and divisiveness. Confess your envy immediately, and don't excuse it for a moment.

Second, with the Spirit's help, regularly practice praising and rejoicing in the achievements, talent, successes, popularity, and possessions of others. Seek to be like Barnabas who rejoiced over Paul's greater giftedness and sought to promote his leadership. Be an encourager of others' gifts. Say, as John the Baptist said, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven [God]." Or, in Paul's words, "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

14. Why is boasting particularly harmful to a Christian leader?

Boasting displays a defect of character by revealing that a leader is sinfully preoccupied with "self." It is public disobedience to the Scripture that says, "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth, a stranger, and not your own lips" (Prov. 27:2).

Leaders are to be examples of Christian conduct (1 Peter 5:3), but boasters are bad examples we wouldn't want our young people to copy. Boasting leaders hurt the church family by dividing and splitting the congregation.

15. What is the difference between sinful bragging and sharing news about one's life and ministry? (See Acts 14:27; 15:3; Gal. 2:1-14.)

Boasters or braggarts love attention and praise. They are self-promoters who want to be on center stage with the spotlight on them. They are sinfully preoccupied with focusing attention on themselves and use people to fulfill their craving for attention.

On the other hand, reporting on one's service for Christ can and must be done without seeking to exalt oneself or to receive praise. Most people can sense if a person is simply bragging or legitimately sharing one's life and example for God in a humble and self-effacing manner.

Reflections

Boasting does not build up or serve the church community. Boasting does not honor Christ. Rather, it intimidates and it divides people. It provokes others to envy. Boasting is particularly abhorrent in a leader. It mars a leader's character. We wouldn't want people in the church to follow such an example.

Leading with Love, page 52

16. When you are tempted to boast or talk too much about yourself, what specific steps can you take to stop boasting? (See Rom. 12:3-4; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; 3:5-23; Gal. 5:25-26; 6:3-5.)

Ask your spouse or close friends to monitor your talk about yourself. Invite them to help you see yourself as they do. And if you sense you are talking too much or too highly about yourself, you probably are. At that point, stop talking.

Remember, boasting of yourself and craving praise is sin that needs to be confessed and forgiven by God. Pray that the Holy Spirit would convict you of sinful boasting and teach you the difference between legitimate sharing of information about yourself and bragging.

Lesson Four

The Character and Behavior of a Loving Leader

This lesson covers pages 55 to 70 of *Leading with Love*. Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Overview: This lesson covers chapters six and seven of the book, and the key passage is 1 Corinthians 13:4-5. As you start this lesson, keep in mind that you will be considering the example of two key leaders: Diotrephes and Barnabas. Make sure the group adequately knows these two men, especially Barnabas.

Diotrephes is arrogant, rude, selfish, and easily provoked to anger. He illustrates all that is bad in a self-centered, controlling leader. Barnabas is humble, considerate of others, self-sacrificing, calm, and self-controlled. He illustrates all that is good in a generous, loving leader and teacher. Pay special attention to questions two and three (Diotrephes) and eleven and twelve (Barnabas).

James and John are also mentioned in this lesson as illustrations of selfish, ambitious leaders who create division. For understanding the virtue of humility in a leader, question seven is key.

Note: I consider question fourteen to be one of the most important questions of the lesson. The verses presented in fifteen are vitally important to loving Christian leaders. They can save us from much conflict and prepare us for skillful conflict resolution.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has

assigned.... Let love be genuine.... Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited.
(Rom. 12:3, 9, 16)

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil. 2:3-8)

Now the works of the flesh are evident: ...enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy. (Gal. 5:19-21)
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23)

Chapter 6: Not Arrogant or Rude

1. a. Define the word *arrogance* as used by Paul in 1 Cor. 13:4.

In Greek, the word is literally “puffed up” or “inflated.” Here it means puffed up with self, a superiority complex, human pride. J. B. Phillips says it best when he says love does not “cherish inflated ideas of its own importance” (p. 56).

- b. List several reasons why arrogant self-importance has no place in the life and ministry of a Christian leader or teacher.

Jesus our Lord “strictly prohibited his disciples from any kind of idolatrous self-exaltation” (p. 56). He was humble, so his followers are to emulate his humility and servant attitude.

Arrogance blinds people to reality and divides relationships.

Arrogance is contrary to love, the gospel, and the Cross. Thus arrogance has no place in the church, the community of the Cross.

People follow their leaders, so if the leaders are prideful, the people will be prideful.

Arrogance is sin and a characteristic of the devil.

Reflections

Those who think too much of themselves don't think enough.¹

Amy Carmichael

2. Diotrephes was a church leader, but not a loving church leader. List Diotrephes' leadership flaws.

I [John] have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church. (3 John 9-10)

Diotrephes loved position, authority, and power. He was "puffed up" with self.

He abused his leadership position. He intimidated people and led by fear. He controlled people and kept them under his thumb.

He made Christian ministry all about himself. He didn't work well with others. He didn't serve others in love. He did not build people up nor did he release their potential or giftedness in the church.

He rejected apostolic authority.

3. If you have even some small measure of the spirit of Diotrephes in your heart (and many more people have Diotrephes' control problem than we like to admit), what can you do to help yourself? Are there any Scriptures that can help you avoid the urge to control others in unhealthy ways?

Study what the Scripture says about humility and the servant spirit. Let the Scripture guide your leadership style and convict you of controlling leadership.

Observe how Jesus and Paul led others.

Be part of a leadership team and let the team hold you accountable for controlling behavior.

Listen to people when they complain about your behavior or leadership (James 1:19). They may be God's instrument to correct your problem.

Ask those you lead to evaluate your leadership and help you become a better leader.

Pray for help and confess self-centered leadership behavior.

Reflections

It was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the completely anti-God state of mind.²

C. S. Lewis

4. What do the following Scripture texts teach about how God views pride?

Psalm 31:23

Love the LORD, all you his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride.

God hates pride and will not let prideful creatures get away with their arrogant ways. He will amply punish the pride of those who reject the Lord and abuse his people.

Proverbs 6:16

There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes

Pride, "haughty eyes" is the first of the seven deadly sins which the Lord hates. It appears at the beginning of the list because it heads all the other vices. Pride exalts the sinner and opposes the Creator.

Proverbs 8:13

The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

Wisdom is personified here and it says: The person who is wise will fear the Lord and hate evil, particularly pride and arrogance. Pride opposes the fear of the Lord and true wisdom.

Proverbs 16:5

Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished.

God detests pride and will punish those who are “arrogant in heart.” The writer uses strong and universal language: “Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord.”

Psalms 101:5

Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy. Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart I will not endure.

Again, God detests pride and will punish prideful creatures for their “haughty look” and their “arrogant” thinking.

Amos 6:8

The Sovereign Lord has sworn by himself—the Lord God Almighty declares: “I abhor the pride of Jacob and detest his fortresses; I will deliver up the city and everything in it.”

The city of Samaria was proud of its wealth, beautiful building structures, and religious practices. As a result, the people arrogantly trusted in their national strength and affluence, rather than the Lord God. Hence the Lord takes a solemn oath that he will destroy Samaria because of its pride in self.

Mark 7:21-23

For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.

Sinful pride comes from deep within the human heart and defiles the mind and disposition of a person. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn states that, “Pride grows in the human heart like lard on a pig.”

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

So to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Paul was taken up to heaven and heard and saw things that cannot be described (vv. 2-4). He had knowledge and experience unrivaled by anyone else in the early church community. He easily could have become puffed up with his superior knowledge and experience, but God protected

him. God so hates pride that He gave His dear servant Paul a “thorn” in the flesh to keep him from self-elevation and pride. As a result of this “thorn” in the flesh, Paul was kept humble and dependent on God for strength. In this way, God received the glory, not Paul. What the “thorn” in the flesh was, we can only guess because Paul doesn’t reveal what it was.

James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5

But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

What a frightening thought that God actually opposes the proud. He is against them, not for them. But to those who are humble before him, he gives his marvelous grace and help. So be humble, never proud. Pride is sin, humility is a virtue prized by God.

5. Why is humility so vitally important to a Christian teacher? (See also pages 128-129.) List several reasons.

We preach that humility is a Christian virtue and that our Savior and Lord was supremely humble. Humility is the mindset of a servant, and we are servants of God and one another.

Jesus Christ is “Teacher and Lord” (John 13:14), yet he says, “learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart [humble]” (Matt. 11:29). Humility makes a leader more teachable, better able to work with others, more willing to submit to others, better qualified to deal with other people’s failures and sins, and less prone to fight (p. 57).

A humble spirit is needed because we are called to teach and relate to “people at all levels of life, even the poorest and least educated” (p. 57). Pride “repels people, humility attracts,” and “effectiveness in teaching calls for humility in attitude” (p. 129).

“A humble spirit makes us better representatives of Jesus Christ and his doctrine” (p. 129). It is the “more excellent” way of teaching. Read to the group Romans 12:16. This passage is placed in a context that begins by saying “let love be without hypocrisy” (Rom. 12:9).

6. What most impacted your thinking about humility as you read the examples of C. S. Lewis’s humble-mindedness? Explain.

Although he was brilliant and successful, C. S. Lewis didn’t let giftedness and fame go to his head. Although he was a very busy man, he answered every

person who wrote asking for his help and sacrificially took time to pray for all who asked for prayer. I particularly enjoyed Dorsett's comment that Lewis "treated each correspondent as if he or she were as important as the king or queen of England" (p. 58).

Although I do not agree with C. S. Lewis in everything, I admire his humble-mindedness. No one was too small or problematic that he would not respond or relate to him or her.

7. Christian people are to actively humble themselves and behave with humility (Matt. 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5-6). What kinds of things can you, as a Christian leader, do to display genuine humility in relationship to the people you lead?

Listen to people when they try to point out weaknesses or failures in your conduct. Be willing to accept correction and rebuke.

Don't always talk about yourself, how much you know, or how gifted you are.

Don't use people to promote yourself. Don't steal all the credit and applause, let others be praised. Eagerly acknowledge their contributions and work.

Let people know you need their advice and prize their companionship.

Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself or admit your mistakes.

Reflections

Humility is the mindset of a servant. It makes a leader more teachable, more receptive to constructive criticism, better able to work with others, better qualified to deal with other people's failures and sins, more willing to submit to others, less prone to fight, and quicker to reconcile differences. Without humility, one cannot be a Christlike leader.

Leading with Love, page 57

8. Define the word *rude*.

Anthony Thiselton best defines the term as "ill-mannered impropriety" (p.59).

9. As the coarseness of society worsens around us, what can you do in your home and church to resist this social problem?

Admit there is a problem and raise people's awareness to the problem of coarseness in society.

Identify rude behavior that directly affects your family and church.

Teach your children and church family what the Bible teaches about proper social relationships, dress, speech, public conduct, and displays of emotion. Gently rebuke rude conduct at home and at church.

Display positive examples of sensitive, loving behavior and don't excuse your own rude behavior. Be quick to confess and apologize for rudeness to others.

Don't laugh at rude conduct or listen to rude people on the radio or television.

Reflections

Loving people are considerate of how their behavior affects others, even in little things. Those who are possessed of God's love are sensitive to proper social relationships, public decency, social convention, politeness, tact, and proper conduct in dress, speech, and action.

Leading with Love, page 60

Chapter 7: Not Selfish or Easily Angered

10. James and John were “card-carrying members of the ‘self-seekers’ club.” What was wrong with James and John wanting to sit on thrones at the right and left hand of Jesus Christ in His glory? See Mark 10:35-45.

There is nothing wrong with proper ambition, but James and John were selfishly and sinfully ambitious. They thought little of their fellow colleagues. In fact, they sought to cut them out, to gain the advantage over them, and to beat them to the throne. They thought only of themselves and their position, glory, and power.

They didn't consider whether they were deserving of the thrones next to Jesus. They were self-deceived and thought more highly of themselves than they had a right to think.

Instead of acting like their Lord and Master, they were acting like the devil.

11. Barnabas serves as an excellent example of loving leadership. List some of his unselfish acts of love from the following passages.

NOTE: Take your time on questions eleven and twelve. People need to get to know Barnabas. He is a marvelous example of loving leadership and you need to be certain that everyone grasps the loving qualities of his life.

Acts 4:36-37

Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

He had a marvelous reputation for encouraging and exhorting believers with the Word of God. He was exceptionally generous with his finances and possessions. He was a builder and lifter of people.

Acts 11:19-30

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution...traveled as far as...Antioch, speaking the word.... And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.... So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people.... Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world.... So the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Barnabas was willing to leave Jerusalem and travel to Antioch in order to help the newly formed church in Antioch. He also traveled a great distance to Tarsus to invite Paul to help teach the church in Antioch.

Barnabas was a humble leader. He was more concerned for the good of the church than his own status. He knew that Paul's giftedness would prosper the church, so he was willing to advance Paul's ministry and gift.

Barnabas, traveling with Paul and others, carried the Gentile offering to the poor in Jerusalem. Traveling in the first century wasn't a pleasure cruise—it was tiring and dangerous work.

Acts 13:1-5

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon...Niger, Lucius...Manaen...and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy

Spirit said, "Set apart from me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God.

Barnabas was deeply concerned for the lost and was willing to put his life at stake in order to reach others with the gospel. With others, he prayed and fasted for guidance regarding the advancement of the gospel to the Gentile world. He was prepared to leave the comforts of Antioch and travel by land and sea to preach Christ.

Reflections

Love is the giving impulse.

Robert Law

12. What can you do to act more like Barnabas in your ministry of leading or teaching people? Be specific.

I can be:

An encourager and promoter of those I lead.

An example of personal generosity to the poor and needy.

A person of prayer and world vision.

A lover of the lost and a witness to them.

Loving and gracious with people, yet a staunch defender of the truth of the gospel (Acts 15:1-2).

Read to the group Acts 15:1-2 to show that Barnabas was a strong defender of the gospel. He was prepared to fight for the truth. He was a man of grace and truth.

Reflections

Barnabas was not a throne seeker; he was a washer of feet (John 13:14). He was a lifter of people, not a limiter of people (Acts 11:19-24). He was a giver, not a taker. His love was the "giving variety," not the "getting variety."

Leading with Love, page 65

13. What does Henry Drummond mean when he says that anger is “the vice of the virtuous” (page 68)?

The problem of anger in our churches is enormous. There are Christians who have many sterling qualities of character but are flawed by bad temper and irritability. They may think their anger is not a problem, but others know better. They may cleverly justify their sinful irritability and anger. They may excuse their destructive anger by claiming they are fighting for what is right. However, they are self-deceived. Sinful expression of anger among saints is a big problem that is seldom recognized or repented of.

14. Sinful displays of anger accentuate problems, cloud people’s judgment, distort reality, inflame emotions, deepen resentments, hinder peaceful problem solving, and provide the devil a prime opportunity to divide people (Eph. 4:26-27). Uncontrolled anger is a primary reason why so many people are overcome by evil in their relationships with their Christian brothers and sisters (Rom. 12:21).

Using the verses below, describe what the Bible says about sinful displays of anger.

Proverbs 15:18

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

Quick-tempered people cause dissension in whatever group they participate. No matter what the problems are, quick-tempered people make the problems worse.

Proverbs 29:22

A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.

A person of anger creates dissension and also commits many sins—hurting people’s feelings, cursing, hating, dividing people, dishonoring God, and being unloving to neighbors.

Ephesians 4:26-27

That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Anger that is not properly controlled gives the devil a prime opportunity to destroy a person. Sinful, uncontrolled anger invites the devil into one’s life or church to and do his dirty work.

Colossians 3:8

But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

Anger and wrath are dangerous vices that are part of the old, unregenerate self. They hinder Christian growth and unity within the church, so they need to be taken off and discarded like filthy old clothes.

Galatians 5:19-20

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions.

Anger ruins Christian community. Sinful displays of anger are part of “the works of the flesh” that also include sexual immorality, idolatry, and drunkenness.

Titus 1:5, 7

This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you...For an overseer, as God’s steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or drunkard or violent or greedy for gain.

One of the biblical qualifications for an elder or overseer is “not...quick-tempered.” So a person with an anger problem cannot be a church elder.

James 1:19-20

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires.

Our anger is displeasing to God and cannot produce the behavior or attitudes that God requires of his children.

15. In sharp contrast to uncontrolled anger, wrath, bitterness, abusive speech, hot tempers, and cutting words, the Scripture encourages calmness, controlled anger, gentle talk, self-control, a cool and gracious spirit, healing words, and wise speech. Only by following scriptural principles of conduct can we hope to enjoy healthy group relationships and provide Christlike leadership for God’s flock.

Take some time to read and consider the following passages. List the two key passages that you think will be most beneficial in helping you improve your ability to handle difficult people and situations without resorting to destructive anger. Briefly explain your choices.

- ◆ The tongue of the wise brings healing. (Prov. 12:18)
- ◆ Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding. (Prov. 14:29)
- ◆ A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Prov. 15:1)
- ◆ A gentle tongue [speaking words that heal] is a tree of life. (Prov. 15:4)
- ◆ He who is slow to anger quiets contention. (Prov. 15:18)
- ◆ Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. (Prov. 17:27)
- ◆ It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling. (Prov. 20:3)
- ◆ A soft tongue will break a bone. (Prov. 25:15)
- ◆ The wise turn away wrath. (Prov. 29:8)
- ◆ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Col. 4:6)
- ◆ Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. (James 3:13)

My first two choices are:

Proverbs 15:1: I have practiced the truth of this verse for many years and many times have seen it work in dealing with people's uncontrolled anger and irritability. A soft answer really does turn away an angry person's wrath.

