



THE
INNER MAN
WITH
SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP
BY J. OSWALD SANDERS

The Inner Man

by Frank Hamrick

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to develop character and maturity within each of your students. The lessons here will present a view of a true leader, one that grows only by God's grace. As men and women seek God, He will change who they are—which is even more important than what they do.

Too often, we teach Bible facts or life applications without developing our inner being. Our students become hollow Christians, people who perhaps do the right things and avoid most of the wrong things—but only because they've been programmed or conditioned by others. As soon as external standards or restraints are removed, their behavior will change to match the new situation.

What you do is important, certainly, but God intends to change the kind of person you are. We seek God so that He will change us to be like Him—after which we can reflect Him with our actions. We are holy only because He is holy (1 Pet. 1:16), so at every step of the way, we must lean on His grace.

We pray that God uses your study of Him to encourage and challenge you. We trust that as your students explore the Scriptures together, God will strengthen them with might in their inner being (Eph. 3:16). Through this study, students should realize that their actions must stem from self-discipline and godliness—not conformity or compulsion. This is the mark of God-focused, mature youth.

Though much of this material may be difficult, we trust that you can inspire your students to rise to the task. Their growth throughout this year will not be a test of their strength—but of God's grace to those that seek Him.

FEATURES OF THIS STUDY

As an academic curriculum and a devotional study, *The Inner Man* presents both factual content and personal application material. By the end of this study, students should have an introductory understanding of leadership as addressed by Scripture. They should recognize positive examples of leadership, and they should appreciate the importance of inner character to ministry.

Teacher's Lectures

The lesson content in the Teacher's Manual can help you prepare and present the truths of this study to your students.

Lesson Objectives

These serve as target truths for each lesson.

Teacher's Lesson

The lecture material is presented verbatim—though formatted with headings and bullets in case you prefer to teach from limited notes.

Notes from the Teacher's Lesson

Each lesson in the Student Manual contains a fill-in-the-blank outline of the corresponding teacher's lesson. Students can use this outline as a foundation for their lecture notes, which will help them study for tests and quizzes.

You can find digital presentations with these outlines on the *Inner Man* product page at positiveaction.org.

We encourage teachers to approach lessons not so much as a fact-finding process, but as a way to strengthen the students' relationship with God. Perfect truth includes love, and perfect love includes truth, so please take care to present this material in a way that both encourages and challenges your students. Make time for discussion, and encourage your students to share their questions with the class.

Student Exercises

Almost every lesson in the Student Manual includes exercises that students should complete outside of class. These exercises encourage students to seek God's truth and love on their own, while also reviewing some of the content from the teacher's lesson.

Early in this course, you may wish to complete some of these exercises with your students, especially if the students are not familiar with looking up and summarizing Scripture on their own.

Reading Assignments

Most lessons in the Student Manual begin with a reading assignment. This may be a brief essay or—beginning in Lesson 19—a section from Sanders' *Spiritual Leadership*. You should generally ask your students to read this assignment before you begin the teacher's lecture.

A complete copy of *Spiritual Leadership* is included in the back of the Student Manual.

Stepping Toward Effective Leadership

Each lesson in the Student Manual features additional projects and activities that you can review and assign at your discretion. Many of these are more appropriate for higher grade levels.

Testing and Evaluation

For classes that require a score or grade, the Teacher’s Manual includes lesson quizzes and unit tests. These cover material from the teacher’s lectures and the student reading. Question types include matching, short answer, multiple choice, true-false, and short essays.

Quizzes, tests, and answer keys are at the back of this Teacher’s Manual. You can find editable versions of the testing material on the *Inner Man* product page at **positiveaction.org**.

Some teachers also grade weekly Scripture memorization, as well as the completion of student exercises and extra activities.

Note that these materials can help you evaluate students’ mastery of factual content—not, of course, their spiritual growth.

Completed Pages from the Student Manual

This Teacher’s Manual contains a complete copy of the Student Manual, except for the text of Spiritual Leadership. In each lesson, you can find facsimiles of the student exercises with suggested answers filled in.

A digital version of these facsimiles is available on the *Inner Man* product page at **positiveaction.org**. If presented via projector or screen, these pages can help you review exercises with your students.

Scripture Memorization

At the end of this introduction, you’ll find a Scripture memory program with an assignment for each lesson. In the past, teachers have used this optional component in the following ways:

1. Assign passages to be recited or written in a graded quiz, whether weekly, monthly, or once a semester.
2. Assign verses to be written on the back of regular lesson quizzes, perhaps as extra credit.
3. Evaluate the students’ understanding of the verses by offering a fill-in-the-blank verse test, or one that requires students to match the text of each passage with its reference.

You can find printable verse cards on the *Inner Man* product page at **positiveaction.org**.

FORMAT AND GRADE LEVEL

Though teachers have successfully adapted and taught this study in grades nine through twelve, we recommend this content for the eleventh and twelfth grade.

As with any other Bible study, your students’ background, Scriptural literacy, and reading level will greatly impact their ability to approach this material. Some students may require additional teacher or parent involvement to understand and complete the exercises in the Student Manual.

SUGGESTED WEEKLY SCHEDULE

This study includes 35 lessons—one for each week in an average academic year. In general, students should first complete their introductory reading assignment, after which teachers can present the lecture from the Teacher’s Manual. Students can then complete the written exercises in the Student Manual. Any optional activities or Scripture memory can expand the students’ individual or group study.

Note that this study likely contains more content than you could cover in depth, especially in a three- or four-day-a-week class. Depending on the needs of your students—and depending on the time you spend in discussion or review—you may need to cover some minor points quickly or not at all.

Five-Day Option

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
Introduce lesson objectives. Begin the teacher’s lesson. Introduce the Scripture memory verses. Assign the student exercises and any additional activities.	Continue the teacher’s lesson. Review Scripture memory.	Finish the teacher’s lesson.	Review the student exercises, as well as lesson content relevant to the quiz or test. Review Scripture memory.	Administer the quiz or test. Check or quiz Scripture memory. Discuss any student questions and additional activities. Assign reading for the next lesson.