Proverbs 17:27: I try to think before I talk and be cautious in what I say. In other words, I restrain my speech. It is true that staying cool, even-tempered, and controlled enables one to gain a better understanding of people and their problems.

Notes

1. Quoted by Wayne A. Mack, *Humility: The Forgotten Virtue*, (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2005), 61.
2. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001), 122.

Lesson Five

The Character and Behavior of a Loving Leader

This lesson covers pages 71 to 88 of *Leading with Love*. Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Overview: This is the last lesson describing the character and behavior of a loving leader. It covers chapters eight and nine of the book, and the key passage is 1 Corinthians 13:5-7. The two big points to emphasize are that love is not “resentful,” meaning it does not hold grudges; that love is strong and tenacious, meaning love chooses to believe and endure all things. This is what loving leaders are like in their attitudes and conduct.

Note: The first three questions are particularly relevant and important to church leaders. Be sure to allow enough time to answer question three thoroughly.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.... So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:6-8, 13)

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts. (1 Cor. 14:1)

Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Col. 3:13-14)

I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.... I rejoice, because I have perfect confidence in you. (2 Cor. 7:3-4, 16)

Therefore love truth. (Zech. 8:19)

Chapter 8: Not Resentful or Joyful over Evil

1. Carefully define the word *resentful*. Be sure you understand the meaning of this significant term.

David Garland captures best the idea of the word when he writes, "The image is of keeping records of wrongs with a view to paying back injury" (p. 72). The story told by Jay Adams accurately illustrates the term. Remind people of the story.

2. Why is this quality of love ("not resentful") particularly important to a Christian leader?

People in leadership experience lots of criticism. It goes with the job. Most of the great leaders of the Bible were falsely accused of wrongdoing, threatened with death, or, in some cases, killed.

Without love, a leader easily becomes bitter and emotionally wounded. So if a leader is to have a long-term, effective ministry with people, he or she can't hold on to bitter memories or old wounds. Those who do quickly lose their joy and motivation for leading.

Also, leaders need to be examples to the people of loving forgiveness in the face of unjust treatment.

3. People involved in leadership often experience deep emotional hurts inflicted by those they lead. What steps can be taken to properly deal with the emotional hurts and injustices inflicted by other people? (See pages 73-74.) Write out your answers in list form and don't rush over this question. It is vital to your ministry with people that you know how to correctly handle emotional wounds.

Begin this question by reading to the group Lewis Smedes' quotation on page 75. Then begin discussing ways to properly deal with the wounds of leadership.

Being hurt by others is a test of character and of obedience to the biblical commands to forgive and to love as Christ loved, so seek to view all hurts and wounds with God's eternal purposes and glory in mind.

Realize that all other leaders have been emotionally hurt by those they lead. Why should you or I not expect the same treatment?

When we have been hurt, we should not pretend that we have not been hurt. We should face the hurt and seek God's grace through prayer to forgive and not seek revenge. He gives grace to live with our hurt feelings and frustrations.

At the heart of all evil attitudes and resentments is the prideful "self," so we must remember to always confess our sinful attitudes, self-pity, and an unforgiving spirit.

We are to forgive as Christ forgave us. Who are we not to forgive a fellow sinner when we have been forgiven so many sins? (See the answers to question five.)

A loving heart is an understanding heart, so we should seek to understand the person who has hurt us. Love covers a multitude of sins.

Under the control of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with biblical principles of conduct, go to the person who has caused the hurt and seek healing and reconciliation.

Pray and sing songs of praise to God. Read Acts 16:22-25.

Reflections

We all have been hurt by evil inflicted on us by others. We all have had to struggle with forgiveness. We all have had to let go of bad memories and give up any desire for revenge in order to be reconciled with those who have injured us. There is no way we could live happily together in marriage or with other believers in the local church without this quality of love. If we refuse to let go of emotional hurts, if we enjoy nursing old wounds, if we feel compelled to get even with our enemies, we will be devoured by bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness. We will be miserable examples and ineffective leaders for Christ.

Leading with Love, pages 72-3

4. In Chapter 8 there are eight stories, starting with R. C. Chapman and ending with John Perkins, about love and forgiveness. Which one of these stories most convicted you about the necessity of forgiving those who have hurt you? Explain your choice.

For me, it is the story of John Perkins. It would take God's special grace to forgive the outrageous injustices and brutal beatings he received. This is especially true given the fact that those who were appointed to protect people, stop crime, and uphold justice were the very ones who perpetuated the crimes against him. One's natural response to such injustice is revenge—even killing such doers of evil. Few of us have suffered great physical pain and injustice. So if John Perkins could forgive, surely we can forgive the hurts and wounds we have received.

5. What do the following verses teach about Christian forgiveness?

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This is a most serious warning. If we display an unforgiving spirit toward other people's trespasses, we are acting in sin and God will not forgive us.

Matthew 18:21-22

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times? Jesus said, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven."

When a fellow Christian sins against us, we are to forgive "seventy times seven," four hundred and ninety times, that is, repeatedly without limit. God forgives thousands upon thousands of our sins against him. We also should be generous in our forgiveness and not keep score or set limits on our forgiveness.

Luke 17:3-4

"Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

Again, there are no limits to our forgiveness, even if we must forgive a repentant believer seven times in one day.

Luke 23:34

And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Upon the cross, Jesus prayed to his Father to forgive his executioners. He

knew they didn't understand the seriousness of what they were doing. What understanding and compassion. What selflessness!

Acts 7:60

And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Like his Lord, Stephen prayed to God not to hold the sins of his executioners against them.

2 Corinthians 2:6-8, 11

For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him...So that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

Paul calls upon the believers at Corinth to forgive the brother they had disciplined. They were not only to forgive him, but to reaffirm "their love for him."

Forgiveness and restoration of a disciplined member is as necessary as discipline itself. If there is not proper forgiveness, restoration, and love, the devil will seize the situation and cause further havoc in the church (v. 11). Paul, who the sinning member had personally attacked, had followed in the example of Christ and Stephen and already forgiven him (v. 10).

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

We must remember that Christ is our standard for forgiveness, not our feelings or the worthiness of the person in question. Thus we are to forgive one another of any painful hurts "as God in Christ" forgave us.

Colossians 3:13

Bearing with one another and, if one has complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

As in the previous passage, the Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme pattern for forgiveness. We all have legitimate complaints about how others have treated us or wounded us, yet this passage says, "You also must forgive."

Reflections

To forgive without upbraiding, even by manner or look, is a high exercise of grace—it is imitation of Christ.¹

Robert Chapman

6. a. Explain why love cannot rejoice in unrighteousness of any kind.

The nature of love is to "abhor what is evil" and to "hold fast to what is good" (Rom. 12:9). Therefore, love seeks the good of others while evil hurts people and dishonors God.

b. In what subtle ways do you find yourself rejoicing over others' misfortune or at the news of religious scandal? Give examples from your own inner thought life of rejoicing over others' misfortune or public scandal.

I have been guilty of this when I have heard of a natural disaster in a country that has sought the destruction of my country.

7. a. What does the word *truth* mean in the context of verse 6?

In a context dealing with behavior and relationships, and juxtaposed to the word "wrongdoing" (or "unrighteousness"), truth is used "in the sense of righteous behavior or principles of conduct that correspond to the truth of the gospel message...truth in practice that results in righteous living...holy character, righteous conduct, integrity, and growth in Christ" (p.78).

To further your understanding of truth in this context, read Gordon Fee's quotation to the group: "The person full of Christian love joins in rejoicing on the side of behavior that reflects the gospel—for every victory gained, every forgiveness offered, every act of kindness" (p. 78).

b. Give an example from your experience of rejoicing "with the truth."

The full repentance and restoration to the church of a brother who had caused our church years of emotional heartache and eventually had to be disfellowshipped because of his unrepentant immorality. His repentance enables us to rejoice in the closeness of fellowship we now experience.

Reflections

What a man rejoices in is a fair test of his character. To be glad when evil prevails, or to rejoice in the misfortunes of others is indicative of great moral degradation.²

W. G. Scroggie

Chapter 9: Bears, Believes, Hopes, and Endures All Things

8. Although the details of verse 7 can be difficult to understand, what is the main point of this verse?

The nature of love is not weak or cowardly, but is strong and tenacious. Therefore, it can bear and endure the heartache, setbacks, and deprivations.

NOTE: Take the time to fully explore this next question with your group.

9. In what ways does Moses' leadership of the rebellious nation of Israel through the wilderness for forty years illustrate the following statements concerning love? (See pages 84-85 and be sure you understand each of the four statements before you answer the question.)

The loving life of Moses can be an enormous help and encouragement to Christian leaders. We face no problems that he did not encounter. We can learn a lot about loving leadership from what Moses wrote about love and how he exemplified love in leadership. Clearly identify his acts of loving leadership.

“bears all things”

Moses had to bear the responsibility of leading two million rebellious people for forty years. The problems he faced and the suffering he endured while leading them to the Promised Land are beyond our comprehension. One of the most difficult burdens was the relentless complaining of the people against God and himself. Their sin of unbelief was most difficult to bear, but love "bears all things."

“believes all things”

Moses' ability to bear with the people and their countless problems was because he believed in the promises of God and in the believing remnant of God's people. By faith he continually moved forward despite many steps backward. He believed God would work in his people and that they would respond and someday enter the Promised Land. As such, his prayers for the people were rooted in faith and love.

“hopes all things”

On a few occasions Moses despaired, but most of the time he hoped in God's promises and a better day for his people. Moses didn't walk away

from the people or give up. He had confidence that at least some of them would respond. Because Moses loved them and acted toward them in hope, the next generation did enter the Promised Land.

“endures all things”

The people not only complained but accused Moses of terrible sins. They accused him of trying to kill them and their children and of abusive leadership. They said he had failed to keep his promise to take them into the Promised Land. Even his closest colleagues Aaron and Miriam, his beloved brother and sister, criticized him. Yet Moses continued to love them, and when God punished Miriam, Moses prayed for her healing.

“Time after time, when it appeared that all was lost for the nation, Moses trusted, hoped, and endured. Selfish leaders, on the other hand, melt like snowflakes when the heat is on. They do not persevere” (p. 85). But Moses endured because he loved God and loved the people. Love is strong and tenacious. It doesn’t give up or melt away. It has staying power despite problems and hardships. As C.K. Barrett writes, “No hardship or rebuff ever makes love cease to be love”³ (p. 83).

Reflections

Most significant ministry with people is usually long-term, but long-term ministry succeeds only with supernatural power from above to endure all of life’s hardships and heartaches. Some missionaries serve for decades in dangerous areas where the problems and setbacks never end. How do they last? The answer: love for God and love for people. Love generates the faith, hope, and endurance to persevere through a lifetime of problems.

Leading with Love, page 85

10. What is the main point Paul makes about love and spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 13:8-12? How should your answer affect the life of your local church?

Spiritual gifts have only a temporary purpose. They are for the church on earth and its upbuilding. In contrast, love is for now and eternity. Heaven is, as Edwards says, “the paradise of love,” “a world of holy love” (p. 86). Since “God is love,” heaven is a home of love. In heaven and for eternity, we will all experience perfect love between one another and perfect love for God.

What a future is ours! The local church should be a foretaste of heaven and a home of love on earth. People should know we are Christ's disciples by the supernatural love they see among us (John 13:34-35).

11. The author pleads with his readers not to use this book to tell other people that they have no love. Why do you think the author is so emphatic about this point?

I have seen too many tireless servants of Christ unjustly accused of a lack of love by self-centered, self-absorbed Christians. As such, I know that unloving people will use this book to harm their struggling leaders. It is far too easy for people to see the specks of lovelessness in the eyes of others but not the logs of lovelessness in their own eyes. I can't bear to hear that hypocrites have used this book to criticize others and divide the church. Nor can I bear the thought that unrepentant believers will use this book to accuse their leaders of lacking in love when they must rebuke or discipline unrepentant believers for their sins.

12. When it is necessary for teachers and leaders to address the problem of lovelessness (and at times it is necessary), what is the proper way to do so?

I consider this a relevant question for all leaders and teachers because it is something they will inevitably have to do. So take time to list key suggestions on how properly to address lovelessness in the church.

We must address lovelessness with others humbly because we also have failed to love as we ought.

We should teach the congregation Revelation 2:4 and other crucial New Testament passages on love. Keep the focus on what the Bible says about love and our response to its commands to love. Let the Word of God speak to the people and change their hearts.

Call the church to repentance, to action (Rev. 2:5), and to pray for a revival of love. Set the example for others to follow.

Identify areas of lovelessness in the church and present a plan of action to remedy these deficiencies. Be patient with change, but not passive.

13. a. It has often been said that you can substitute the name *Jesus* for *love* throughout the following passage. So try it. Place the name Jesus or Jesus Christ in the spaces below. Read it this way once during your group session.

Have some fun with this assignment!

_____ is patient and _____ [is] kind; _____ does not envy or boast; _____ is not arrogant; _____ [is not] rude. _____ does not insist on [his or her] own way; _____ is not irritable; _____ [is not] resentful; _____ does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. _____ bears all things, _____ believes all things, _____ hopes all things, _____ endures all things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

b. God's will is for his people to be like his Son Jesus Christ and to love as he loved, so we can apply this passage personally by placing our own name for love in each blank. Hopefully your friends wouldn't laugh when they hear you read this passage aloud with your name inserted. Of course, if they do laugh, read it aloud with their name inserted in the blanks. They won't laugh anymore!

By doing this exercise, you will now learn how to act and think in the spirit of love. Try this a few times in your group session until you get the idea of what God is expecting from you and me.

_____ is patient and _____ [is] kind; _____ does not envy or boast; _____ is not arrogant; _____ [is not] rude. _____ does not insist on [his or her] own way; _____ is not irritable; _____ [is not] resentful; _____ does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. _____ bears all things, _____ believes all things, _____ hopes all things, _____ endures all things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

c. Now substitute the name of your leadership or ministry position for the word love. For example, say "An elder is patient..." or, "A teacher is patient..."

_____ is patient and _____ [is] kind; _____ does not envy or boast; _____ is not arrogant; _____ [is not] rude. _____ does not insist on [his or her] own way; _____ is not irritable; _____ [is not] resentful; _____ does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. _____ bears all things, _____ believes all things, _____ hopes all things, _____ endures all things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

d. Finally, marriage is the first place to implement the Christian characteristics of love as described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, so apply this passage to your marriage relationship. Substitute the name “a Christian husband” or “a Christian wife” for the word love. Marriage is the fundamental testing and proving ground of love. A Christian leader can’t love people in the church, but hate the spouse at home. That is hypocrisy, and the Scripture says, “Let love be without hypocrisy” (Rom. 12:9; NASB).

_____ is patient and _____ [is] kind; _____ does not envy or boast; _____ is not arrogant; _____ [is not] rude. _____ does not insist on [his or her] own way; _____ is not irritable; _____ [is not] resentful; _____ does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. _____ bears all things, _____ believes all things, _____ hopes all things, _____ endures all things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

These love qualities will make you more skilled in serving people, so let them shape your character. As they do, you will be more like the loving Lord Jesus Christ.

14. Based on what you have learned from 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, briefly describe the character and behavior of a loving leader.

Loving leaders are patient with and kind to people. They are not self-centered people—jealous, boastful, arrogant, rude, self-seeking, short-tempered, vindictive. Instead, they are like Christ—always self-giving, self-sacrificing, tenacious, and hopeful.

Reflections

When Christians love one another as Jesus did, the local church family prefigures the glories of our future loving, heavenly existence. Sadly, the church at Corinth was not experiencing heavenly love. It was characterized by rivalries, lawsuits, immorality, abuse of Christian liberty, disorderly conduct, pride, and selfish independence—altogether an unacceptably poor representation of the heavenly realities of love and the fruit of the Spirit.

Leading with Love, page 86

Notes

1. Robert L. Peterson and Alexander Strauch, *Agape Leadership: Lessons in Spiritual Leadership from the Life of R. C. Chapman* (Littleton, Colo.: Lewis & Roth, 1991), 39.
2. W. Graham Scroggie, *The Love Life: A Study of 1 Corinthians 13* (London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), 45).
3. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 305.

Lesson Six

The Works of a Loving Leader

This lesson covers pages 91 to 105 of *Leading with Love*. Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Overview: Chapters ten through eighteen of *A Christian Leader's Guide to Leading with Love* explain the works of a loving leader and present a picture of what loving leaders do for those they lead and teach. As you study lessons six through ten of the Study Guide, be sure to keep this big picture in mind. In lesson six, you will explore the works of love expressed and hospitality. A key passage for this study is Romans 12:9-13.

As you gauge the amount of time to spend on each question in this lesson, keep in mind that question seven is a key question that will take considerable time to answer properly. Question eight, which presents the Scripture passages on hospitality, also deserves extra time and attention because if the exposition of God's Word doesn't convince people of the necessity to practice loving hospitality, then nothing will.

NOTE: Move through the first two questions quickly in order to devote adequate time to question three, which asks you to list suggestions for improving ways to acknowledge and thank people for their service.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 16:24)

I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 1:8)

I wrote to you...to let you know the abundant love that I have for you. (2 Cor. 2:4)

Let love be genuine.... Love one another with brotherly affection.... Seek to show hospitality. (Rom. 12:9, 10, 13)

Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (Heb. 13:1-2)

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly.... Show hospitality to one another ...without grumbling. (1 Peter 4:8-9)

Chapter 10: Expressing Love and Affection

1. What actions and character traits does Paul acknowledge and praise in Romans 16? From the verses below, list as many as you can. Don't simply repeat the words of the texts; use your own words to describe what Paul acknowledges and praises.

- ◆ Phoebe, a servant of the church (Rom. 16:1)
- ◆ Prisca and Aquila...who risked their necks for my life (Rom. 16:3-4)
- ◆ Mary, who has worked hard for you (Rom. 16:6)
- ◆ Andronicus and Junia....They are well known to the apostles (Rom. 16:7)
- ◆ Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord (Rom. 16:8)
- ◆ Apelles, who is approved in Christ (Rom. 16:10)
- ◆ Those workers in the Lord Tryphaena and Tryphosa (Rom. 16:12)
- ◆ The beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord (Rom. 16:12)
- ◆ Rufus, chosen in the Lord (Rom. 16:13)
- ◆ Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church (Rom. 16:23)

To make the practical details of Paul's example "stick," try to restate them in your own words. Paul gladly acknowledges and praises:

- Being a willing servant of the local church***
- A willingness to risk one's life to save a fellow believer***
- Diligent work on behalf of the church***
- Being loved and respected by church leaders***
- Being spoken well of by others***
- Providing hospitality on behalf of the entire church***

2. a. How would you answer someone who says there is no need to acknowledge or thank people for their service because they are doing their work for God and God is the one who is responsible to reward and acknowledge his people for faithful service (Matt. 25:21)?

The Scriptures provide numerous examples of acknowledging and thanking people for their work or character, which should be encouragement enough to follow the same example.

Just because God rewards people for their service does not eliminate our human responsibility to thank them for their work. Love ought never to be silent in the face of good deeds done or virtuous character; it always rejoices in the truth (1 Cor. 13:7).

Healthy human relationships require that we recognize and acknowledge one another's works and virtues. So good leadership always communicates thanks and praise to those who serve well; it doesn't leave people guessing.

Imagine how cold and inhuman a church community would become if we did not thank or acknowledge one another for work well done.

- b. How would you respond to someone who says we will cause people to be tempted with pride if we publicly praise their work or character?

Public appreciation could sometimes lead to pride, so we must be wise and proper when we praise people. Exaggerated praise, elaborate recognition, or flattery can lead a person into self-deception and self-elevation. However, if someone becomes prideful as a result of proper praise, it is the person who has those thoughts who is responsible, not the one who did the praising.

One preacher, when told that his sermons were life-changing and deeply appreciated responded by saying, "Well, thank the Lord." These were not just pious words; they were genuine words of thanks to God who deserves all the glory.

3. List specific ways you can acknowledge and thank people in your church or group for their faithful service to others or their quality of Christian character.

NOTE: Don't be too hasty when your group lists practical suggestions for thanking others. Make this a learning time through which participants can gain fresh ideas from one another.

Send a personal card or letter. People are deeply touched by written acknowledgements. Each week, our elders send a note of appreciation to one or two people in the church who have served others well. Each of us writes a short word of encouragement and thanks on the card.

In certain cases where people have volunteered an extraordinary amount of their time to serve the church body, it is appropriate to give a book or a gift certificate to a restaurant.

Regularly tell specific individuals in your church that you thank God for their service or Christian example. Look for people who serve faithfully but rarely receive acknowledgement and tell them they are loved and appreciated.

4. The following passages display Paul's loving heart and affectionate leadership style. Which two passages most touched your heart regarding Paul's intense love for his converts? Explain your choices.

- ◆ I rejoice over you. (Rom. 16:19)
- ◆ I hold you in my heart. (Phil. 1:7)
- ◆ I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 1:8)
- ◆ My brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown. (Phil. 4:1)
- ◆ Being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (1 Thess. 2:8)
- ◆ My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you. (Gal. 4:19)
- ◆ My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. 16:24)
- ◆ I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears...to let you know the abundant love that I have for you. (2 Cor. 2:4)
- ◆ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. (2 Cor. 6:11)
- ◆ You are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. (2 Cor. 7:3)
- ◆ Because I do not love you? God knows I do! (2 Cor. 11:11)
- ◆ I seek not what is yours but you. (2 Cor. 12:14)
- ◆ I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? (2 Cor. 12:15)
- ◆ And may the Lord make you increase...in love for one another...as we do for you. (1 Thess. 3:12)
- ◆ I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart [the slave Onesimus]. (Philem. 12)

I am particularly touched by the words of 1 Thess. 2:8: “Being affectionately desirous of you” and “you have become very dear to us.” These were Paul’s true children in the faith, and he loved them. He couldn’t have expressed his love for them in more endearing language than he did. Like all loving parents, he shared with them not only a message of life and hope, but offered his very life in service to them.

Philemon 12—Onesimus was a runaway slave. Paul met him in Rome and later sent him back to his owner, Philemon, in Asia Minor. Paul informs Philemon that Onesimus had become so close to him that Onesimus was like Paul’s own heart—nearest and dearest to him, his very life. Paul was a deeply loving man.

5. What endearing terms can you use, without being phony or uncomfortable, to express your love for those you teach and lead?

Brother, sister, beloved, and friend would be a good start.

6. What does the author mean when he says the local church “is to be a life-transforming community?”

The Christian life is to be a life of continuous, non-stop growth into Christlike maturity (Col. 1:28-29). The local church family is one of the prime instruments God uses to transform our character and nurture Christlike love within us. That is why a Christian needs to be a part of a local church family. The local church is to be a place of education and character formation.

7. List ways that you and your fellow leaders can help believers grow in love. Answer this question with the intent of taking positive action in accordance with the answers you give. This is not meant to be an exchange of creative theories.

NOTE: Take this question seriously.

Start the question by reading to the group Hebrews 10:24: “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.”

People need to see living models of loving behavior and growth in love, so leaders first must be growing in love themselves. Since many believers may not know that God wants them to grow in love, leaders must also consistently teach what God’s Word says about growing in love (Phil. 1:9; 1 Thess. 3:11-12; 4:9-10; 2 Thess. 1:3) and challenge believers to do so.

Leaders must also regularly pray that those we lead will better understand the amazing love of Christ. Pray Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19 for others as well as for ourselves.

Lead the group in repentance for attitudes and acts of lovelessness and selfishness. Identify and confess selfish, self-seeking conduct in the group.

Have everyone in the congregation—especially the leaders—read the book *A Christian Leader’s Guide to Leading with Love and Agape Leadership* or *Robert Chapman: A Biography* by Robert L. Peterson.

Regularly inform the congregation of needs within the body. Let people know how they can help suffering members in the body and lead by example such as by asking others to accompany us on visits to the sick or dying.

Over time, invite all those we care for into our homes for a meal and fellowship (as much as is possible).

Make the effort to be friendly to everyone, especially new people. Work hard to learn everyone’s name, including the names of their children.

Before or after the service, call on the group to greet others warmly and affectionately. Encourage the congregation, at a designated time during congregational gathering, to stand and greet one another (maybe even give a kiss of love). The Scripture commands it.

Reflections

The local church is “the household of God” (1 Tim. 3:15) and should be filled with loving words and demonstrations of familial affection. Sadly, the atmosphere in some churches is more like a funeral home than a loving family home. There is little affection and warmth. Legitimate emotional feelings are suffocated. People hardly know one another. They keep their distance, and the only display of affection is a speedy handshake before exiting the church doors. Such behavior is not authentic, Christian brotherhood and sisterhood.

Leading with Love, page 96

Chapter 11: Practicing Hospitality

8. Briefly explain each of the following statements below. Point out key words and ideas in each one. If you have commentaries on these passages, use them. Or, if you have *The Hospitality Commands* by Alexander Strauch, it will also help you understand these passages.¹ *The Hospitality*

Commands is a short, 53-page booklet that can be given to each of the leaders in your church or group to help them understand loving, Christian hospitality.

Romans 12:13: “Seek to show hospitality.”

This exhortation to practice hospitality appears within the larger context of love and sacrificial Christian living (Rom. 12:1-21). Love and hospitality always go together.

The Greek word that is rendered “seek to show” is dio^{ko} and means to “strive for” or “pursue.” We normally don’t think of pursuing hospitality, but that is what the passage commands. Leon Morris states that the verb dio^{ko} “points to vigorous effort,” and C. K. Barrett tries to emphasize the force of the verb by rendering the phrase, “Practice hospitality with enthusiasm.” In the same vein, the French expositor, Godet, renders it “eager to show hospitality.”² Thus we are to actively pursue, promote, and aspire to hospitality. We are to think about it, plan for it, prepare for it, pray about it, and seek opportunities to do it.

1 Peter 4:9: “Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.”

The connection between Christian love and hospitality is even more clearly emphasized in 1 Peter 4 than in Romans 12.

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly. . . Show hospitality to one another without grumbling” (1 Peter 4:8-9).

As Christians, we should earnestly love one another. One very practical way to fervently love one another is to show hospitality. Hospitality fuels the flames of love. It promotes, preserves, enriches, deepens, and renews love. Hence, Peter naturally follows his exhortation to love fervently with the command to practice hospitality gladly.

The main emphasis of Peter’s exhortation is on the phrase in verse 9, “without complaint” (without murmuring or grumbling). Complaining does not promote love; it promotes disharmony, discouragement, and discontentment. The opposite of complaining is gladness—the willingness to cheerfully accept the inconvenience, labor, and cost of hospitality.

The ministry of hospitality can easily rattle our grumbling bones. Hospitality demands old-fashioned hard work. It is time consuming and places a strain on the family. It may be costly and is often inconvenient. Sometimes guests abuse their Christian brothers’ and sisters’ hospitality. And during times of persecution, hospitality can be dangerous. But we must remember that hospitality is a form of giving, and “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Hospitality, therefore, is a concrete, down-to-earth test of our fervent love for God and his people. Love can be abstract and indistinct whereas hospitality is specific and tangible. We seldom complain about loving others too much, but we do complain about the inconveniences of hospitality. So let us remember: hospitality is love in action, the flesh and muscle on the bones of love. Through caring acts of hospitality, the reality of our love is tested.

At heart we are all selfish, and selfishness is the single greatest enemy of hospitality. We prefer to be free to go about our business without interference or concern for other people's needs. We do not want to be inconvenienced, nor do we want to share our privacy or time with others. We are consumed by our personal comforts and don't want the responsibility and work that hospitality entails. We are greedy and don't want to share our food, home, or money. We are afraid that we will be used or that our property will sustain damage. All of these attitudes are selfish, and selfishness is sin. Selfishness is a mark of the old, unregenerate life and is the opposite of love. It is contrary to hospitality. It is totally opposed to everything Jesus Christ taught and lived.

Hebrews 13:2: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

*As is true in the previous two passages, this passage also establishes a close connection between love and hospitality. Using a negative imperative command, the writer of Hebrews says, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers." The Greek text reads, "Be not forgetful [or neglectful] of hospitality."³ Many English translations add the words "to strangers," but this translation is not accurate. The Greek word for hospitality here, *philoxenia*, should be translated simply as "hospitality," which includes entertaining complete strangers as well as familiar friends.*

To strengthen his exhortation to faithfully practice hospitality, the writer of Hebrews adds an intriguing and profound comment: "some [who have practiced hospitality] have entertained angels unawares." This comment was sure to spark fresh thought in the minds of his readers about the importance and rewards of hospitality. The writer is referring to the Old Testament characters: Abraham and Sarah, Lot, Gideon, and the parents of Samson (Genesis 18, 19; Judges 6, 13). Each of these people showed hospitality to strangers who turned out to be angelic messengers.

The writer of Hebrews is not suggesting that we should expect supernatural agents to visit us incognito if we practice hospitality. Rather, the writer means that hospitality often results in unexpected blessing and reward. In the guest-host relationship, the guest often blesses the host. Biblical commentator Henry Alford ably expresses the author's thought:

“...angels were the messengers of God’s spiritual purposes, and such messengers may be found in Christian guests, even where least expected.”

Bible expositor William Kelly says that the encouragement of this comment “is that some, as Abraham and Lot of old, entertained angels unawares. To receive God’s children now is assuredly no less honour in His eyes.” Every guest is an honored guest, a person of infinite value who will live forever. So it is as much a privilege to entertain God’s people today as it was for Abraham to entertain angels. This is why my wife always reminds our family, “We should treat every guest as an angel of God or as our Lord himself. They are all important guests.”

3 John 5-6: “Beloved, it is a faithful thing you [Gaius] do in all your efforts for these brothers [missionaries and preachers], strangers as they are, who testified to your love [hospitality] before the church.” Why is John, the apostle, so delighted with Gaius?

Because Gaius opened his home to traveling preachers, evangelists, and missionaries, he demonstrated true Christian love in action. He feed them, gave them board, and sent them on their way full. In this way he supported the advancement of the gospel. These preachers later reported to their local church of his loving hospitality, which made John glad.

1 Timothy 3:2: “Therefore an overseer [elder] must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable.” (also Titus 1:8)

If you were to ask a number of Christians what the required qualifications are for a church shepherd, most would say, “They must go to seminary, be properly licensed, lawfully ordained, or believe certain doctrines.” Few Christians would list hospitality as a requirement for church office, yet that is precisely what the New Testament requires. Some Christians may even disagree that such a minor point should be a requirement. Such thinking, however, shows an inadequate understanding of authentic Christian community and of the biblical shepherd’s work. An open home is a sign of an open heart and a loving, sacrificial, serving spirit.

9. List three reasons why hospitality is a biblical requirement for a church elder (or overseer).

As the elders go, so goes the church. If the elders are inhospitable, the people will be inhospitable. If the elders are disobedient to the biblical commands to practice hospitality, the people will be disobedient to those commands.

It is often the responsibility of the church elders to provide hospitality for traveling preachers or missionaries. See, for example, 3 John 5-8.

Elders are required to be “above reproach” in their Christian lives (1 Tim. 3:2). To refuse to open one’s home to God’s people is reproachful because it displays a lack of love and care for others.

Elders shepherd people (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2), and hospitality has a big impact on people. So one of the most effective ways to shepherd people is to share one’s table and home with them. “Shepherding people cannot be done from a distance.... It requires close interaction” (p. 101).

“Our homes are one of the best tools we have for building loving Christian community” (p. 101).

“The Christian leader who offers hospitality to others fleshes out love in a uniquely personal way” (p. 99).

Reflections

You don’t have to be a preacher or have years of training to use your home to love and serve people. If you simply open the doors of your home, the people will come.

Leading with Love, page 103

10. From your own experience, explain why teaching people or being taught in a home environment is a powerfully effective way to communicate the Word of God.

When teaching God’s Word to non-Christians or new believers, the home provides a less intimidating atmosphere than a church building. The home environment communicates love, warmth, care, and family community. This helps open people’s hearts to be receptive to God’s Word.

Because the home environment is informal and intimate, people feel free to ask questions and share their thoughts. There is much more interaction between teacher and student. So learning is enhanced when it takes place in a home.

“For the early Christians, the home was the most natural setting for proclaiming Christ to families, neighbors, and friends” (p. 102).

11. Give several examples of how hospitality can be used for evangelism.

People who would never think of entering a church building will come to your home for dinner or friendly fellowship.

When friends or neighbors face a crisis, you can share love and comfort by inviting them to your home for counsel or prayer.

You can host a home Bible study, a child evangelism club, or a neighborhood Christmas party.

You can provide temporary housing for a needy person.

12. List at least three rich benefits you and your family will receive if you practice hospitality.

You will have the opportunity to make new friends.

Your children will learn to relate to adults, which will help them mature socially and spiritually. They will also learn to serve others and share their possessions.

Hospitality will draw your family closer as you work together to serve the needs of your guests.

If you invite missionaries to stay in your home, your family members will be enriched as they meet God's servants from all over the world. Sharing your home in this way will broaden your vision for the gospel.

You will gain great personal satisfaction as you share your home with the Lord's people.

13. If you have had a memorable or funny experience while practicing hospitality or being treated to hospitality, share your story with the group.

When I was a new Christian, the hospitality I received in the homes of godly families made a lasting impression on me. Those first impressions and friendships have lasted to this day.

14. What most hinders you from actively practicing hospitality?

From the following list of hindrances to hospitality, pick two that apply to you. Write out some simple steps you can take to overcome these problems and become more hospitable.

- _____ Time pressures (too many other things to do)
- _____ Finances
- _____ Inadequate living conditions
- _____ Selfishness
- _____ Fear of failure
- _____ Inexperience
- _____ Lack of discipline and organization (or failure to plan ahead)
- _____ Pride
- _____ Others

Time pressures and selfishness are often most difficult for me.

The solution that has helped us most as a family is to designate Sunday as the day we invite people into our home. We have found it to be one of the best days for hospitality. We have discovered that the joy and fulfillment of inviting people into our home regularly helps motivate us to practice hospitality continually. We feel we are missing an important element of our Christian experience when we don't practice hospitality.

15. On pages 103-105, there is a list of suggestions to help you obey the command of Scripture to practice hospitality. Which of these ideas is most helpful to you? Why?