Four-Day Option

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
Introduce lesson objectives. Begin the teacher’s lesson. Introduce the Scripture memory verses. Assign the student exercises and any additional activities.	Finish the teacher’s lesson. Review Scripture memory.	Review the student exercises, as well as lesson content relevant to the quiz or test. Review Scripture memory.	Administer the quiz or test. Check or quiz Scripture memory. Discuss any student questions and additional activities. Assign reading for the next lesson.

Three-Day Option

Day One	Day Two	Day Three
Introduce lesson objectives. Begin the teacher's lesson. Introduce the Scripture memory verses. Assign the student exercises and any additional activities.	Finish the teacher's lesson. Review the student exercises, as well as lesson content relevant to the quiz or test. Review Scripture memory.	Administer the quiz or test. Check or quiz Scripture memory. Discuss any student questions and additional activities. Assign reading for the next lesson.

FEEDBACK

As a non-profit publishing ministry, we consider teachers our co-laborers in the faith. Each of our curricula remains a work in progress, and the people who teach these studies have a great impact on the scope and format of each new edition. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us—we'd love to hear from you.

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A FINAL WORD

It's our prayer that this study helps you and your students know God's glory, grow in that knowledge, and share it with others. To see the most from this study, we'd encourage you to do the following:

- Spend time each day in the Word. Use the material in this study to guide your devotional reading so that you can present God's truth and love from the heart. Spend time also marking and adjusting the lecture content to suit your students' needs.
- Pray for your students, and ask God to grow you, as well.
- Be vulnerable to your students, expressing questions and confidence in equal measure. Encourage them to explore Scripture with you.
- Be the love and truth you want to see from your students.
- Depend on God's strength and grace, even in your weakness.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY PROGRAM

Lesson	Passages
1	Gen. 50:20; Exo. 33:13
2	Exo. 33:19; Josh. 1:8
3	Josh. 1:9; Josh. 3:7
4	Josh. 10:25; Josh. 10:42
5	Josh. 13:1; Josh. 14:8
6	Josh. 14:12; Josh. 22:5
7	Josh. 23:6; Josh. 24:15
8	1 Sam. 24:6; 1 Sam. 24:17
9	Ps. 42:1–2; Ps. 57:7
10	Ps. 63:1; Ps. 97:10
11	Ps. 103:12; Prov. 13:20
12	Prov. 16:32; Isa. 6:5
13	Isa. 6:8; Isa. 45:11
14	Lam. 3:27; Ezek. 22:30
15	Matt. 5:3; Matt. 5:4
16	Matt. 5:5; Matt. 5:6
17	Matt. 5:7; Matt. 5:8
18	Matt. 5:9; Matt. 5:10
19	Matt. 5:11; Matt. 6:14
20	Matt. 6:15; Matt. 22:37
21	Luke 14:26; Luke 14:27
22	John 3:30; John 15:19
23	Acts 6:3; Rom. 7:18
24	Rom. 8:28; Rom. 12:18
25	Rom. 12:19; 1 Cor. 2:2, 3
26	1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Cor. 9:27
27	1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 3:18
28	Gal. 6:1; Gal. 6:14
29	Eph. 3:16; Eph. 4:11–13
30	Eph. 4:26; Eph. 4:32
31	Phil. 3:7; Phil. 3:8
32	1 Thess. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:18
33	1 Tim. 4:7, 8; 1 Tim. 4:15
34	2 Tim. 3:12; James 4:7, 8
35	James 5:16; 1 John 1:9

UNIT ONE

THE FOUNDATIONS
OF LEADERSHIP

LESSON 1

THE PURPOSE OF A GOD-FOCUSED SCHOOL

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

1. To outline the broad purpose of the church—maturity for spiritual service
2. To outline the broad aim of the Christian school as an integral part of the church's ministry
3. To reveal the characteristics of a mature, God-focused Christian—the goal for every student
4. To describe the plans and procedures by which that goal is to be achieved
5. To show the student his or her place and responsibility in the Christian school
6. To encourage the student to fulfill his or her responsibility within the school

NOTE: Because of the length and importance of this lesson, no additional student work is required beyond the introductory reading. You should spend the entire week teaching this foundational material.

Ask: What is the purpose of our Christian school? (Discuss student responses.)

Ask: Do we have a school simply to educate young people? If our school is connected with a local church, is our purpose to get more members for our church? Do we have a school so that we can show the world that whatever they can do we can do better? (Discuss student responses to each of these questions and guide their thinking toward the legitimate justification for having a Christian school.)

The purpose of a Christian school is essentially the same as the purpose of a local church, and we find that purpose in Ephesians 4:11–13. (Read this passage aloud slowly and clearly.)

THE PURPOSE OF A LOCAL CHURCH

The Goal Is Maturity for Christian Service

According to Ephesians 4:11–13, God gave the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Verse 12 states the purpose of these roles: the perfecting of the saints and the work of the ministry. Perfecting means “maturing” or “making complete.”

So verse 12 says that the pastor, his associates, the youth leaders, and everyone who teaches in the church must seek to produce mature believers—in the case of the young people in Christian school—that they might do the work of the ministry. In other words, the purpose of everything in our school should fit like a glove with the youth ministry of local churches. The school, as part of the local church's overall youth ministry, exists for the purpose of making you mature, God-focused, character-filled, Christian young people who are capable of ministering effectively for the Lord. We hope to make you so strong that by the time you're seniors, you are mature enough to conduct the work of the ministry. By the time you reach your senior year, you must be strong Christian leaders who can stand in front of people and speak, sing, lead singing, make announcements, witness, work effectively with children—and whatever else is needed—

without shyness or restraint. We want you to exhibit leadership and zeal. We want you to make a positive impact on the younger students in our school. We want you to know what you believe and why—to have strong biblical convictions, as well as the character to live by them.

This Goal Is Not Popular

Although producing God-focused, mature Christian servants is our biblical goal, it is not a popular one in many circles. Many youth groups, for example, strive for more tangible goals: having fun or seeing how many attendance records they can break. Likewise, many Christian schools do not seek to train mature servants of the Lord. Often their goals become numerical. They lower their standards to enroll more students. They emphasize their sports programs to the point that athletes are the most revered students on campus, downplaying the goals of those who hope to become preachers, missionaries, Christian school teachers, or spiritual leaders in other fields. Some Christian schools are nothing more than public schools with chapel programs, Bible classes, Christian teachers, and prayer thrown in.

A Christian school is truly unique when it has a different goal and philosophy than what's pursued by a public school. Our goal should not merely be education or even maturity—rather, it's about teaching God in such a way that it produces love and maturity leading to Christian service.

Ask: Why is the development of mature, God-focused Christian youth so unpopular when it is obviously the one scriptural goal of a ministry? (Discuss student responses.)

Here are two possible reasons:

1. Developing God-focused, mature youth for Christian service takes time.
2. Measuring maturity is difficult.

It Takes Time

Most organizations—including Sunday schools, youth programs, church groups, and Christian schools—want to see immediate and measurable results. Some are unwilling to spend the long years necessary to develop mature students.

But growth takes time—sometimes more than an organization can invest. Church youth programs can be limited by the fact that the average tenure of the typical youth pastor is a little under two years. It's extremely difficult to build a strong ministry in such a short amount of time. Just as strong oak trees don't grow overnight, neither do Christian youth mature in such a short time, especially when their youth pastors switch out so quickly.

Christian schools, as aids to the local church, must offer consistency and stability. If the school is willing to keep at the task of “growing” students, and if the students maintain their enrollment in the school year after year, the teachers can gradually see maturity and growth developing in their students' lives.

If a school is to be effective, its teachers must guide their students through a tough, disciplined program with clearly-defined requirements—all with the goal of maturity and service in mind. If your youth program is difficult—with a lot of quizzes, Scripture memory, outside reading, and other hard work—then thank God for it. The stringent demands of a solid church youth program, coupled with a school that sets high expectations, will help form you into a Christian leader.

It Is Difficult to Measure

Because maturity is not easy to measure, many schools and church youth programs simply don't emphasize it. They want goals that they can measure quickly and easily. They want fast, visible, dramatic results. So their goals become numerical. They want to talk about how many youth they had in church last Sunday or how many decisions were made in the last revival meeting.

Nothing is wrong with numbers, of course, but if we are not careful, those become our goal. When a school lowers its standards to make itself more attractive to the ungodly, or when a school refuses to uphold its rules for fear of losing students, that school is doomed.

With this in mind, we can thank God for a school and a church youth program that, although they would like to reach many people for Christ, refuses to make their programs less disciplined in order to do so. Our purpose will be defeated if we make concessions only to satisfy—not edify—more people.

Imagine a football coach who, instead of training and pushing for the win, focuses on getting as many people on his team as possible. He would probably tell his guys that they had to lift just five pounds a day and run maybe ten yards, and if that minimal effort was too much, they could sit out practice whenever they wanted. "After all," he might say, "I have some little guys on the team, and I don't want to run them off by making the requirements too hard or setting the standards too high."

How ridiculous! Yet many churches do that very thing in their schools and youth groups. They make their programs little more than fun and games, turn their schools into little more than glorified public schools, lower the academic standards, soften the rules—all just to please everybody. And what does that do to the students? It eliminates the very conditions necessary to make them mature and strong.

Both the church youth program and the Christian school must work together to operate a demanding, stringent, disciplined program, thereby putting you under a certain degree of pressure. It's the only way to make you mature. As the African proverb goes, "Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors."

In the end, maturity may indeed be difficult—or even impossible—to measure accurately. However, there are two indicators that can give some idea of the effectiveness of a Christian school.

1. The percentage of the school's graduates who hope to attend a Christian college
2. The percentage of the school's graduates who pursue ministry-related types of work

Too many Christian school graduates do not continue their education and training at Christian colleges. Some don't even consider universities like that an option. They opt instead to attend state universities and colleges, where they are taught the world's philosophy, and where their faith is ridiculed and attacked. As their minds begin to open—as they begin to seek answers for questions they never even knew they had before—they are filled with the corrupt, twisted logic this world uses to obscure the truth. Students who do not have Christian counsel during this stage of their lives seldom enter ministry at any level.

THE AIM OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL AND CHURCH YOUTH PROGRAM

Because mature, God-focused youth is the aim of the youth program of local churches—of which the Christian school is a part—we must understand what constitutes maturity.

Ask: What is a mature, God-focused youth? (Discuss student responses.)

Refer to TIM 1 and give this answer: A mature, God-focused Christian youth exhibits the following five characteristics.

Saved (Eph. 4:12)

Look back at Ephesians 4. Verse 12 shows that this whole passage is addressed to Christians. A person must be “born again” before he or she can mature in the Lord. The Bible curriculum for this year can teach you leadership principles, but it will not make you mature in the Lord if you do not have spiritual life.

Therefore, our first burden and concern is that every member of this class knows Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior.

Ask: Can you honestly say that you have been born again? In what or in whom are you placing your faith? Could you show someone from the Bible how you know you are part of God’s family?

NOTE: You might want to discuss the plan of salvation at this point to ensure that the students understand what the gospel really is. Many students already know the plan of salvation just from growing up in a Christian environment. They know the terminology and the expectations about Christian lifestyle. But some have never truly begun a relationship with Christ. Emphasize who the object of their faith should be—Jesus. Discuss with them your own salvation testimony, especially if it came later in life. If appropriate, let them know that you’ll be available for private discussion after class or at some other designated time.