For me, it is the first point: "Set a regular time each week to invite people to your home." Unless we plan the time and call people ahead, our ministry of hospitality is sporadic.

Assignment: Ask each member of your group to download the article entitled "A Friendly Church Is Hard to Find." If the group would like, discuss the article and seek to improve your church's friendliness and hospitality.

16. Fill in the blanks of this quotation, "Christian hospitality is not a matter of _____; it is not a matter of _____; it is not a matter of _____, _____, _____, or _____. Christian hospitality is a matter of _____ to God."⁴

Helga Henry

Christian hospitality is not a matter of choice; it is not a matter of money; it is not a matter of age, social standing, sex, or personality. Christian hospitality is a matter of obedience to God.

Suggested Assignment

An excellent article to read and make available to your church leaders is, “A Friendly Church is Hard to Find,” by Gene and Nancy Preston in the *Christian Century* (January 30, 1991). You can download it at www.lewisandroth.org.

Notes

1. Alexander Strauch, *The Hospitality Commands: Building Loving Christian Community and Building Bridges to Friends and Neighbors* (Littleton, CO., Lewis and Roth, 1993).
2. Godet, *The Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), 436.
3. Henry Alford, *The Greek New Testament*, 4 vols. (5th ed., London: Rivingtons, 1871), 3: 261.
4. Quoted from V. A. Hall, *Be My Guest* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 9.

Lesson Seven

The Works of a Loving Leader

This lesson covers pages 107 to 124 of *Leading with Love*. Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Overview: This lesson covers chapters twelve and thirteen of *A Christian Leader's Guide to Leading with Love* and focuses on the works of caring for people's needs and laboring in prayer. Romans 12:9-13 remains the overarching passage for this lesson while Luke 10:30-37 is a key passage for understanding the practical application of love.

As you lead this lesson, keep in mind that caring for people's needs through practical service and prayer is what loving Christian leaders do. It is what makes them special. It is also what Scripture commands. Keep this big picture in mind so that it is not lost in a forest of details.

NOTE: Move through questions one through three speedily, and focus your time on question four.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

*Let love be genuine.... Love one another with brotherly affection....
Contribute to the needs of the saints. (Rom. 12:9-10, 13)*

So give proof before the churches of your love [their love offering for the poor in Jerusalem] and of our boasting about you to these men. (2 Cor. 8:24)

Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth

boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Eph. 6:18-20)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (James 5:16)

For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother. (1 John 4:20-21)

Chapter 12: Caring for Peoples' Needs

Read below the story of the Good Samaritan:

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Take care of him and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back." (Luke 10:30-35)

1. a. What did it cost the Good Samaritan personally to help an unknown, dying man on the road to Jericho? List as many things as you can.

It cost emotional distress, an interruption of his schedule, two denarii and a promise of more money if needed, invaluable time, and the responsibility of an ongoing commitment. If the man was on a business trip, it temporarily diverted him from his mission and work.

b. Considering the cultural and religious context, what excuses did the priest and Levite use for refusing to help the dying man on the road to Jericho?

They couldn't decide if the man deserved care. They didn't know him personally, so to their way of thinking he could have been a bad man who was receiving his just punishment.

They couldn't decide if the man was a true neighbor in the sense of their religion and home country.

They were holy men of God and didn't want to become ceremonially unclean by touching a dying or dead person.

They were busy with God's work.

c. What sins did the priest and Levite commit by refusing to help a fellow human being in desperate need?

They broke a most important commandment: to love their neighbor as themselves (Lev. 19:18) and thereby broke the covenant with God.

They were selfish, loveless, and heartless men. They didn't exhibit God's compassion for suffering people and as such were terrible testimonies to the world of what God's people should be like.

2. What vital truths does Jesus Christ teach his followers by means of the story of the Good Samaritan? To answer this question, read the full context of the story (Luke 10:25-37).

Jesus teaches the extent and degree of love his followers are to show all people in need. He illustrates love and mercy exhibited in practical action.

Jesus teaches us who our neighbor is. A neighbor is not limited to those in our family or religious community. Rather, all people we meet on the path of life—regardless of race, gender, or religion—are our neighbors.

Jesus teaches all his followers to be Good Samaritans to people in need.

3. What do you honestly think you would have done if you had found the dying man on the road to Jericho? Would you have done as much as the Good Samaritan did? Or would you have done much less?

I know I would have been worried about my time and schedule. I certainly hope that I would have stopped and helped the dying man. I'm not sure I would have promised to pay future expenses as the Good Samaritan did.

NOTE: These next two questions are important for improving loving leadership in the church, so take the time to be practical and specific.

4. a. Why is it important that a Christian leader be genuinely concerned about sick or dying people in the congregation? List as many reasons as you can.

Because God is compassionate and concerned for those who suffer, a Christian leader is to be an example of God's love and compassion.

A compassionate leader produces compassionate followers; a cold leader produces compassionless followers.

The local church family is to be a loving, caring family, not an impersonal institution.

Christian love requires practical care for needy people (1 John 3:16-18).

Jesus went out of his way to care for the sick and dying during his life here on earth (Luke 7:1-17; 8:26-56), and we are to be like him. It would be an awful testimony, a disgrace to the name of Christ, if Christian leaders didn't care for their sick and dying members.

The New Testament elders, deacons, and apostles cared for the needy in practical ways.

"A leader will not have much of a ministry if people do not know that he or she truly cares about them" (p. 109).

This world is full of sickness and death. So leaders must address the consequences of suffering and pain.

- b. What do you personally do for sick or dying people in your church?

I always fear that people will be improperly cared for or forgotten. This motivates me to action. I regularly call to check on the sick person's condition and progress.

I visit them, send a card, or take them a meal.

I pray for them and make sure the church is also well informed and praying.

I talk with the deacons to be certain that help is well coordinated with all those who are assisting.

5. What does the author mean by "We must all be aware of and look out for the growing senior population" (page 111)? What does this statement have to do with your church and its future?

The whole world is graying. People are living longer than ever before, so the senior population is exploding. This will require more of the church's money, time, and attention. It also presents new opportunities for evangelism and mercy ministry, so we need to be aware and be prepared.

The problem, however, is that it is easy for busy people to neglect older people, especially those who are shut-ins. But to neglect our elderly members is a bad testimony to the world and displeasing to God (Acts 6:1-6). Read to the group James 1:27: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction."

6. What practical steps can you take (personally and corporately) to help busy, over-burdened people become more aware of and mobilized to care for the church's sick, shut-ins, and poor? Remember Acts 6:1-6.

Keep the needs of the sick, shut-ins, and poor before the church by regular public announcements and prayer. Also use your church bulletin to raise awareness of people's needs.

Every church should have a body of deacons to minister to the needy. The elders and deacons should establish a structure for people to get involved at different levels—to help, call, or visit the needy.

Teach what God's Word says about our responsibility to help needy members, and teach the young people of your church to care for the elderly and needy. Take others with you when you visit shut-ins or help older citizens.

Be sure the church's budget includes a benevolence fund.

Call people on the phone and ask for help. Some people just need to be asked.

Reflections

A leader will not have much of a ministry if people do not know that he or she truly cares about them. So a leader needs to demonstrate a tender heart toward suffering members, a genuine concern for the sick, a generous disposition to the poor, and a spirit of mercy to help relieve the misery that characterizes the lives of so many people today.

Leading with Love, page 109

7. John best describes the standard of love among believers envisioned by the New Testament:

Read aloud 1 John 3:16-18, then emphasize to the group the importance of knowing and living out this passage.

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart [refuses to show compassion] against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:16-18)

a. How would you describe this standard of love?

Jesus' death for us on the cross is our standard of love. He gave his life to save us from our sins, so we should be willing to die for one another. Although we are rarely called upon to die for one another, this principle applies to everyday life in terms of sharing our money, possessions, and time with need brothers and sisters.

After answering this question, read to the group Leon Morris' s quotation on page 112.

b. What does John mean by the words, "yet closes his heart against him"?

To close the heart means to show no compassion or mercy for the desperate need of a fellow believer when one has the means to help relieve that need. Closing the heart means to be heartless, loveless, and selfish in the face of suffering. It should never be said that a Christian closes his heart against another.

c. Why is closing one's heart to the needs of others such a serious matter to the beloved disciple John?

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22), and the love of God is poured out into a believer's heart by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). So to refuse to show loving compassion to a needy member brings into question the reality of God's love existing in a person's life. This thought is expressed in 1 John 5:8: "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." Thus, closing one's heart could be a sign that one does not have

the Holy Spirit dwelling within. At the least, an absence of compassion demonstrates a disobedient heart and an inconsistent Christian walk.

d. According to 1 John 3:16-18, how is Christlike love and compassion to be displayed?

Christlike love is to be displayed in total self-giving, in practical deeds, and in reality—not just empty words or theory. In daily life, a Christian is to actually share one’s life, money, possessions, and time with another.

8. What does the author mean by the statement, “Loving leaders find themselves making lots of phone calls” (page110)? How would the truth of this statement help you be a more effective, loving leader?

Good shepherds know their sheep and constantly check on their condition. Read to the group Proverbs 27:23: “Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds.”

When you love people, they are on your heart and mind. Their problems and needs become yours, so you are compelled to check on them and to stay in touch. The phone is a quick and easy way to maintain contact. It enables you to be informed of their condition and lets them know you love and care for them. People who see your practiced concern for their lives will respond better to your leadership.

You also need to know that such care will require you to make many return phone calls. When people discover that you are a loving person, they will call you for help and for prayer.

NOTE: Don’t rush over these questions. Help your group get to know Job because he exemplifies the loving compassion of a community leader.

9. Job is a wonderful example of a compassionate, loving leader. Read his own testimony to his big-hearted compassion for poor and needy people:

It is challenging to read Job’s words of testimony regarding his loving, compassionate leadership. Read his testimony (found on page 68 of the study guide) to your group, then answer the questions that follow.

“Did not I weep for him whose day was hard?

Was not my soul grieved for the needy?” (Job 30:25)

“Because I delivered the poor who cried for help,
 and the fatherless who had none to help him.
 The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me,
 and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.
 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
 my justice was like a robe and a turban.
 I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame.
 I was a father to the needy,
 and I searched out the cause of him who I did not know.”
 (Job 29:12-16)

“If I have withheld anything that the poor desired,
 or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
 or have eaten my morsel alone,
 and the fatherless has not eaten of it...
 if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,
 or the needy without covering...
 then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder,
 and let my arm be broken from its socket.” (Job 31:16-17, 19, 22)

a. List the kinds of people Job cared for in their “affliction.”

The hard-working poor and the fatherless poor, the widows, the dying, the blind and the lame, and those exploited by the rich.

b. From the passage above, describe in your own words Job’s disposition toward suffering people.

***Job wept for suffering people and grieved over the poor.
 He was generous, big-hearted, and hospitable.
 He was concerned about justice for the poor and had a deep sense of responsibility to care for those who couldn’t care for themselves.
 He cared deeply and gave of himself for others.***

c. List all the things that Job did for needy people.

***He wept and grieved.
 He responded to calls for help.
 He provided material assistance to the orphan, widow, blind, and lame.
 He fought for justice.***

***He opened his home to feed people.
He clothed the poor.***

d. What practical steps can you take to begin to develop a compassionate heart like Job's (and the Lord Jesus Christ)?

Pray for a spirit of loving compassion and always confess greed and selfish behavior as sin.

Observe what the Scripture teaches about caring for the poor and the suffering.

Focus on a needy person to help.

Invite needy people to your home for dinner.

Send a card to a person going through hardship.

Make a compassionate phone call to a hurting member.

Adopt a widow or widower to pray for and assist.

Close this section of the lesson by reminding the group of the story of the Greek scholar and feeding the poor at the bottom of page 114.

Reflections

As leaders and teachers, we can make a difference. We can cast a vision and set an example of compassionate care. We can raise awareness and set up organizational structures providing opportunities for people to share with others in need. We can also warn of how materialism, prosperity, and greed harden the heart and blind our eyes to the terrible suffering of our fellow believers as well as that of other human beings.

Leading with Love, pages 113-114

Chapter 13: Laboring in Prayer

NOTE: Questions ten through fourteen address prayer. Questions eleven and fourteen will take the largest share of your time. Be sure to allow sufficient time for question fourteen.

10.D. Martyn Lloyd Jones reminds us that prayer can be one of the most difficult things we do in the Christian life:

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.

a. Why do you think, "Everything we do in the Christian life is easier than prayer"? What makes consistent prayer so difficult for us?

Even though all humans are created in the image of God and designed for fellowship with God, we have struggled with our relationship with God since the time of the Fall in the garden of Eden. Sin spoils our relationship with God (see Genesis 3:8) and inhibits our communion with him. Even the redeemed, who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, need to be exhorted to nurture our relationship with God and commune with him through prayer (Luke 18:1; Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18-21; 1 Thess. 5:17).

Prayer is also difficult when we allow the many distractions of life to squeeze out time for conscientious prayer.

Prayer seems boring to many people.

Consistent prayer takes self-discipline, and many people lack the discipline needed to pray.

Spiritual problems like unconfessed sin, unbelief, disobedience, and worldliness dampen our desire to pray.

We don't love people or God the way we should.

b. Explain how love for God and neighbor affects praying for others.

When we love God, we obey him (1 John 5:3) and keep his commands to pray for others (Eph. 5:18). When we love God, we love those whom he loves (1 John 5:1-2). The more we love others, the more we find ourselves praying for them.

Love motivates us to pray for those we love. When we love our neighbor, we want to intercede in prayer for our neighbor's good.

End this question by reading to the group D. A. Carson's second block quote on love and prayer (p. 118).

NOTE: Commenting on all these verses could take a good deal of time, so stress particularly the following verses: 1 Sam. 12:23; Luke 18:1; Acts 6:4; Eph. 6:18; Heb. 4:16; James 5:16b.

11. What do the following passages of Scripture teach you about prayer and your prayers as a leader?

Remember to emphasize what these verses teach leaders about prayer and their intercessory ministry for those they lead.

1 Samuel 12:23

Praying for those who are entrusted to our care is part of the job of leading the Lord's people. To not pray for them is sin against the Lord.

Mark 1:35

Following the example of our Lord and Teacher, we should begin our day in solitude with prayer to our Father. We should not look upon a day without first looking upon the face of God our Father and seeking his will for the day. Jesus was a man of prayer, so leaders must be people of prayer.

Luke 11:1

As examples to others, we should be growing and improving our prayer life continually. If we are growing in our prayer life, others will follow and want to learn how to pray. We can ask God to teach us through the Holy Spirit and his Word to pray more effectively.

Luke 18:1

Despite life's heartaches and many discouragements, we should persevere in prayer. This is the Lord's will. Never give up praying.

Luke 22:31-32

Loving, caring leaders pray for the spiritual lives of their followers. Jesus, for example, knew that Peter was about to be tried directly by Satan. So Jesus tells Peter these comforting words: "But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail." What comfort it is to know that someone has prayed for us! May the people we lead know that we have prayed for each and every one of them, for their special needs and trials.

Acts 6:4

Here, at the dawn of the Christian era, we learn that prayer is a top priority for those who lead the church. All our work depends on prayer for success. Let us never forget this vitally important verse of Scripture.

Romans 10:1

Our prayers should demonstrate passion and love for the lost.

Romans 15:30-31

As leaders, we should never be afraid to ask for prayer from those we teach and lead. We need their prayers. We can appeal to them for prayer based on their love for us, which is produced by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:10-11

Note the connection between God's mighty work of deliverance from the jaws of death and the prayers of the saints. We need and depend on the prayers of others for our success and protection in the gospel. There is great power in the united prayers of the local church.

Ephesians 1:16

We should follow Paul's example and maintain a regular prayer ministry for those we are responsible to lead and teach, and we should be thankful for them.

Ephesians 6:18-20

In the context of spiritual warfare and standing firm against the Devil (vv. 11-14), prayer is a priority. Our prayers matter to the people of God. As soldiers at war for the cause of Christ, we should pray at all times in the power of the Holy Spirit. We should stay alert to danger by persevering prayer, and we should intercede for missionaries and all the saints under our care.

Philippians 4:6-7

We are not to be worriers, but warriors of prayer. We are to tell our Father whatever worries us and ask for his help in prayer, but we are to do so with a spirit of thankfulness for his goodness. In the end, as we pray, his peace will guard our minds from needless anxiety.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

As to the frequency of our prayers, “pray without ceasing.” This is God will for us.

1 Thessalonians 5:25

We should take prayer requests seriously and respond to all requests for prayer. Don’t tell people you will pray for them when you know you won’t. That is lie.

1 Timothy 2:1-2

When the local church gathers together (3:14-15), prayer should take priority, especially prayer for those who rule and govern society. Our prayers make a difference to this world and its leaders, so we must be sure to pray for those in leadership over our nation and state.

Hebrews 4:16

At God’s throne, we can find mercy and help during our times of great need. Don’t neglect prayer, “with confidence draw near to the throne of grace.” To not pray is to disobey God’s Word.

James 5:16-17

Encourage people to get together and pray for one another’s healing. When you pray, never forget verse 16b. It is one of the most significant and encouraging verses on prayer. Prayer is powerful and effective. The prophet Elijah, who was in many ways a man just like us, proved the effective power of prayer.

At this point, ask this question to the group: “If those I lead were dependent on my prayers, how would they do?” Then ask this question: “If our missionaries were dependent on my prayers how would they do?”