Stable in the Word (Eph. 4:13–14)

When children begin to grow up physically—especially when teenagers experience their growth spurt—they develop a hunger that their parents can hardly satisfy. Perhaps you’re experiencing that hunger even now! The same is true when one begins to mature spiritually. If you begin to grow spiritually, we will not have to beg you to study the Word. You will have an insatiable hunger to know the Book.

At a picnic, you can always recognize the hungry people: they’re first in line, with plate and fork in hand. At a spiritual “picnic”—like your Bible class or youth group Bible study—you can just as easily spot the spiritually hungry teens. They don’t sit in the back of the room with their chins propped in their hands or their chairs leaned back against the wall, looking at their watches in anticipation of the conclusion of the meeting. Instead, they are the “first in line,” anxious to learn and holding their “plate” (their Bible) in their hands with a “fork” (pen) at the ready. They are licking their spiritual lips, taking notes, and enjoying every moment of the Bible study.

But stability is more than just a desire for the Word. The mature student recognizes error and trendy ideas for what they are—mere winds of doctrine. We shouldn’t bounce from one new theological idea to another. Our walk in the Bible must be steady, which comes only by yielding our understanding to Christ. This attitude will, in turn, foster a desire to grow into the fullness of Christ—not just along with the latest pseudo-Christian trend.

Submitting (Eph. 4:15)

When we yield our understanding to Christ—when we tell Him that we trust His Word more than our wisdom—we are exercising submission. This quality is an essential step on the path to maturity.

All of us realize that plain old every day maturity requires at least some submission. Mocking a police officer that just pulled you over does not indicate maturity. Neither does making jokes about your boss just

before your performance review. Maturity from the world's standpoint requires limiting your behavior in common sense ways, submitting your immediate desires for long-term gain.

Spiritual submission involves three components. The first is submission to the truth. As long as we resist truth, we will never grow in grace. Of course, Ephesians 4:15 says that we're all to communicate the truth in love, but sometimes others will confront us with a truth in a less-than-loving way. Imagine your classmates making fun of a bit of food stuck to your face. Should we ignore the truth because of the hateful way it can be presented? Of course not. We must objectively and graciously submit to the truth, making a commitment to speak the truth in love to others.

Second, we must submit to the Holy Spirit's work of growth in our lives. Sure, we may see something as truth, but sometimes we can refuse to let that truth touch our lives. Without a willingness to grow, there can be no further maturing. As painful as the truth may be, a better walk with God will make the difficulty of submission more than worth it. Look to your teacher, good Christian friends, and the Word for encouragement in your walk.

Finally, we must submit to the headship of Jesus Christ. He provides both the power and the goal for Christian maturity. Without the grace available through Him, none of us could mature spiritually. And without His example in the Bible, we wouldn't even know what mature Christianity should look like. True submission to Him reveals itself in a desire to see and savor Christ in every area of life.

Sharing (Eph. 4:16)

Sharing is a natural result of God's work in our lives. As we see His hand in our circumstances, in our walk, in our growth, it becomes impossible to stay quiet about Him. As we see Him in His Word, we'll tell other believers, encouraging them to turn their eyes to God. As we are overwhelmed by the power of the gospel, we will share our faith with others that do not know Christ.

This kind of sharing has two effects on the "body" of Christ—His church. The first is a numerical growth, an increase in men and women who come to Christ and grow by His grace. The second effect is a growth in the faith and maturity of believers, who are edified in their walk and encouraged to share their own testimonies of God's glory and grace.

Separated (Eph. 4:17–32)

In Ephesians 4, Paul warns believers not to act like lost Gentiles. He encourages us to be separated, committed to a growing relationship with God that does not cling to the sins of the world.

Some define separation by talking about what we should be separated from. Lying, stealing, bitterness, wicked language, drugs—we could spend forever talking about things that have no place in a mature Christian's life. In verses 17 and 18, Paul doesn't bother listing these sins. He points to the source of unbelievers' problems—their darkened understanding, which is apart from the life that is in God. So they walk in vanity, futility, and frustration, stumbling through the night in search of something that will satisfy them. They can't help but sin, and that only pulls them further from the light.

But what should we be separated to? Paul tells us that we don't need to live in futility. When we believe on Christ, we gain access to the light of truth. We walk as children of the light, going through this world illuminated by God's glory and grace. We see what unbelievers can't see in problems and dire circumstances—the work of God. We no longer have to seek satisfaction in the pleasures of sin. Instead, we can put off our old ways and separate ourselves to a relationship with God, letting a knowledge of Him and His will guide our behavior.

If we pursue this kind of relationship with God, we do not resent the standards of our parents or other authorities. If someone asks you why you don't do something, the answer shouldn't be "because my parents don't believe in it," or "because my youth pastor doesn't allow it." Our convictions should be our own. Even if you are under a rule or regulation that you don't personally believe is backed up by the Word, submit to it anyway, as long as doing so does not require you to sin. You can exercise your faith by respecting authority, even as you learn from the mistakes of others and commit to standards that you believe are based in the Word of God.

OUR PLAN

Ask: What things must our school and a good church youth program do if we are to produce the kind of students we've described here? What must we do if we're to see saved, stable, submitting, sharing, and separated young people? (Discuss briefly before offering the following points.)

What Doesn't Produce Mature Teens

Many schools emphasize at least six things that do not develop Christian youth:

- Excitement
- Fun
- Activities
- Food
- Entertainment
- Promotional gimmicks

Note that nothing is wrong with any of these six things. But no amount of fun, food, and excitement will ever make a person burdened for souls, hungry for the Word, separated from the world, or surrendered to Christian service. Only a program of disciplined Bible study can build such maturity.

Enhancing and Essential Ingredients

When you bake a cake, certain ingredients (e.g., eggs, flour, and milk) are absolutely essential. Other ingredients (e.g., nuts, icing, flavoring, and sprinkles) enhance the cake. Imagine baking a cake with only the enhancing ingredients and almost none of the essential ingredients. It would taste horrible.

Christian education has both essential ingredients and enhancing ingredients. Recreation, fun, enthusiasm, good food, parties, and effective promotions are enhancers, but they can never "make the cake." If we are regularly to produce mature, dedicated, high-quality seniors who will attend Christian colleges, become leaders in their church, or prepare to go into full-time Christian work, we must identify the essential ingredients and build our program around them.

Ask: So what are those essential ingredients, the things that alone will build this class into a strong, spiritually mature group? (Discuss the students' ideas, perhaps listing them randomly on the board, before referring to TIM 1 and offering the following points.)

Three Essential Ingredients

Spiritual maturity will not come to those students who are not developing each of these three areas. It is our responsibility as teachers to help you know God's glory, grow in it, and show it to others.

Knowing God's Glory (Col. 1:9–11)

First and most important, we must know God's glory. In Colossians 1:9–11, Paul prays for this very type of growth in the believers at Colossae. He wanted them to be filled with the knowledge of God's will, as well as spiritual wisdom and understanding (v. 9). This way, they could be fruitful in good works and increase in the knowledge of God (v. 10). We cannot expect our behavior to reflect God's glory until we take the time to know and meditate on Him.

Growing in God's Glory (2 Cor. 3:18)

But if knowing God's glory never goes beyond mere academic knowledge, then it is useless. There must also be growth. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul describes the natural result of beholding God's glory—a change, a transformation, a metamorphosis. We must be open and willing for God's grace to work in our lives, letting His Word transform us into a clearer reflection of His character. As we discussed before, recognizing the truth is one thing, but letting it change us is another thing altogether.

Showing God's Glory (Ps. 145:10–12)

When we are awed by God's glory, and when we are overwhelmed by His work in our lives, we are moved to share His glory with others. Just like we discussed in the “Sharing” section, there are two important aspects to showing God's glory. First, we must serve and edify other believers, encouraging them by showing God's grace in our life. Second, we must reach out to unbelievers, showing them God's love through the gospel of Christ.

All three of these ingredients must be at the center and core of our ministry. We don't major on activities; we major on these three essential ingredients. Next, let's see how we interweave these ingredients into our overall school program.

OUR PROGRAM

To balance these three essential ingredients, we must develop a Bible program that will emphasize each of them. But where in the Word of God do we find the essentials of a biblical program?

Read aloud 2 Peter 1:5–7. Note three specific things in this passage of Scripture.

Growth Is Gradual and Sequential

Notice that we begin with faith and then “add to” it. Then to virtue we add knowledge, and so on. This adding of one ingredient at a time—one after the other—indicates a process. A person doesn't begin the Christian life fully equipped with all of the patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love that he or she needs for life. These things come to fruition gradually by the process of growth and development.

This Growth Is According to a Divine Order

Peter specifically tells us that we begin with faith. Then to faith we add virtue—before we add knowledge. Knowledge does only a little good before we have developed faith and virtue. Then to knowledge we add temperance (i.e., self-control).

This does not mean that we gain all possible virtue before adding some knowledge or must learn everything there is to know before we can work on self-control. As long as we are on this earth in these imper-

fect bodies, we will need growth in every area mentioned in this verse. However, we must develop our growth by the order given.

Many Christian institutions have made the mistake of taking newborn Christians and giving them knowledge, for example, before they have virtue. Others make the mistake of teaching Bible truths to the unsaved (i.e., teaching knowledge to those who do not yet possess faith). These attempts are doomed to failure because the Bible says that the natural, carnal person does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. They seem like foolishness from an earthly perspective. They're unknowable because they require a spiritual viewpoint (1 Cor. 2:14).

The Beginning of Christian Growth Is Salvation, and the Conclusion Is Mature Service

Note that Peter begins with faith—which we can understand as saving faith—and he ends with brotherly kindness and love. Brotherly kindness and love refer to mature, loving service to others for the Lord.

If you have never trusted Christ as your Lord and Savior, you cannot grow in the Lord. A baby cannot mature until it is first born. Similarly, you cannot profit from our Bible study this year until you are born again. But once you are saved, you are not to sit still. You are to grow, learn, and mature so that you can serve the Lord effectively.

Therefore, our school is part of the whole church program that seeks

1. To know God's glory
2. To grow as a result
3. To show that glory to others

Summarize these ingredients by the following five words. Use TIM 1 to place each word in the proper box on the chart.

1. Faith
2. Virtue
3. Knowledge
4. Character
5. Service

Notice that the ingredients are not in numerical order on your chart. That is because we put them where they fit with our plan.

OUR PROCEDURE

Ask: Specifically, how do we develop each of these five major areas of your lives? (Discuss briefly before offering the following points.)

First, remember that no single organization of the church can begin to develop all five areas effectively. This limitation is why we have a Christian school, a Sunday school, and the other various elements of the church youth program. We could think that because we go to a Christian school, we don't need Sunday school or the church youth program. Therefore, the youth programs of many local churches find that their "worst" teens are often the Christian school kids!

Ask: Why? (Discuss)

Because Christian school students often think that they do so much “spiritual stuff” during the week—Bible class, chapel programs, ball games, plays, and more—that they don’t need to go to the church activities.

Never forget that your first responsibility in this regard is to your local church. The school can never take the place of the church. When it tries to do so, there’s trouble. God instituted the church, not the school. The school is merely one part of the church, a tool that the church can use as a part of its overall program. To develop fully in all five areas, you need to be involved in not only the school but also Sunday school and the various activities of your church youth program.

Bible Classes

Our Bible classes are very important to your spiritual development. Their primary function is to teach you knowledge—specifically, a biblically-sound knowledge of God. In addition, they should also develop your character and encourage discipline.

Chapel

A primary aim of a school chapel program is to encourage faith, although chapel messages also aim at one or more of the other areas of your spiritual development. As long as we know that we have unsaved students in our school, one of our main purposes of chapel is to preach the simple gospel and see those students get saved. The chapel messages will also encourage believers to grow in their faith.