12. What are some practical ways you can draw out needed prayer requests from those you lead and teach in order to stimulate and enhance your prayers for them?

Call people on the phone and ask for their personal requests. If you ask in a public setting, you will get few requests.

Hand out prayer request cards for people to write down their personal requests.

Be consistent and persistent in asking for prayer requests. When people know you pray for them regularly, they will be more inclined to give you their personal requests.

Reflections

To pray intelligently, we need information; we need current prayer requests.

Leading with Love, page 121

13. a. If you do not have an intercessory prayer list to help you pray systematically and consistently for those you lead and teach, think of how you would organize and implement such a prayer list. Get started, even if you begin with just a few names.

Get the names of all the people you are responsible to lead and teach and set aside a time each day for intercessory prayer for them.

Pray for several families a day. Remember to pray for the children also.

Pick a quiet place in order to pray without distraction.

- b. List a few biblical statements from the prayers found on pages 122-123 that you can use as you pray for the people you presently lead.

I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel [your church] your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel [your church], which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned (Nehemiah 1:6).

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.... Sanctify them in the truth (John 17:15, 17).

That the Father of glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him (Eph. 1:17).

It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment (Phil. 1:9).

You may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom

and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:9-10).

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all...so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father (1 Thess. 3:12-13).

Reflections

Out of love for those you lead, commit yourself to improving your intercessory prayer. Ask yourself, *If those I lead were dependent on my prayers, how would they do? Or, If our missionaries were dependent on my prayers, how would they do?*

Leading with Love, pages 123-124

14. Take some time now, with your study group, to share practical ideas for improving your intercessory prayer ministry for others. Help each other with fresh ideas and start anew to pray consistently, persistently, and intelligently for others.

Share practical suggestions with one another of how to start and maintain a vital intercessory prayer ministry. End your time with a call to prayer for recommitment to intercessory prayer. Encourage each other to start afresh at prayer.

Start by confessing prayerlessness as a leader and ask God to give you a loving heart of prayer for others.

Set aside a time and place to pray each day for others.

Develop a complete list of the names of those for whom you are spiritually responsible.

Hold each other accountable for developing a consistent intercessory prayer ministry.

Pray with others. Get involved in a prayer group.

Reflections

The best teachers and preachers labor to improve their teaching skills, and they should. Competent leaders and administrators seek to continually improve their leadership abilities, and they should. So, too, believer priests should labor to improve their intercessory prayer ministry.

Leading with Love, page 121

Lesson Eight

The Works of a Loving Leader

This lesson covers pages 125 to 142 from *Leading with Love*. Stop your reading at the bottom of page 142 before “How to Warn and Rebuke with Love.” The rest of the chapter will be covered in the next lesson. Read pages 125-142 before doing the lesson.

Overview: This lesson focuses on chapters 14 and 15 of *A Christian Leader’s Guide to Leading with Love*. It teaches that love compels Christian leaders to educate people in God’s Word and protect them from false teachers and their pernicious doctrines. Jeremiah 3:15 is a key passage to keep in mind as you explore the two big concepts of this lesson.

Questions six, eight, and ten (b) should be given emphasis. Also, be aware that questions five, seven, and eleven contain long lists of verses to explain. Don’t allow the details of the individual verses to obscure the big picture presented by the verses as a whole. Move through the individual verses quickly, emphasizing the key points of the whole body of verses.

NOTE: Be aware that question one might be difficult for some people to answer correctly and succinctly, so be sure you can explain Deuteronomy 8:3 in the context of teaching people God’s Word.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. (Jer. 3:15)

When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. (Mark 6:34)

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. (2 Tim. 2:24-25)

Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? (Gal. 4:16)

Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. (Acts 20:31)

To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. (Phil. 3:1-2)

Chapter 14: Feeding Hungry Souls

1. Explain the meaning of Deuteronomy 8:3. (Remember to consult the full context and see also Matthew 4:4; John 6:49-51.) Why is this an important verse of Scripture for leaders and teachers to know?

For forty years, the nation of Israel wandered through the wilderness. During this period of time, God tested and disciplined his people and taught them invaluable lessons about trust in the power of his Word. When the people (more than two million strong) could not feed themselves and faced starvation in the wilderness, God spoke manna (food) into existence for them to eat.

The manna revealed that God, not physical food, was their true source of life. Through the provision of manna, they were to learn "that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (v. 3). The manna showed God's Word to be creative, sustaining, and saving: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host" (Ps. 33:6). The provision of

manna taught the people that they could depend on their omnipotent God for all their needs; they could trust all that he said, commanded, directed, and revealed.

Jesus spent forty days fasting in the wilderness. At the end of that time, Jesus was hungry. That is when the devil came to Jesus and tempted him by suggesting that Jesus, since he was the Son of God, turn stones into loaves of bread. But Jesus considered obedience to the will, mission, and word of the Father to be infinitely more important than eating bread. So Jesus refused to act independently of his Father by creating bread to meet his hunger. Instead, he trusted that God would sustain him.

As leaders and teachers of God's people, we must never forget that we lead, feed, and protect the Lord's people by the Word of God. It is our spiritual food. It gives eternal life (2 Tim. 3:15). Without it, we could not be saved or live the Christian life.

Therefore, we are completely dependent on God's Word for all that we are and do. Without it, we have little to say to people except possibly, "have a nice day." What proceeds out of the mouth of God is Holy Scripture: "breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

To help your group grasp the sustaining power of God's Word, you may want to read the following words by C. H. Mackintosh:

Here we have the only true, the only safe, the only happy attitude for man, namely, hanging in earnest dependence upon "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord...." As the natural life is sustained by bread, so the spiritual life is sustained by the Word of God. It is not merely going to the Bible to find doctrines there, or to have our opinions or views confirmed; it is very much more than this; it is going to the Bible for the staple commodity of life—the life of the new man; it is going there for food, for light, for guidance, for comfort, for authority, for strength—for all, in short, that the soul can possibly need, from first to last.

...It sets forth the blessed fact that our souls can no more exist without the Word than our bodies could without the food. In a word, we are taught by this passage that man's true position, his proper attitude, his only place of strength, safety, rest, and blessing, is to be found in habitual dependence upon the Word of God.¹

2. Why does love compel us to teach the Word of God to others? List as many reasons as you can.

People's greatest need is for the life-giving, life-sustaining Word of God. Love seeks to provide this basic need because love always seeks the welfare of the beloved.

Through the Word of God, people are saved. Without it, they are lost forever.

Through the Word of God, believers are fed spiritual food that helps them grow into Christlike maturity (Col. 1:28-29).

Through the Word of God, believers are guided, comforted, encouraged, and helped in their Christian walk.

Love for Christ compels us to follow his example of teaching the Word of God to the lost and to his followers.

Love cannot stand by and see loved ones "emaciated and starving spiritually because of a famine of the Word of God" (p. 125). Love must act!

3. Fill in the following blanks. On page 126 the author states, "Love for people _____ us to preach and teach God's Word." Furthermore, he writes, "Love cannot bear to see loved ones in _____, starving for the _____, and it will not leave them in ignorance."

"Love for people compels us to preach and teach God's Word" (p. 126). "Love cannot bear to see loved ones in spiritual poverty, starving for the Word of God, and it will not leave them in ignorance" (p. 126).

Reflections

When we see pictures of emaciated, starving children our hearts grieve and we want to help. So, too, our hearts should grieve when we see God's people emaciated and starving spiritually because of a famine of the Word of God. We should want to take immediate action because love always seeks to provide loved ones' needs and the greatest need people have is for the Word of God. The Lord himself says: "Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3).

Leading with Love, pages 125-126

4. Explain why a loving, Christian disposition makes a person a better teacher or preacher. Can you give an example of an effective, loving teacher you have encountered?

A loving, Christian disposition makes people better teachers or preachers because they have a passion for their students' growth in the knowledge of the Lord. They "give themselves unselfishly to their [students] education," and "They care about their students. They respect and value them" (p. 128).

Teachers with loving, Christian dispositions will connect well with their students because they are humble, not arrogant; patient and kind, not harsh and impatient; tender and compassionate, not hard and unconcerned; approachable and easy to talk to, not aloof and uncaring; gracious and courteous, not rude.

A loving, Christian disposition gives teachers a love and passion for the Scriptures that they are called to teach. This love drives them to continually improve their teaching and preaching skills.

A teacher who has affected my preaching and teaching is Eric Alexander, now retired, from Scotland. For decades I have listened to his tapes. He is the most gracious, loving preacher I have ever heard. He is doctrinally sound and courageous to speak the truth.

Reflections

Leadership in the apostolic church was largely based on proper teaching.²

William Mounce

5. What do you learn about becoming a more loving teacher from each of the following verses of Scripture below? Make a list of specific characteristics of a loving preacher or teacher of the gospel message.

NOTE: Don't allow the details of the individual verses that follow to obscure the big picture. Move through the individual verses quickly and emphasize the key points of the whole body of verses, then devote your attention to question six, the personal application of these verses.

As you review the verses below, note the emphasis on a loving teacher's gentleness, humility, and self-sacrifice.

Mark 6:34

When he went ashore he saw a great crowd and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.

Compassion: Jesus' compassion for the people moved him to teach the people. He saw them starving for spiritual food, so he fed them.

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Gentle and humble: Jesus invited the people to take his yoke and learn from him because, unlike the legalistic, proud Pharisees, he was gentle and humble. He assured them that they would find renewal and rest for their weary lives.

2 Corinthians 4:5

For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Humble servants of Jesus and his people: Paul and his colleagues promoted the name of Jesus Christ—not their own names or reputations. They saw themselves as humble servants of the Lord's people, not rulers or lords. They understood their preaching of Christ to be serving others. They didn't draw attention to themselves but focused attention on Jesus, their Lord.

2 Corinthians 10:1

I Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!

Meekness [humility] and gentleness: In his warnings and appeals to the church, Paul acted with Jesus' meekness [humility] and gentleness. (See also Matthew 11:29.)

1 Thessalonians 2:4

But just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

God pleaser, not people pleaser: In his teaching ministry, Paul sought to please God above all else. He was faithful to the truth and to God. He did not seek people's approval for his message. We, too, must never compromise the integrity of the gospel for people's approval.

1 Thessalonians 2:5

For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness.

Not flattering people or motivated by greed: Paul didn't use flattering speech to please people's egos, nor was he motivated to gain financial profit or popularity from his teaching.

1 Thessalonians 2:6

Nor did we seek glory from people whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ.

Not demanding honor and status: Paul was not a glory seeker. He didn't require honor from those he taught although, as an apostle, he could have done so.

1 Thessalonians 2:7

But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

Gentleness: Paul was gentle with those he instructed, as tender and gentle as a nursing mother with her own child.

1 Thessalonians 2:8

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

Loving and selfless: Paul loved those he instructed in the gospel. They were so dear to his heart that he was willing to give his life for them.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil; we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

Hard working and completely dedicated: Paul worked hard to provide for his own physical needs through employment and to teach others the gospel of Christ. This proved he was not motivated by greed but by love.

1 Thessalonians 2:10

You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers.

Integrity of character and behavior: Paul displayed complete integrity of character, and his behavior was above reproach. His moral and spiritual character added credibility to his teaching.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Fatherly: Paul behaved like a loving, caring father when he exhorted, encouraged, and challenged his converts. He wanted nothing but the best for his children in the faith, so he gave them his best. Everything he did, he did for their good and future success.

2 Timothy 2:24

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil.

Kind and patient, not quarrelsome or angry: It is important to note that the "Lord's servant" refers to any Christian leader or teacher. Thus, kindness, patience, and a lack of quarrelsome tendencies is essential.

2 Timothy 2:25

Correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.

Gentle when correcting or rebuking: Harsh teaching and correction drives people away and hardens hearts.

1 Peter 3:15-16

But in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Gentleness and respect for others: When explaining or defending the gospel, it must be done with a gentle spirit and respect for the other person.

6. You have now read and studied some important character qualities of a loving teacher. Which qualities do you personally need to incorporate into your own teaching ministry (whether it is informal instruction to a few people or formal teaching and preaching to a large group of people)? How would you actually make such changes? Share your ideas for change with your study group.

I would say more humility and greater self-sacrifice. I find it helpful to have a friend or my spouse monitor my weaknesses and call me to account in those areas.

To encourage other important qualities, it may help to hand out an evaluation form at the end of a study series or class and ask participants to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. Ask for helpful suggestions for improving your teaching and personal presentation of God's Word. Ask a more experienced teacher to help you improve.

Be committed to developing what the Bible says should be the proper disposition and character of an approved teacher of God's Word. Ask the Father to convict and teach you through the Holy Spirit.

Reflections

Good teachers love their students and give themselves unselfishly to their education. They care about their students. They respect and value them. They know and understand them. Loving teachers are dedicated to their students' education. Like Paul, they can say, "we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thess. 2:8).

Leading with Love, page 128

7. Reread the significant quotation by Paul Stanley and Robert Clinton:

We have observed that most people cease learning by the age of forty. By that we mean they no longer actively pursue knowledge, understanding, and experience that will enhance their capacity to grow and contribute to others. Most simply rest on what they already know. But those who finish well [life and ministry] maintain a *positive learning attitude* all their lives.

Many people, particularly leaders, plateau. They become satisfied with where they are and with what they know. This often occurs after they attain enough to be comfortable or can maintain a relatively secure and predictable future. But this contradicts the biblical principle of stewardship.³

What do the following verses teach you about passionately striving to continually grow in every area of your Christian life and ministry?

Proverbs 1:5

Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance.

Wise people love to learn. They practice the art of listening well and strive to grow in knowledge and understanding.

2 Corinthians 3:18

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

It is God's will that we gradually be transformed into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a continuous process that never ends until we see Jesus. Thus we should strive daily to be Christlike in all we are and do.

2 Corinthians 4:16

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.

What an example Paul sets before us! Although his physical body is weakening and breaking down with age, his spirit is being renewed and invigorated daily. He doesn't get discouraged or give up because the spirit within him grows stronger and fresher each day.

Philippians 3:12-14

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul's motto was "one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Paul pushed himself for the prize of knowing Jesus Christ more fully and completely. This was a continuous process of growth in the knowledge and experience of Christ that required conscientious effort and discipline on Paul's part.

1 Timothy 4:7b-8

Train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

We are to be spiritual athletes of the gospel—exercising, training, and disciplining ourselves for the purpose of godliness. In other words, growth in godliness takes effort, commitment, hard work, and sacrifice. It will not happen if we are lazy, self-satisfied, or aimless.

1 Timothy 4:15

Practice these things, devote yourself to them so that all may see your progress.

Here is a wonderful idea: other believers should be able to see our spiritual progress and be challenged to grow. The fact is, we are either progressing or regressing spiritually, and the Holy Spirit wants us to progress in such a way that others see our progress. To do this, we need to devote ourselves to the full use of our spiritual gifts and obedience to the Word of God.

1 Peter 2:2

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation.

As to the Word of God, we are to be like newborn infants who crave their mother's milk and scream until they get it. We, too, are to crave God's Word so that we "may grow up to salvation."

A Christian can never be self-satisfied with his or her accomplishments and knowledge of Christ. Our goal is greater knowledge of Christ, greater maturity in Christlike character, and fresh accomplishments for Christ. Thus we can never stop growing, learning, or changing.

8. One of the simplest definitions of leadership is: Leadership is influence. If you are not influencing people's thinking, values, ideas, and lifestyle for Jesus Christ, you are not really leading them. However, you cannot influence people for Christ if you are not growing in the knowledge of Christ yourself.

NOTE: All parts of question eight are vital to Christian leadership and teaching. Give these questions the time and attention they deserve. It is a terrible thing to see self-satisfied Christian leaders who refuse to grow or change. But the faith of Christian leaders who are growing and excited about their faith is contagious.

a. Why do you think so many Christians lose their passion for growth in the knowledge of God and Scripture and just rest on what they already know?

At heart, we are spiritually lazy. We would rather pay someone to perform our religious and spiritual duties than perform them ourselves.

We are distracted by too many things in life that draw us away from reading and studying the Scriptures and serving God's people. (Read to the group Luke 10:38-42.)

Some of us are deceived by our pride and think that we have "arrived" spiritually. We deceive ourselves into thinking that because we are in the "right" denomination or know the "right" theology, we no longer need to grow.

Many of us are too busy and tired to "exercise" ourselves to godliness (1 Tim. 4:7-8).

Reflections

There is no doubt that the best teachers in any field of knowledge are those who remain students all their lives.⁴

John Stott

b. What do you do presently to continue to learn, grow, change, and move forward in your Christian life and ministry? Be specific and share your thoughts with others in your group.

I listen to many excellent sermons on tape (or CD) that challenge my mind and heart and am always looking for good books to read.

I daily read the Bible and pray for growth and Christlike transformation.

I make an effort to be around people who are passionate about learning and growing, especially younger men and women.

I serve the local church with a body of pastor-elders who desire to grow, learn, and move forward for God. By being involved in church leadership and serving people, I am constantly being challenged by new issues, problems, trends, and questions. I also have to regularly prepare messages, which forces me to investigate new material and keep my mind fresh.

I go to conferences that stimulate my thinking and expose me to new resource material.

I read the newspaper daily as well as news magazines and theological journals.

Reflections

When we lose our zeal for knowledge, we lose our zest for teaching. When we stop growing, we stop influencing others. When we're not excited about Scripture, we don't excite others. If we expect to challenge the hearts and minds of men and women of the next generation, our hearts and minds must be challenged also. We cannot influence people for God if we are not learning, changing, and growing. Teachers who love God and love to study his Word reproduce this love in others.

Leading with Love, page 133

9. A number of suggestions were made to improve your teaching skills. Which one would most help you personally? Explain why.

One of the most helpful for me has been listening to expository messages given by excellent preachers and teachers. These messages help me to better understand a passage and apply it effectively to the twenty-first century. By listening to others, I find good illustrations and learn how to organize my material better. At times I learn what not to do and what dangers to avoid.

Before we begin a new series of messages at our church, we order four or five different series of messages on our selected Bible text that have been given by other preachers. From each preacher we gain valuable insights, ideas on how to teach the passage, and practical helps.

Reflections

If you are part of a leadership team responsible for leading and teaching people, lay out a clear biblical philosophy of teaching and preaching the Scriptures. Also, regularly evaluate your teaching ministry and plan for the future. Be sure the content of your teaching is biblical, challenging, applicable, and relevant to the people. Don't let it become haphazard or ineffective. Be able to say as Paul did, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27).

Leading with Love, page 134

Chapter 15: Protecting and Reproving Loved Ones

10. a. Circle all the statements below that *clearly help explain* why Jesus Christ so vehemently denounced the Pharisees and scribes as wolves among the sheep. Explain one of your choices.

- ◆ But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. (Matt. 23:13)
- ◆ Woe to you, blind guides.... (Matt. 23:16)
- ◆ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (Matt. 23:28)
- ◆ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? (Matt. 23:33)
- ◆ You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition...thus making void the word of God by your tradition. (Mark 7:9, 13)
- ◆ Beware of the scribes...who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. (Luke 20:46, 47)

“you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces.”

“full of hypocrisy and lawlessness”

“making void the word of God by your tradition”

“devour widows' houses”

Jesus denounced the Pharisees and scribes because they shut the doors to God's kingdom to all who wouldn't follow their traditions, standards, and laws. They pushed sinners away from God's mercy and grace and became the enemy of needy sinners.

NOTE: Be sure the group can answer the next question satisfactorily. In a society that boasts of tolerance and condemns being judgmental or dogmatic, this is a relevant question.

b. How would you explain to someone the stern, thunderous denunciations of Jesus Christ (the most loving man to have ever graced this earth) against the religious leaders of his day? Or, how would you defend Jesus Christ from the criticism that he was hateful, intolerant, and bigoted toward the Pharisees and scribes?

Jesus loved his followers, so he warned them of the subtle dangers of the Pharisees' false doctrines.

Jesus' condemnation of false religion was God's warning and call to repentance. God hates false religion, especially when it is done in his name.

Jesus was a prophet who, like all the true Old Testament prophets, was responsible to expose false teachers and their deceptions.

Jesus was not an uncaring, angry prophet. He wept for Jerusalem and grieved over the unbelief of the people.

Jesus Christ is the "Good Shepherd" who rescues people from the jaws of Satan—the chief liar and deceiver. He risked his life to speak the truth and, as the Good Shepherd, gave his life for his sheep.

God is both loving and holy, thus he must judge sin and falsehood. Many people have a false notion of God. They treat him as if he is a heavenly teddy bear who can't get upset with anyone, but such a God exists solely in their own imaginations and is not the God revealed in Scripture. In contrast, In contrast, the book of Hebrews describes God as "a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

Jesus was doing what his Father called him to do.

Jesus was not hateful or bigoted, but many of his critics were.

The modern idea of tolerance is not a biblical concept. Indeed, it contradicts the whole of Scripture and the gospel. (Read pages 160-163.)

11. Using the verses below, describe in detail the personal character, deeds, and sad results of false teachers of the gospel.

The devil is the father of all lies, and he desires nothing more than to fill this world with lies, false religion, and pseudo philosophies. So as you read the following passages, take note of how often deceit and greed characterize false teachers. Remember, loving leaders must warn those they love of the destructive consequences of the devil's lies. Loving leaders cannot be naïve or passive with false teachers; loving leaders must confront and expose the devil's lies. Before commenting on these verses, read to the group John 8:44.

Micah 3:11

Its heads give judgment for a bribe; its priests teach for a price; its prophets practice divination for money; yet they lean on the LORD and say, "Is not the LORD in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us."

False leaders are motivated by greed and personal profit. They love money and will work for bribes. They will say and do whatever will bring the right

price. They may maintain an outward form of religious piety, but it is a sham because they are disobedient to the ethical and moral commands of God's law.

Jeremiah 14:14

And the LORD said to me: "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds.

False teachers are liars. What is worse, they proclaim lies in the name of the God of truth. They are not messengers of God; they are self-appointed messengers. Their teaching is worthless; their minds are deluded; their visions are from Satan. They always lead the people astray from God and his perfect law.

Jeremiah 23:32

Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD.

False teachers claim divine inspiration, but they are deluded. God is not the source of their inspiration, nor is he the source of their commission. Their teaching is of no real benefit to the people.

Zechariah 10:2

For the household gods utter nonsense, and the diviners see lies; they tell false dreams and give empty consolation. Therefore the people wander like sheep; they are afflicted for lack of a shepherd.

False teaching is nonsense. False teachers provide no real comfort for the people; they leave the people leaderless and unprotected.

Malachi 2:7-9

For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts, and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction.

False teachers reject God's ways and choose their own way. Instead of leading people toward God and the truth, false teachers actually place obstacles in the way to God and his law. They will be exposed and punished because they fail to provide right guidance or correct interpretation of God's Word.

Matthew 7:15-20

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

False teachers may look innocent, but in reality they are clever wolves, intent on devouring people's lives. Like "diseased" trees that bear diseased fruit, the character and lives of false teachers are corrupt. Their corruption may not be evident at first, but in time they prove themselves to be immoral, greedy, self-centered, deceivers, self-righteous, autocrats, lawless, and mentally and emotionally unstable.

Matthew 23:28

So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

False teachers are hypocrites; they are not what they appear. They display a pleasant demeanor, an upright character, and a sanctimonious disposition, but at heart they follow their own desires and rules. They are unrighteous and disobedient to God and his Word.

Mark 7:9, 13

And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition ... thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

False teachers love their own traditions and religious heritage more than God's Word. As a result, they invent ways to practice and teach their own traditions rather than the laws of God. In the end, their man-made traditions and rules take precedence over God's Word, which nullifies the Word of God.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Like Satan, false teachers are master deceivers. They may pose as Christ's apostles, but they are nothing less than Satan's apostles. They pretend to be messengers of truth and light, but they are messengers of falsehood and darkness; they claim to be servants of Christ, but they are servants of Satan. (See John 8:44.)

Philippians 3:2

Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

False teachers are implacable opponents of God's salvation. They are evildoers who reject God's gracious salvation in favor of their own form of righteousness. They are, in fact, the unclean dogs they accuse others of being.

Titus 1:10-11

For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.

False teachers are rebellious-minded people who are unwilling to submit to God's Word and whose teachings mix up people spiritually. They are deceptive, big-time talkers with little of value to say.

2 Peter 2:1-3

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

False teachers are self-serving, greedy people who underhandedly introduce destructive heresies into the church. As mockers of truth and proponents of worldly behavior, they deceitfully change the meaning of biblical words to further their own philosophy.

12. What did Paul mean when he said to the Ephesian elders, "I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27)? Be sure to read the whole context, Acts 20:17-38.

Paul envisioned himself as an alert watchman on the city wall who warned the people of ensuing danger from an invading army. As a leader and teacher of God's people, he constantly warned the church of inevitable attacks by false teachers (Acts 20:29-31). Hence he would not be responsible for their demise if they refused to heed his passionate warnings. He could say truthfully that he was "innocent of the blood" of those he was responsible to lead and teach.

Furthermore, on the positive side, he taught the church and its leaders the complete gospel message. He held back nothing of what they needed to

know. Indeed, he could say that he taught them “the whole counsel of God.” He equipped them for the battles ahead by thoroughly teaching them all the doctrines of the faith.

13. As leaders and teachers of God’s people, it is our duty to lovingly correct, warn, or rebuke those we lead. But confronting people’s sins and problems is a task most leaders avoid because of the emotional cost. However, it is part of the leadership task, and must be done. What practical steps can you take to improve your personal courage and skills in loving confrontation?

Throughout Scripture, we have many beautiful examples of courage that can challenge and inspire us to lead God’s people properly: Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Deborah, Ruth, Hannah, David, Daniel, Jeremiah, Jesus, Mary, Paul, Prisca, and Peter, to name a few.

To become courageous, we must confess the fear of man for what it really is: sin. Pray for courage to confront those who are drifting away from the faith or are living in sin. Be part of a leadership team that encourages leaders to act courageously and tactfully.

To become more skillful at confrontation, practice the fifteen descriptions of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Also study Paul’s tactful way of confronting sin and error in the church.

Notes

1. C. H. Mackintosh, *Genesis to Deuteronomy, Notes on the Pentateuch* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1972), 760-761.
2. William Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 392.
3. Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 222.
4. John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), 180.

Lesson Nine

The Works of a Loving Leader

This lesson covers pages 142 to 164 of *Leading with Love*. Beginning your reading at the bottom of page 142 with “How to Warn and Rebuke with Love.” Then proceed on to all of Chapter 16. Read pages 142-164 before doing the lesson.

Overview: This lesson covers chapter 16 of *A Christian Leader’s Guide to Leading with Love* and deals with the discipline and restoration of those who have gone astray. Contrary to popular opinion, loving leaders must discipline and restore. How church leaders go about this important responsibility is of utmost importance. Love requires that discipline and restoration be done with gentleness, patience, tactfulness, and according to the instruction of Scripture. Second Corinthians 2:5-11 is a key passage for understanding and implementing this difficult requirement.

Because most churches avoid corrective church discipline, be sure to answer questions one and two thoroughly. Since Matthew 7:1-5 is commonly misused to evade church discipline and since hypocritical judging of others is a problem we all face, be sure your group grasps the significance and meaning of this passage.

NOTE: Questions five, seven, eight, and twelve are to be emphasized.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives. (Heb. 12:6)

For they [our fathers] disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his

holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Heb. 12:10-11)

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. (Rev. 3:19)

For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. (2 Cor. 2:6-9)

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. (Gal. 6:1)

Chapter 16: Disciplining and Restoring the Wayward

1. How would you explain the seeming contradiction between Paul's stern statements in 1 Corinthians 5 regarding church discipline and his later statements about love in 1 Corinthians 13:4, 7, and 16:14?

- ◆ Let him who has done this be removed from among you. (1 Cor. 5:2)
 - ◆ Deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. (1 Cor. 5:5)
 - ◆ Cleanse out the old leaven. (1 Cor. 5:7)
 - ◆ Not even to eat with such a one. (1 Cor. 5:11)
 - ◆ Purge the evil person from among you. (1 Cor. 5:13)
-
- ◆ Love is patient and kind.... Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Cor. 13:4, 7)
 - ◆ Let all that you do be done in love. (1 Cor. 16:14)

Love is not a morally neutral quality. The Bible says love "Abhor[s] what is evil; hold[s] fast to what is good" (Rom 12:9). "Love does no wrong to a

neighbor” (Rom 13:10). Love “does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth” (1Cor 13:6).

Paul loved the church and acted quickly to save it from moral corruption and self-destruction. A good shepherd knows that he cannot allow the whole flock to be lost because of even one bad sheep. The situation in the church at Corinth was so deplorable that it called for immediate, decisive action; the time for patience had passed.

Paul loved the sinning member and did the best thing for him by exposing his sinful behavior and disciplining him “so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (1 Cor. 5:5).

God loves his people, hence he disciplines them for their good (Heb. 12:5-11). In our day, the local church is God’s designated instrument of correction and discipline. Read to the group James Denny’s quote on page 157.

Many people have naïve, mistaken notions of love. They think of love as always being “nice” and never saying “no” to anyone. Thus they can’t conceive of rebuking or disciplining a brother or sister in Christ.

God is love (1 John 4:8), but he is also holy (1 Peter 1:15-16; Heb. 12:29). He disciplines his people (at times severely) for their ultimate benefit and growth in holiness.

Love can be both tender and stern.

Read to the group Anthony Thiselton’s quote on love and correction located at the top of page 142.

Reflections

Love is not just happy smiles or pleasant words. A critical test of genuine love is whether we are willing to confront and discipline those we care for. Nothing is more difficult than disciplining a brother or sister in Christ who is trapped in sin. It is always agonizing work—messy, complicated, often unsuccessful, emotionally exhausting, and potentially divisive. This is why most church leaders avoid discipline at all costs. But that is not love. It is lack of courage and disobedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, who himself laid down instructions for the discipline of an unrepentant believer.

Leading with Love, page 152

2. Paul had to rebuke the church at Corinth for not taking disciplinary action against one of its impenitent members. This same inaction and complacency regarding dealing with sin exists today. Why do you think most church leaders avoid the practice of corrective church discipline? List as many reasons as you can.

Church leaders may avoid discipline because they:

Lack courage, an essential quality of a good leader.

Have not seen discipline done successfully, or at all.

Hate church discipline and simply refuse to do it.

Are disobedient to God's Word.

Feel it is too difficult to do or that it won't work.

Believe people won't understand.

Have a skewed view of Christian love.

Don't like to confront people or problems.

Fear people, the loss of money, or division in the church.

3. Certain character qualities are necessary for a leader to be able to initiate and follow through with corrective church discipline. Name some of these qualities.

The qualities of a loving leader who can follow through on discipline include courage, obedience to God, fear of the Lord, faith in what God says, love for God's Word and its authority over the church, love for the welfare of people, and faithfulness to God.

4. Carefully read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 below. This is the account of Paul's instruction to the church at Corinth on how to restore the rebellious man who had humiliated Paul and been disciplined by the church.

Now if anyone [the offending brother] has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment [the discipline] by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm

your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

a. What attitudes does Paul personally display in this passage toward the offender and the church body?

Deep concern: *Paul was not concerned about his own grief but was concerned about the emotional grief the discipline had caused the congregation.*

Compassion: *Paul had compassion for the penitent member and didn't want him to suffer needlessly or unjustly.*

Parental and instructive: *As their apostle and spiritual father in the faith, Paul probed their spiritual responsiveness. He tested them in regard to their faithfulness to the truth and their obedience to his God-given authority.*

Selfless: *Paul did all things for the good of the church body; he had little concern for himself.*

Forgiving: *Paul generously forgave the offending brother and expressed love to him in the Lord.*

Protective: *Paul was concerned about protecting the church from Satan's evil intent to divide it and crush the penitent member.*

b. What are the key steps and attitudes for restoring one who has been publicly disciplined by the church? (Be sure to read endnote 8.)

Once you are sure the church's discipline has done its corrective work and the disciplined member has repented, discipline should not be prolonged. It is then time to publicly restore and declare the church's love and acceptance of the penitent member. (Remember to read endnote eight on page 163.)

Corporately forgive the repentant member and reach out to him or her with words of comfort and encouragement.

Pray for healing and protection from Satan's plans to divide the church and harm the repentant member.

For a designated period of time, assign someone the responsibility of regularly meeting with the restored member and holding the member accountable.

c. Explain the meaning of 2 Corinthians 2:11. This verse is imperative to understand when facing the issues of church discipline and restoration.

This verse is well worth committing to memory, especially for leaders. See to it that everyone in your group understands this passage of Scripture.

Whenever we exercise corrective church discipline and biblical restoration, we need to be keenly aware that Satan becomes extremely active. Satan is a roaring lion who seeks to devour vulnerable believers (1 Peter 5:8), and he knows that corrective discipline can provide a ripe opportunity to divide the church and ruin the lives of believers. So we should never be “ignorant of his designs.” We must ensure that church discipline and restoration are carried out properly so that Satan cannot divide the penitent member from the church body and spoil the penitent’s spiritual restoration.

Reflections

Making proper moral and spiritual judgments about doctrine and conduct is required by Scripture. The gospel would be lost to the world and the church would be assimilated into secular society if we did not make discriminating judgments between truth and error, Christ and Satan. Thus the Scripture commands, “do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

Leading with Love, page 159

5. “Matthew 7:1-5 has become a modern day mantra. People who have never read one word of the Gospels know this verse. It proves to them that Jesus was a teacher of tolerance; he was non-judgmental and non-dogmatic; he would condemn no one; he would never judge anyone” (quoted from pages 157-158).

Since this passage of Scripture is so horribly misused by both non-Christians and Christians to condemn church discipline or any negative moral judgment against another, it is vital that you be able to explain the passage correctly. Feel free to use commentaries to help you understand this passage.

This oft-quoted text is highly misunderstood, even among Bible-believing Christians. So it's important to be able to explain and apply it correctly.

- a. What were the Pharisees and scribes doing wrong that prompted Jesus to say, “Judge not, that you be not judged”?

The Pharisees were hypocritically judging and condemning other people. They judged others harshly but did not judge themselves. They saw clearly the sins, faults, and errors of others but did not see their own glaring sins. They had a prideful, faultfinding, and self-righteousness mentality. They were harsh, unmerciful, and overly critical of people.