Academics

The academic subjects that you take—including the homework assignments, outside reading projects, and tests that go with them—are designed not to just impart of knowledge, but to develop character and leadership skills. The “knowledge” that we have listed on our charts is Bible knowledge. Our Bible class takes care of that area. The other academic subjects are designed to not only teach facts, but also encourage you to discipline yourself—both in how you think and how you choose your priorities in work or play.

We can forget that the purpose of education is not just to cram your heads with facts that you’ll just forget in a few months. You might not remember everything you learn in class, but the effort you put forth to learn the facts, the time spent in using your mind, and the discipline you exercise in denying yourself fun so that you can study will pay lasting dividends in your life.

Naturally, other academic subjects will give you skills that you can use to serve the Lord. Those of you who will become preachers will need to develop skills in grammar and speech. You’ll need to know history as an important background for good preaching. In addition to being grounded in the Word and close to the Lord, you’ll need to be able to relate to others, to minister to them from the pulpit and face to face.

Those who will become missionaries will likely need to excel in a foreign language. Although the language that you take here might not be appropriate to the specific area to which God will send you as a missionary, learning any foreign language will give you the basics needed to pick up another language quickly.

Some of you will become Christian teachers. As such, you will need to know the subjects you’ll be teaching. But you never know exactly what the Lord will have you teach. It might very well be your least favorite subject right now.

Some of you will become Christian doctors, nurses, or perhaps medical missionaries. For you, the sciences—especially mathematics, biology, and chemistry—are important.

And others will become Christian business people. Economics, math, computer skills, and business ethics will be important tools for your area of service.

Regardless of what you will become later in life, you must be disciplined, intelligent, and dedicated. You must learn how to learn. So give your very best, work hard, and concentrate on making good grades in every subject. Those of you who loaf—who just try to get by with minimal effort—will come up short when you get into the job market. Even Christian organizations don't want lazy, dull, uninformed people. Preachers, missionaries, school teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, and business people must be sharp, intelligent, disciplined, well-informed individuals if they are to make an impact on this world for Christ.

Scripture Memory

We expect you to memorize Scripture because doing so helps develop virtue—moral excellence. The Word reveals God to us, and as we see Him, we become more like Him. The sheer discipline required to memorize the Word is a character builder, but the verses that you memorize will help you immeasurably in many circumstances for years to come.

Extracurricular

Our sports program and other extracurricular activities are also designed to develop your character and leadership abilities. Sports offer a venue for showing how God is working in your life, and extracurricular activities provide opportunities to serve classmates and the community.

However, we must keep in mind that participating in these activities will not automatically develop your character or service for the Lord. You must make character and service your goal as you participate in them. If winning is your goal in sports, you will not develop character. You can see proof of this fact in the lives of many professional athletes who have no character at all. Increasingly, professional athletes reveal themselves as poor role models, dabbling in drug use or other unethical and criminal behavior.

Ask: Did sports develop their character?

No.

Ask: Why not?

Because participation alone doesn't develop character. Character must be the goal of sports. The players must work toward the goal of becoming the right kind of person through sports, not trying to gain elusive prestige or wealth. We cannot say that sports and extracurricular activities develop character and service. We can say only that they can—if rightly used—develop a Christian student in these areas.

Other Opportunities

The Sunday school, church youth program, and church music program also play major roles in each of these five areas. The church youth program is especially effective in the areas of faith, virtue, and service. The youth program excels in these three areas. Thus, you need to be involved in a good, dynamic, and evangelistic youth program that will teach you how to develop a loving, living relationship with the Lord.

Virtue has to do with your personal love for and separation to the Lord. In this area the youth program excels. It is designed to help you grow to love the Lord through daily devotions, meditation in the Word,

Christian service opportunities, etc. Unless you develop virtue through your youth program, your Christian school Bible class—with its emphasis on knowledge—will have little effect. Knowledge must be based on virtue (2 Pet. 1:5–7). Therefore, to be what we ought to be, we must throw ourselves wholeheartedly into both our Christian school and our church youth program.

TWO FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In conclusion, we must remember two points in everything we do this year.

We do everything with a definite purpose: to know God and ensure your maturity into Christian adulthood.

We don't play ball just to play ball. We don't have a Bible study just because "everybody ought to study the Bible." A more specific reason exists for our activities.

Ask: Why do we have Bible study, tests, chapel, academic demands, etc.?

So that you will develop your knowledge of God's glory, your growth in Christ, and your desire to share all this with others.

Ask: And why should you develop in these three areas?

Because there is no other way, apart from these three ingredients, that you can ever become a mature, five-star Christian leader.

Ask: And why should you become a five-star youth?

Because that's what God has commanded you to become (Eph. 4:11–13).

Our school rules are for this purpose. We are trying to discipline you to grow into the men and women that God created you to be.

When we challenge you by making the program hard on you, we do so for this purpose. Remember—soft pillows don't make strong soldiers! If we made the program easy for you, we'd be cheating you out of becoming the strong leaders God wants you to be. The lives of all great leaders seem to have one thing in common—they learned how to discipline their lives through rigorous, exacting regimes.

So our program will be characterized by work, not play. If you'll seek God's strength through it all, His grace will develop you into a godly man or woman.

As happens in a chain reaction, if you refuse to discipline yourself this year by the rigors of studying, your Bible knowledge will be affected, which will, in turn, affect your development as a five-star youth—which will keep you from ever being the mature Christian youth that God wants you to become. You cannot omit any of the methods at the bottom of the chart without its affecting what you will eventually become at the top of the chart.

NOTE: Remind the students that they must be able to reproduce the five-star chart for the test, as well as understand how each method affects each of the five points of the program and the ingredients in the "plan."

LESSON ONE

THE PURPOSE OF A GOD-FOCUSED SCHOOL

Leadership—it's something almost anyone can recognize, but few can define. What makes a leader? How can a leader be successful? What is the source of greatness?