In the Gospels, Jesus spoke a great deal about religious hypocrisy, a sin each of us must face in ourselves before we think of criticizing others. While the Pharisees judged others, Jesus pointed out how they loved money, robbed widows' houses, prayed long prayers and fasted so that they would be seen and praised by people, laid heavy burdens on people but didn't lift a finger to help, and disobeyed the law of God by elevating their own traditions over it.

- b. What does the following statement, “For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you,” mean?

The way in which we judge other people sets a standard for how we will be judged—both by others and God himself. If we judge others without mercy and compassion, we also will be judged without mercy and compassion. This should be a frightening warning to us to take heed of how we judge others.

- c. Explain the following verse and provide an example to illustrate your explanation: “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”

The people Jesus spoke to were proud, religious hypocrites who were impressed by their own righteousness, traditions, and doctrinal superiority.

As a result, they saw clearly small specks of sin and error in the eyes of others but were blind to the glaring logs of sin, inconsistency, and error in their own eyes. They saw only the sins of others because they were self-deceived, self-righteous, and hypercritical.

(Alex, you ask for an illustration of the explanation of this verse. Is what follows your example? You may want to be more specific.) ***This is not just a problem the Pharisees had two thousand years ago; it is real-life problem we must honestly face in our churches today. We all struggle with some measure of hypocrisy in judging others. We are quick to see other people's sins and faults but not our own. (Be more specific here?) We are too judgmental of others and too easy on ourselves.***

d. Explain the following verse and provide an example to illustrate your explanation. "Or how can you say to your brother. Let me take the speck out of your eye, when there is the log in your own eye?"

Because religious hypocrites are completely blind to their own sins and errors, they feel justified in criticizing, exposing, and correcting the specks of sin in others.

To illustrate, I am reminded of a man who demanded to meet with our elders in order to tell us all our faults, specifically our sins against him. As we sat together, he vehemently poured out accusation after accusation against us. He saw clearly all our specks of sin but not his own sins of anger, pride, harsh judgments, petty selfishness, and an unforgiving spirit that he displayed publicly before us all. Even after we patiently explained ourselves, nothing would satisfy his anger and criticism.

e. Give a more detailed explanation of the meaning of the following verse: "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

Jesus advises religious hypocrites to examine themselves first and remove their own glaring sins through humble confession and repentance. Only after honest self-judgment and cleansing is anyone in a position to help remove the specks of sin, fault, or error from the eyes of others. Instead of being experts in judging and criticizing others, we should all become experts in honest self-evaluation and self-judgment. Then we would be less critical of others and better able to help them.

6. How does the new “tolerance” movement redefine the word *tolerance*? Give an example. How should the word *tolerance* be defined?

Tolerance used to mean “respect and forbearance with regard to disagreement” over other religious and ethical viewpoints. Tolerance allowed people to disagree with, debate, or intellectually critique one another’s views without being charged with intolerance or hate. In contrast, the “new tolerance” demands that we accept—even praise—the religious, ethical, or life-style views of others. The ideological brainchild of moral and religious relativism, the “new tolerance” affirms all religious and philosophical opinions unless they are deemed “intolerant.” As a result, it has become “intolerant” to claim that one’s religious or life-style views are the only valid viewpoints.

Example: The “new tolerance” requires that we accept, affirm, and praise the Islamic religion as equally valid to biblical Christianity. Otherwise, we are intolerant, hateful, and bigoted. Honest, helpful intellectual critique of Islam is banned as “hate speech” and bigotry.

7. How would you explain to a person who prided himself or herself on being open-minded and tolerant, that your church disfellowshipped one of its members because of unrepentant sinful behavior?

This is a highly relevant question that we should be able to answer.

I would say that all responsible institutions have a written code of conduct and disciplinary guidelines for protecting the integrity of the organization. This is true of government, of legal and medical societies, of academia, and of the military. The church is no different in terms of needing standards of organizational conduct.

The church has such a standard—the infallible guidebook of the holy Scriptures—that all believers individually and corporately must follow. In that guidebook, Jesus Christ gave ethical instructions for his disciples to follow. He also laid down disciplinary guidelines for the church to follow when dealing with its wayward members. All faithful and obedient disciples of Jesus must obey these instructions.

The discipline of the church is meant to save an erring member from self-destruction and is to be administered with grace, patience, mercy, justice, and love.

I would also add that tolerance is not the highest of all virtues. In fact, tolerance is not always the proper response to every situation. For example, we should not be tolerant of wrongdoing such as pouring toxic chemicals into the ocean, discrimination, or child abuse.

Reflections

The word tolerance is being used as a club to intimidate and marginalize people who don't fall to their knees before the god of moral and religious relativism. The word itself is actually used to foster intolerance of all dissenters of secular relativism and its religious counterparts.

Leading with Love, page 162

How to Warn and Rebuke with Love

8. Before confronting another person's sin or error, the author says, "check your attitude," especially anger. List as many reasons as you can for why dealing with sin in anger makes problems worse and is ineffective in helping people.

Note that question eight relates closely to chapter fifteen, pages 142-149.

When people are angry, they don't think straight. They become obsessed with their anger and the issue that is provoking their anger. They use harsh, cutting words and accentuate problems rather than solve them (Prov. 15:1).

People don't respond well to angry confrontation. Such confrontations often escalate anger, provoke out-of-control emotions, and make reconciliation more difficult (if not impossible).

Deep down, people despise angry confronters.

The Bible has many warnings about the destructive force of anger.

Love is not easily provoked to anger (1 Cor. 13:5).

Reflections

Don't rebuke or correct when you are angry. Wait until your anger is under control of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:15-23)...But when you are angry, recognize that uncontrolled anger inflames emotions, exaggerates

issues, and hinders godly correction. It tends to be less rational and more self-justifying. It deals with people harshly. Loud, threatening talk can echo in a person's mind for a lifetime.

Leading with Love, page 143-144

The New Testament emphasizes treating people with gentleness, especially when correcting error or restoring a fallen believer. To be gentle with people is to be kind, tender, gracious, and calm—not harsh or combative. When confronting serious problems, Paul warns and corrects the Corinthians “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1).

Leading with Love, page 147

9. When correcting, rebuking, or disciplining a sinning brother or sister in Christ, what do the following passages of Scripture teach you about how this is to be done?

Galatians 6:1

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

This is a key text to remember when dealing with sin and restoration. First and foremost, we are directed to be gentle, not harsh or combative. It takes calm, gentle hands to remove the splinters of sin from a person's eye.

We also need to remember that we, too, are vulnerable to falling into sin and temptation, so we have no right to act in a spirit of self-righteousness, pride, or superiority. As the Bible says, “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

2 Timothy 2:24-26

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.

Again, we are directed to correct and rebuke with gentleness. We are to display kindness and patience, even when wronged. Moreover, we are not to be quarrelsome but are to instruct erring members by means of God's Word.

2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

We are always to rebuke error and bad behavior by teaching the Word of God, and we are to do so with “complete patience.”

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correcting, and for training in righteousness.

Again, we see that we are to use Scripture when we rebuke, teach, correct, or train in righteousness. This is one of the reasons Scripture was given to us, and we are to use it skillfully and gently when correcting or disciplining.

10. If you needed to correct or rebuke a fellow believer who had displayed sinful outbursts of anger at home and at church, how would you use the Scriptures to effectively rebuke and at the same time help that person gain victory over a sinful temper? Lay out a plan you can use for helping such individuals in the future.

First, I would want to get all the facts about the person’s anger and the situations in question. I would want to know the severity and frequency of the outbursts. Next, I would meet with the person alone (at least in most cases) and ask for his or her evaluation of the problem and the situations reported to me.

Depending on the results of our meeting, I would use a few key Scripture texts that reveal the dangers and damaging, long-term effects of anger. Some of the passages I would use include Ephesians 4:26-28; Gal. 5:19-20; Col. 3:8; Titus 1:7; James 1:19-20 and a few key Proverbs (Prov. 15:18; 29:11; 29:22).

With the Scripture open before us, I would gently reprove, correct, teach, and help the person come to a realization of the problem, repent, and seek further help.

To help a person with an anger problem, I would ask him or her to study all that the Bible says about anger and write a paper on the subject. I would meet with the person to review the study paper and assist in applying the study to his or her situation.

I would counsel the person to daily pray for God’s grace to enable the person to control the problem (Heb. 4:16). I would also point out that the devil often uses anger as a tool to create more serious problems.

I would suggest reading some good, biblically oriented books on anger management.

If the problem was severe, I would advise seeing a Christian counselor and a medical doctor.

If you have time, you might want to read to the group the excellent quotation by William Arnot about the need to extinguish the flames of anger. It is located on page 143.

11. As a Christian leader, why is it imperative that you be gentle in spirit and conduct church discipline with gentleness?

The following verses will help you answer the question. Be aware that different translations may render the word *gentle* (Greek, *praÿtēs*, *praÿs* as *mekness*, *humility*, or *courtesy*):

Matthew 11:29-30; 2 Corinthians 10:1

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ!

Jesus was not harsh, intimidating, or oppressive. We should be gentle because Jesus Christ was gentle and we are to become like him. Because he was gentle, people more easily learned from him and found rest for their weary souls.

Paul followed Christ's example, and we are to follow Paul (1 Cor. 11:1). He pleaded with and instructed the wayward Corinthians by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

1 Corinthians 4:21; Galatians 6:1

What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

Paul gave the Corinthians a choice of whether he should deal with them "with a rod" of discipline or "with love in a spirit of gentleness." Gentleness was his preferred way of dealing with people.

We are to restore a sinning member "in a spirit of gentleness." It is not an option, for Scripture commands us to handle the restoration of a sinning member with gentleness.

2 Timothy 2:25

Correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.

Again, the Scripture commands us to deal with doctrinally erring members “with gentleness.” The reason is, a gentle approach in correcting error does not immediately alienate the erring member. A harsh approach, in contrast, may cause the erring member to immediately run off—not necessarily to escape the argument but to escape the angry, rough treatment.

Galatians 5:23; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12
The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...gentleness.

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.

Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

When we act gently with people, we are Spirit controlled and express the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God.

The call to live and conduct our lives according to our high calling in Christ requires gentleness.

As God’s holy and beloved chosen ones, we are to put on gentleness like we put on clothes. Without the covering of gentleness, we are not fully dressed as Christians.

1 Thessalonians 2:7; 2 Timothy 2:24 (Here the Greek word is *e-pios*, “gentle” or “kind.”)

But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil.

Paul knew how best to handle new converts from paganism: gently—like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. In the end, people respond best to loving, gentle guidance and teaching.

As the Lord’s servants, we are instructed to teach and handle people with gentleness. It is God’s way for his servants to act. On page 148, there is a reminder that in some cultures where confrontation and rebuke are generally avoided, gentleness in discipline and confrontation is all the more important to Christian leaders.

Close this question by asking someone to explain the U.S. policy of Chieu Hoi (CHEW HOY) during the Vietnam War and why it was successful.

Reflections

Love provides the right attitudes for exercising church discipline and restoration. Love acts patiently and kindly; love is compassionate; it feels for the misery of the impenitent sinner and seeks to relieve pain and rescue from death. Loving hands are healing hands, both tender and firm.

Leading with Love, page 157

12. a. In practical terms, describe what dealing with people “in a spirit of gentleness” (1 Cor. 4:21) would look like in practice.

It would mean:

Talking to people in a calm, controlled voice, not in an angry voice or with an angry look;

Not making unnecessary threats, accusations, or severe judgments;

Acting and speaking patiently because love is patient (1 Cor. 13:4);

Asking lots of questions in order to understand the other person’s perspective;

Being a concerned listener;

Letting people know you are trying to help, not punish;

Handling people’s sins graciously and tenderly, not harshly or severely;

Showing genuine care, understanding, and compassion for people’s weaknesses and faults;

b. Describe what the opposite of gentleness would look like in practice.

It would mean:

Talking to people in a harsh or angry voice;

Speaking in a hurtful, blunt manner or accusing and judging sternly;

Talking before listening;

Displaying an uncaring attitude;

***Lacking genuine concern, compassion, and understanding for the person;
Seeking severe, punitive action for sin or error.***

13. Explain the following verses and how they can help you deal more effectively with people and their sins:

We are more effective with people and their problems when we love them and speak wisely, gently, tactfully, graciously, and patiently.

Proverbs 12:18b

But the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Wise speech has healing properties. It heals divisions and opens the way for reconciliation. When people have been hurt by sin or by other people, wise words can soothe and heal bitter, hurting hearts. So train yourself to speak wisely and thoughtfully when dealing with people and their sins.

Proverbs 16:24

Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

Gracious words have both aesthetic and moral qualities. They are sweet, that is, pleasant and attractive, to the hearer. Thus people delight in hearing such words and are persuaded to respond to their appeals.

Gracious words also provide good medicine for the soul. If you want to help sick souls, use gracious words that heal wounds and sustain the health of the soul.

Proverbs 18:21a

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

The “tongue” is used as a figure of speech for what we say. Our speech has tremendous power for good or bad, life or death. It can divide and tear down the people of God or it can unite and build up the Lord’s people. We should consider carefully whether our words destroy people or infuse life into them.

Proverbs 25:15b

And a soft tongue will break a bone.

A “soft tongue” means sensitive, gentle, non-offensive, conciliatory speech. Gentle speech has enormous power to break down the strongest resistance to the truth or to sound counsel. If only we believed that the best way to win hardened sinners is by the gentle, sensitive speech of “a soft tongue.”

Colossians 4:6

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

We must always speak graciously and individualize our approach to each person. We need to tactfully and deliberately “season” our speech with the right words at the right time.

James 1:20

(Add verse in the translation you want to use)

Our anger will not achieve the righteous conduct God requires of us and others. This is why we need always to be “slow to anger” (v.19). God is slow to anger, thus we should be slow to anger. We will displease God if we try to correct his people with an angry spirit.

14. What practical steps can you take to be a more effective encourager of the people you lead? Share your ideas with others in your study group.

To be an encouragement to the people you lead, be consistent in telling them how much you appreciate their work and their good attitude. They need to hear this from you.

Let people know you pray specifically for them and that you regularly thank God for them.

Send thank you notes with a word of encouragement and a verse of Scripture.

Make a brief phone call to express your appreciation and acknowledgement or to ask for a prayer request.

Give a gift such as a book or restaurant certificate for a meal.

Tell people you love them. It means a lot when people hear words of love and affirmation.

Give a big hug or loving handshake to express love and encouragement. Show genuine interest in the work of those you lead.

Reflections

Ultimately, then, refusal to confront a fellow believer’s sin or false teaching in the name of tolerance and love is counterfeit tolerance and distorted love.... It was by the stern discipline imposed by Paul, not the church’s lackadaisical tolerance, that the sinning member received genuine hope and help—that his “spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (1 Cor 5:5).

Leading with Love, page 163

Lesson Ten

The Works of a Loving Leader

This lesson covers pages 165 to 184 of *Leading with Love*. Read these pages before doing the lesson.

Overview: This last lesson covers chapters 17 and 18 of *A Christian Leader's Guide to Leading with Love*. Its two major points are that loving leaders manage conflict according to the “more excellent way” of love and that they obey God’s Word and teach others to obey it. Philippians 2:1-8 is a key passage for understanding and applying these concepts.

Question six is especially important for learning to manage conflict with love. Christian leaders must know what Scripture teaches about biblical responses to the attacks and hurts that occur in the midst of conflict. And finally, obedience is essential to loving leadership. If we as leaders are “hearers only” and not “doers” of biblical love, we are deceived about our true spiritual condition. The last two questions will help your group take steps to become practitioners, not merely theorists, of biblical love.

NOTE: For managing conflict with love, questions two and six are key. Be sure to list the Scripture references with the answers to question six. Be sure to answer question eight thoroughly and allow sufficient time to address questions thirteen and fourteen.

Begin Your Session by Reading the Passages Below

But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. (Gal. 5:15)

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom. 12:19-21)

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. (John 15:10)

Chapter 17: Managing Conflict a "More Excellent Way"

1. Examine and explain the meaning of Galatians 5:15.

The churches in Galatia were in the death grip of false teachers and serious doctrinal controversy. This resulted in criticism and quarreling among the believers, so Paul warned them that if they kept biting and tearing at one another like wild beasts, the church would be destroyed.

At times Christians disagree over doctrine and treat each other more like wild beasts than rational human beings. The deeds of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-20) rather than the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) control their disagreements and behavior. As a result, they consume each other with vicious attacks and cruel words. Tragically, the doctrines they ferociously defend seem to make no impact on their sinful attitudes and wicked conduct.

Reflections

One of Satan's most successful strategies for keeping churches weak and ineffective is infighting and unresolved conflicts. This is a life-and-death issue in our local churches. So as a Christian leader, you will not have to face many conflicts, you will have to manage them according to biblical principles.

Leading with Love, pages 165-166

2. Below is a list of the fifteen descriptions of love (1 Cor. 13:4-7). Remember that each of the negative ones (the vices) has a positive counterpart. Use those also for answering questions.

Love According to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

1. Patient

2. Kind

3. Not envious

Delights in the successes and talents of others

4. Not boastful

Promotes others

5. Not arrogant

Is humble and modest

6. Not rude

Displays proper decorum

7. Not selfish

Is self-sacrificing

8. Not easily angered

Calm

9. Not unforgiving

Forgives

10. Not joyful over wrongdoing

11. Rejoices with the truth

12. Bears all things

13. Believes all things

14. Hopes all things

15. Endures all things

Before answering this question, read slowly to the group the fifteen descriptions of love listed on pages 98 and 99.

a. Which two vices do you think are most responsible for creating conflict among Christians? Explain your answer.

a. Envy and selfishness. Throughout the Bible, we see evidence of conflict, division, and even murder as a result of jealousy or envy. This sinful disposition has ruined many relationships and churches. Read to the group Nathaniel Vincent's quote on page 48.

Closely related to envy (and often at the root of it) is selfishness—the preoccupation with one's self. When people seek their own interests and advantage above the interests of others, they soon find themselves in conflict with other self-seekers. Selfish people don't get along well with others. They are easily offended and angered.

b. Which two vices do you think are most responsible for perpetuating conflict and hindering resolution?

Arrogance (or pride) and an unforgiving spirit (holding grudges).

c. Which two virtues do you believe are most helpful in reducing conflict among believers? Explain your answer.

Patience, that is, longsuffering, forbearance. Life is full of frustrations, hurts, injustices, and cruel, uncalled-for attackers by others. But love suffers long with the hurts and injustices experienced at the hands of others. Without longsuffering, we would be in perpetual conflict and would become extremely bitter.

Not easily provoked to anger or irritability. Angry people have more conflicts than self-controlled people and tend to escalate conflicts, making difficult situations worse than they really are. In contrast, people who control their anger reduce conflict and lessen the intensity of it. So leaders who are not easily angered are essential. "Leaders have to deal with a lot of difficult situations. There will always be plenty of fuel to provoke a leader to anger, irritability, offence, bitterness, and resentment" (p. 67 check footnote style for this book).

3. When you face conflict, and we all do, which two vices must you be most aware of in your personal life so that you don't accentuate and perpetuate the conflict?

Take note if one particular vice is mentioned predominately within the group. If there is such a vice, talk about why it is so prevalent and why it accentuates and perpetrates conflict.

Selfishness and pride. The pressures created by conflict have a way of exposing our weaknesses and flaws. We may not think of ourselves as selfish, proud, or angry, but conflict often shows us to be what we don't want to be.

Reflections

When their feelings have been hurt, people often feel justified in doing anything they want in retaliation. They can leave the church, divide the body, explode with uncontrolled anger, cut people off, lie, hate, and backbite. They try to justify the most wicked, sinful behavior with the simple excuse, "But I've been hurt!"

Leading with Love, page 172

4. The church at Philippi was experiencing internal conflict. Paul's overarching solution to such conflicts is given in Philippians 2:1-8:

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Explain how Philippians 2:1-8 helps reduce and temper conflict among believers.

Philippians 2:1-8 points us to the supreme example of Christ's humility and selflessness.

The means to achieve unity and reduce conflict is first stated negatively:

Do nothing "from rivalry" (that is, selfish ambition), and do nothing from "conceit" (that is, empty pride and self glory).

It is then expressed positively:

With "humility count others more significant than yourselves" and "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Selfishness and pride ruin human relationships and are the fundamental causes of most conflict. In contrast, Christians are to emulate Christ who poured himself out for others and humbled himself, even to death on the cross. When we have a Christlike mindset of humility toward others and a selfless concern for the interests of others, conflict will be reduced and tempered.

5. Peacemaking is an act of love blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. What are the character traits of loving, biblical peacemakers?

Biblical peacemakers are Spirit-controlled people (Eph 5:18- 6:9) who:

Selflessly seek the welfare of the group above their own interests and feelings;

Are self-controlled, especially in their expression of anger;

Are not defensive or easily hurt;

Are quick to forgive and more forward;

Understand people and their different perspectives;

Are problem solvers;

Seek justice and truth in group decision-making and compromises;

Are humble, gentle, wise, and patient;

Love truth, justice, and unity.

NOTE: The answers to this next question are important! If people give superficial answers to this question, press them for more biblical and substantial answers.

b. In which areas of your life do you need to develop yourself as a loving, biblical peacemaker?

In order to be a more loving and biblical peacemaker, I need to develop:

Greater wisdom and biblical knowledge;

A deeper understanding of people and greater patience with people;

A deeper appreciation for the unity of the body;

A deeper intercessory prayer ministry.

NOTE: The answers to this vital question are found on pages 166-173. Seek to answer this question thoroughly and with Scripture. Christian leaders are often at the center of controversy, so they should know these passages of Scripture well.

6. When Christians are engaged in bitter conflict, when harsh words have been exchanged and feelings have been deeply hurt, what does the Bible say a Christian's response is to be? List those responses with a Scripture reference for each. Be thorough in your answer.

Always act under the control of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 4:30-31; 5:18).

Respond according to “the more excellent way” of love. Remember: the greater the controversy, the greater the need to act in love. Apply the fifteen descriptions of love to your conflict (1 Cor. 12:31-13:7). If you have time, read Dr. Francis Schaeffer’s quote on page 173.

Don’t let anger dominate your response; instead, respond calmly, patiently, and with self-control (James 1:19-20).

Emulate Christ’s attitudes of selflessness and humility. “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5).

Energetically pursue peacemaking (Matt. 5:9).

Passionately pursue love that covers sins (1 Peter 4:8).

Fervently forgive and repent of evil thoughts and intentions against a brother or sister. Genuinely bless those who hate you and speak against you. Pray for them and act kindly toward them (Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:22-28; Rom. 12:20).

Stubbornly refuse to be ruled by the get-even mentality. Resist the urge to seek personal revenge against those who have hurt you. Refuse to return insult for insult or slander for slander (Rom. 12:17, 19; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Peter 3:9).

Whatever the conflict might be, do not be overpowered by evil. Commit yourself to overcome “evil with good” (Rom. 12:21).

7. In practical terms, how do you display love to people who dislike you or who you dislike because they have hurt your feelings?

Pray regularly for those who have hurt you. Don’t allow yourself to act in a petty manner or to be unforgiving.

Don’t backbite or slander. Instead, speak well of them to others.

Pray regularly for those who have hurt you. Don’t allow yourself to act in a petty manner or to be unforgiving.

Don’t backbite or slander. Instead, speak well of them to others.

Greet them with warmth, friendship, and love. In order to ease tensions, invite them to share a meal with you and others in your home.

View all conflict and hurts as God’s way to test, expose, and develop Christlike character within you.

Be committed to continued reconciliation and unity. Seek their best interests and help them in any practical way to live for God and serve him.

Pray for improved harmony, the blessing of the other person, and for God to be glorified by your responses.

Greet them with warmth, friendship, and love. In order to ease tensions, invite them to share a meal with you and others in your home.

View all conflict and hurts as God's way to test, expose, and develop Christlike character within you.

Be committed to continued reconciliation and unity. Seek their best interests and help them in any practical way to live for God and serve him.

Pray for improved harmony, the blessing of the other person, and for God to be glorified by your responses.

Chapter 18: Obeying Christ's Commands and Teaching Others to Obey

8. In the section entitled, "Connecting Love and Leadership" (page 176), five examples are given of the connection between love and obedience. Summarize each of these points briefly in your own words. Which one of these points did you find most helpful to your own understanding of obedience and love? Explain.

(1) God commands us to love him and our neighbor. Love is a duty, a Christian obligation. Read to the group Alexander Ross's quote on page 176.

(2) We express our love for God by obeying his commands (1 John 5:3; John 14:21). If we love him, we will want to obey his will for us.

(3) The proof and assurance that we know and love God is our obedience to his Word.

(4) Obedience is necessary for enjoying and growing in our love relationship with Christ. We remain in his love as we walk in obedience to his will. Read to the group Bruce Ware's excellent quotation on page 178.

(5) Love motivates us to obey with joy and eagerness of heart. Obedience to Christ is a fruit of love for Christ.

For me, the most helpful point is four. This point demonstrates the necessity of obedience in our daily relationship and walk with Christ. It has been modeled for us in the relationship between the Son and the Father. The Son enjoys and remains in his Father's love through perfect obedience to his Father's commands. We enjoy and remain in Christ's love through obedience to his Word. Disobedience spoils the love relationship.

9. a. What does the author mean when he says, "It's not enough to teach the facts about Christ, we are to teach, exhort, and train disciples to obey and live according to the commands of Christ"?

This is a significant point to grasp. Our ministry with people is not just teaching biblical information; it is teaching and modeling that leads to life transformation.

The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) requires us to teach people to obey all that Christ commands and teaches. Christianity is a life to be lived, a doctrine to be practiced, so what we teach must move from the head to the feet.

b. In what ways are you actively teaching and exhorting the people you lead to obey Christ's commands?

It is my responsibility to live and model Christ's commands. So when I teach the Scriptures, I always stress the need to practice and implement the teachings of Christ.

I regularly exhort people to practice the truth, to live the life of Christ, and to be doers of the Word. I remind them that Jesus warned against hearing the Word but not doing the Word, page 179.

When I see believers neglecting or disobeying Christ's commands, I ask them why and what I can do to help them practice the Lord's commands.

Reflections

One of the greatest blessings a church can experience is for its leaders and teachers to love the Lord and delight in obeying his Word. It thrills the heart to see a church where the leaders are committed to obeying Scripture, eager to seek God's will, and determined to lead the church in ways that please the Lord. Such leaders are better leaders because they are far less inclined to neglect their God-given pastoral duties.

Leading with Love, page 183

10. Explain the following two passages of Scripture (1 Sam. 15:22-23):

“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?”

First and foremost, the Lord God requires an obedient heart, not mechanical ritual. To the Lord, joyous obedience to his divine will is far more important than ritual observances that a godless person could perform. Of course, an obedient child of God would, in Old Testament times, have offered “burnt offering and sacrifices” in obedience to God's law.

“For rebellion is as the sin of divination.”

Disobedience to the Lord’s voice is open rebellion against him (Deut. 9:23; Josh. 1:18). Indeed, such rebellion against the Lord’s command is as serious a sin as demonic divination (Deut. 18:10).

11. The Old Testament Scriptures speak about Israelite kings who were half-hearted in their obedience to God. Give a modern-day example of half-hearted obedience to the Lord that results in serious harm to the local church.

The New Testament lists spiritual qualifications for local church elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4). Many churches ignore these biblical qualifications or apply only a few favorites. Such practices result in the placement of biblically unqualified and unfit elders and deacons. Unqualified elders and deacons create years (even decades) of problems for a local church. This is especially true when the church elders or deacons are not even born-again believers.

12. In what ways are obedient leaders better leaders and teachers of the Lord’s people and the church? List as many as you can.

Obedient leaders:

Provide excellent models for the church to follow,

Fulfill their God-given duties to care for the flock,

Teach sound doctrine and a biblical gospel,

Drive off false teachers,

Love God with their entire being and their neighbor as themselves,

Please the Lord,

Inspire others to live obedient lives.

NOTE: Hit this point hard! It is vital that the group understand the necessity of practicing the biblical commands to love and not to be mere hearers of the Word, which is a grave danger to the soul.

13. What problems will you personally face if you merely hear about love and agree that love is important but don’t daily practice the New Testament principle of love? Use James 1:22-26 to answer this question.

James makes two frightening statements about those who are “hearers only” and not “doers” of the Word: First, they are dangerously self-deceived. They may think they are walking with God, but in reality they are not. Second, God’s Word has no lasting, transforming effect on them (James 1:23-24). They are “forgetful hearers.” The Word is not internalized in their hearts, so it has no real impact on their daily lives. Such people have the theory but not the reality of Christianity.

To merely hear about and agree with the biblical teaching of love but not practice it is self-deception. Such a person is spiritually bankrupt, a living contradiction. Furthermore, God promises blessing only to the “doers of the Word.” Indeed, Jesus repeatedly warned of dire consequences for those who listen to and profess the truth but do not practice it (Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46-49; 8:21).

14. What practical steps can you take to become a more obedient practitioner of the New Testament principle of love?

Loveless behavior is disobedience that needs to be judged, repented of, and confessed as sin before God. So practice confessing your unloving conduct and attitudes.

Regularly pray for help and strength to love as Christ loved (John 13:34-35).

Study what the whole Bible says about the importance of obedience to God’s Word.

Conscientiously observe and follow those who model loving lives. (Read the life of Mr. R. C. Chapman for inspiration and motivation.)

Work closely with loving people. Ask your spouse or a close friend to hold you accountable to walk in love as Christ did (Eph. 5:2).

Make a fresh commitment to “pursue love” and never give up (1 Cor. 14:1). When you fail, recommit yourself to obey and “pursue love.”

In the words and counsel of Revelation 2:5: “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.”

Reflections

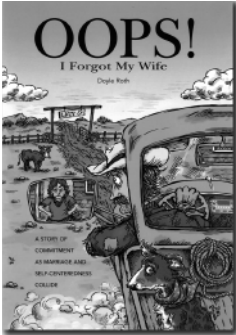
The Bible says, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22). If we hear the words of God but do not

obey them, we are self-deceived and his words have no lasting transforming power over us (James 1:22-25). Merely hearing God's words about love is not sufficient. We must set our minds on being eager "doers of the word."

Leading with Love, page 184

Other Titles from Lewis & Roth

**All of these titles can be ordered from
your local bookstore or through
Lewis & Roth Publishers
1.800.477.3239 ♦ www.lewisandroth.org**



Oops! I Forgot My Wife offers a fresh and unique approach to encouraging healthy marriages. Communicating biblical truth through humor and story, author Doyle Roth challenges marriages to face their #1 enemy: self-centeredness, equips men for spiritual leadership in the home, provides a helpful resource for counseling and creates a user-friendly approach to evangelism.

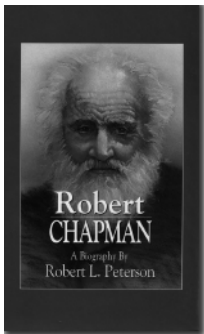
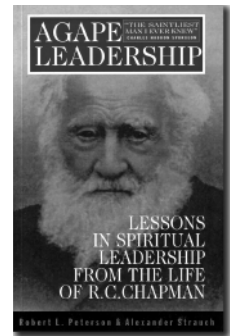
Oops! I Forgot My Wife (Hardback; 304 pages)

Oops! Discussion Guide (Paperback; 48 pages)

Oops! Audio CD Set (2 Audio CDs; 158 minutes)

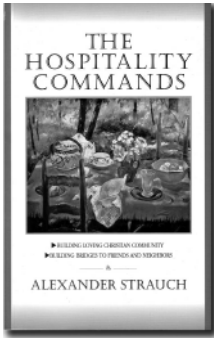
Perhaps our greatest need as we train new generations of church leaders is for role models—godly examples of what loving Christian leadership should look like. Though largely unknown today, Robert Chapman (1803-1902) serves as just such an example. Featuring twelve “leadership lesson” snapshots drawn for Chapman’s life, this inspiring little book demonstrates godly, pastoral leadership in action. Its short, easy-to-read chapters will challenge you to be a better leader, a more committed believer, and a brighter light to the world.

Agape Leadership (Paperback; 76 pages)



Charles Spurgeon once referred to Robert Chapman as “the saintliest man I ever knew.” This full-length biography of Chapman tells the story of why he had such a marked impact on the lives of such men as George Muller, Hudson Taylor, Charles Spurgeon and others. It will challenge you to deepen your devotion to Christ and love others selflessly.

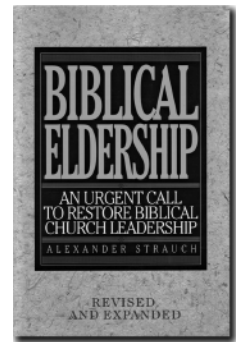
Robert Chapman: A Biography (Hardback; 210 pages)



Hospitality may well be the best means we have to promote close, brotherly love. It is also an effective tool for evangelism. Showing Christ's love to others in a home environment may be the only means Christians have to reach their neighbors for Christ. Study questions and assignments for group discussion are included, making this an excellent resource for small groups and adult Sunday School classes.

The Hospitality Commands (Paperback; 68 pages)

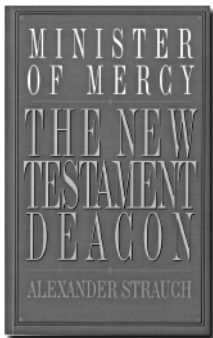
With over 150,000 copies sold, this comprehensive book at the role and function of elders brings all the advantages of shared leadership into focus. Beginning with the four broad categories of eldering (leading, feeding, caring and protecting), *Biblical Eldership* explores the essential work of elders, their qualifications, their relationships with each other, and each of the biblical passages related to eldership. Written for those seeking a clear understanding of the mandate for biblical eldership, this book defines it accurately, practically and biblically.



Biblical Eldership (Paperback; 340 pages)

Biblical Eldership Study Guide (Paperback; 176 pages)

Biblical Eldership Mentor's Guide (Paperback; 194 pages)



Deacons, as the New Testament teaches and as some of the sixteenth-century reformers discovered, are to be involved in a compassionate ministry of caring for the poor and needy. The deacons' ministry, therefore, is one that no Christ-centered church can afford to neglect. It's through the deacons' ministry that we make Christ's love a reality for many people. A groundbreaking study of all the biblical texts on the subject, *The New Testament Deacon* will help you build a strong ministry in your church.

The New Testament Deacon (Paperback; 192 pages)

The NT Deacon Study Guide (Paperback; 96 pages)