Across history, the famous leaders seem like a diverse bunch. Moses, a meek shepherd with a speech impediment, stood as a striking contrast to Pharaoh. Alexander the Great was certainly not the same as Darius III. Richard the Lionhearted could hardly be compared to Saladin. Grant was no Lee, and Churchill no Hitler. Margaret Thatcher led very differently than Mikhail Gorbachev.

And don't forget religious leaders, educators, or businesspeople. No two preachers are the same, and no two teachers teach alike. Businesses are as diverse as the people that lead them. After all, every organization reflects its leadership.

But what do all of these people have in common? Whether they lead in war or in peace, in politics or in faith, each of these succeed to the extent that they are able to lead themselves as well as others. They exercise self-control—some better than others—and pull their followers toward a higher goal, using inspiration, intimidation, or a mixture of the two.

A great leader, therefore, is one who can control himself and motivate others. But a godly leader is one whose goals and methods reflect the goodness of God.

History is filled with leaders whose methods were not as pure as their goals. Franklin Delano Roosevelt wanted to protect the free world during World War II, yet he manipulated the press, suspended *habeas corpus*, and forcibly interned over 100,000 Americans of Japanese descent. Mao Zedong, who hoped to feed millions of rural Chinese in the 1960s, launched a Communistic farm program that resulted in the starvation and death of tens of millions.

So if we are to be Christian leaders, how can we ensure that our goals and methods are pure? Our first step should be to know God—to see His character and stand in awe of His work. We should then grow in the knowledge God, allowing His grace to form us

into the people we should be. Finally, His work in our lives should inspire us to share Him with others, encouraging and leading them to seek God's grace as well.

Anyone who wishes to lead must first learn to follow and serve—Christ first, and earthly authorities second. Anyone can demand others to follow, but if you wish to *command* a following, you must first establish a record of faithful service. Christ told His disciples that the “least” among them would be the greatest (Luke 9:48), and He backed up His teaching with an unmatched commitment to service and sacrifice.

But we should not pursue leadership lightly. Only time and experience can show us the responsibilities and weight of leading others. Tough decisions that balance rights and duties, freedom and security, grace and justice—all of these will weigh heavily on anyone who takes such issues seriously. It's no wonder that Paul commands us to pray for those in positions of authority (1 Tim. 2:1–4).

Unlike the majority of leaders throughout history, however, we need not lead alone. When or if we are ever chosen to assume a position of leadership, we can look to God's grace to control our desires, overcome our failures, and deny sin—to be an example that others would want to follow. Only when we follow God can we ever expect others to follow us (1 Cor. 11:1). When we give ourselves totally over to His leading, sensitive to His correction and filled with His grace, we can trust Him to use us for His glory.

There's no need to fear leadership. We shouldn't avoid responsibility when it is clear that God calls us to lead. But preparation is essential, and that's where your school comes in.

As students in a Christian school, you have a great honor and privilege. Here is an opportunity to receive an above-average education—a *Christian* education—which will prepare you to be a follower and a leader. But with this blessing comes responsibility, because one day you will be called to use the tools you've been given here (Luke 12:48).

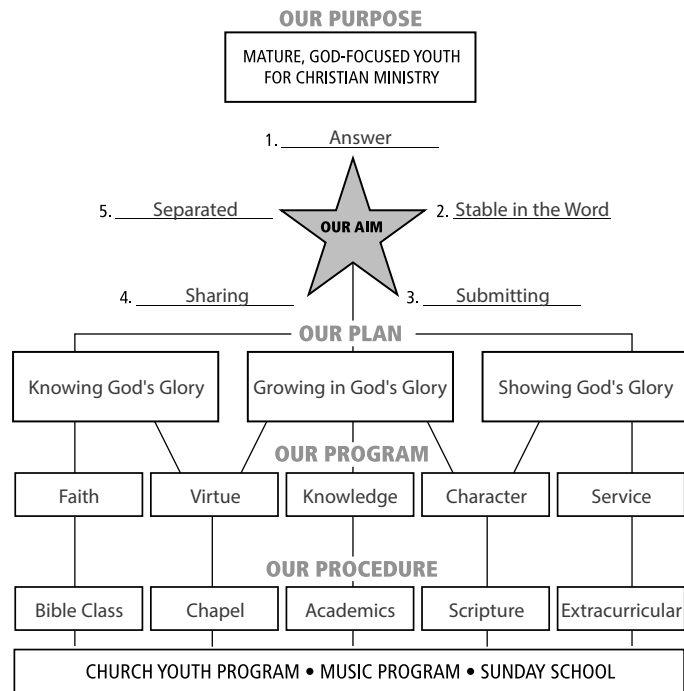
To develop these tools, your Bible studies this year will focus on the principles of godly leadership. The first chapters will establish the foundations of spiritual leadership, as well as the attitudes that must be present in an effective leader. You will then read J. Oswald Sanders' *Spiritual Leadership*, which will define a godly leader's character, qualities, and responsibilities. Finally, you will study two examples of effective spiritual leadership: Nehemiah and Joshua.

A final word to those who do not believe God would ever use them in a position of leadership—this study can profit you too. Even if the principles here do not inspire you to pursue leadership now or in the future, these lessons will apply to every area of per-

sonal or professional responsibility in your life. You will also learn to identify what kind of people are true spiritual leaders—an important skill now more than ever.

As you work through this study, ask God to help you see His example of leadership throughout Scripture, especially in the person of Christ. Only by knowing Him and following His leading can we become the leaders He wants us to be.

Notes from the Teacher’s Lesson



Stepping Toward Effective Leadership

- Read a biography of a great leader from the Recommended Reading List—or any other biography that your teacher approves. As you read, list the qualities that made this person an effective leader.
- Explain the following statement as it relates to Christian leadership: “Only those who live under authority are fit to wield authority” (Larry Christenson, *The Christian Family*). How does this statement apply to the family? The Christian school? The church? Your ministry? Your vocation?
- In light of the teacher’s lesson for this chapter, what steps do you need to take to ensure that you are helping your school achieve its goal of preparing spiritually mature young people for Christian service?
- Using the ideals presented in the teacher’s lesson, assess your schools’ effectiveness in preparing spiritually mature Christian servants in each of the following areas: chapel, Bible classes, Scripture memory requirements, sports/extracurricular activities, and academic demands and expectations. Specifically, identify any weaknesses. For every weakness you identify, list steps that can be taken for improvement. Be prepared to defend your assessment and your suggestions for improvement.
- In light of the teacher’s lesson for this chapter, what steps do you need to take to ensure that you are helping your school achieve its goal of preparing spiritually mature young people for Christian service?
- Using the ideals presented in the teacher’s lesson, assess your schools’ effectiveness in achieving the goal of preparing spiritually mature Christian servants in each of the following areas: chapel, Bible classes, Scripture memory requirements, sports/extracurricular activities, and academic demands and expectations. Specifically, identify any weaknesses, but for every weakness you identify list steps that can be taken for improvement. Be prepared to defend every aspect of your assessment, as well as your suggestions for improvement.

LESSON 2

GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

1. To state and demonstrate by biblical examples the truth that all things work together for the good of God's children
2. To clarify that because this point is true, for one to complain or gripe about his or her circumstances is sin
3. To encourage the students to see God's hand at work in all things for their good and God's glory

The student lesson emphasizes the following four principles from Romans 8:28:

1. All things work together *for good*
2. All things *work*
3. *All things* work together
4. All things work *together* for good (i.e., circumstances blend together and harmonize to make our life a symphony for God's glory)

GOD BRINGS GOOD FROM EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE

We see this truth proven in the lives of countless people, including the following examples.

William Carey On March 12, 1812, a huge fire broke out in a print shop in Serampore, India, destroying years of translation work by William Carey, Mr. Ward, and Mr. Marshman. In a matter of minutes, hundreds of pounds of paper burned; Chinese metal type melted; and portions of manuscripts, dictionaries, and grammar that the men had compiled laboriously went up in smoke. Included in the loss was Carey's lifelong work on a dictionary on Sanskrit.

Ask: What would have been your reaction to such a loss?

Carey later wrote, "Nothing was saved but the presses. This is a heavy blow, as it will stop our printing the Scriptures for a long time. Twelve months hard labor will not reinstate us; not to mention the loss of property which we shall scarcely ever surmount. . . . God will no doubt bring good out of this evil and make it promote our interest."

Marshman wrote that "it stilled me into tranquil submission, enabling me to look up and welcome God's will."

And Ward, while the fire still smoldered, was seen to be not only submissive but also actually jubilant!

Ask: How could these men react so?

They believed Romans 8:28.

Ask: What good came of Carey's experience?

News of the fire awoke the British Christians. In the blaze of the fire, they saw the grandeur of the work, and the money that poured in more than offset the loss. In addition, more men were called to the mission field, and the work of Christ was multiplied.

Joseph

Notice the following five things in the life of Joseph that God used for good.

1. His brothers hated him.

When he was a youth, Joseph's brothers hated him and left him alone (Gen. 37:4).

2. They sold him to the Ishmaelites.

Later, they stripped him of his clothes and threw him into a pit, planning to let him die there, and then they sold him to travelers from another country (Gen. 37:18–28).

3. They sold him as a slave.

Then the travelers (the Ishmaelites) sold him as a slave to an Egyptian (Gen. 39:1).

4. Potiphar's wife falsely accused him.

In Egypt, Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of sexual assault. (Gen. 39:7–18).

5. He was cast into prison.

As a result of Potiphar's wife's accusation, Joseph was cast into prison and forgotten for two years (Gen. 39:7–15, 20).

Ask: What good came of all this?

While Joseph was in prison, he began interpreting dreams, including that of Pharaoh, who later released him. He was given a job and rose to a prominent position as a minister of agriculture. Because of Joseph's foresight, Egypt had plenty of food during a seven-year famine whereas the surrounding nations languished in poverty. The famine brought Joseph's family to Egypt for food, where they were reunited and grew into a large nation under Egyptian protection and provision. Joseph summarized the outcome and purpose of his lifelong circumstances in Genesis 50:20. (Read this verse aloud and note how God used these evil intentions for good.)

The Israelites

God allowed the Pharaohs to enslave Joseph's descendants.

Ask: Why?

He allowed it to toughen their hands, feet, backs, and willpower for the rugged years that they were to spend in the Wilderness.

David

David spent his boyhood years tending sheep, a tough, lonely job for an energetic boy. He faced wild animals—a lion and a bear—hard work, a hot sun, and long hours of weary walking and even boredom.

He might have been tempted to gripe about the job. He might have wondered why he had such a lackluster job when his brothers had more desirable responsibilities.

But Psalm 78:70–72 shows us God’s plan in David’s life. He needed a king for Israel who had a shepherd’s caring heart and who would feed and protect His people. He needed a skillful man of deep thought and great character. The years that David spent tending the sheep prepared him for just such a position.

COMPLAINING AND GRIPING ARE NOT CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

Let’s apply the Romans 8:28 principle to our own lives.

Ask: What is God seeking to make of you? (A mature Christian.)

Read Lamentations 3:27. God’s part is to put you under trying circumstances. His yoke is for your good. If you will accept His plan rather than fight against it, He will make you a strong leader.

Ask: Why do we have problems? (Discuss.)

God allows problems in our lives for the following reasons:

1. To drive us to His Word (Ps. 119:71)
2. To build character in us (Rom. 8:29)
3. To give us grace (James 4:6)

Therefore, complaining and griping have no place in a Christian’s life. Whenever we complain, we’re saying that Romans 8:28 is not true—in essence, calling God a liar. When we gripe, we’re saying that God made a mistake.

Ask: What should be our attitude in all circumstances? (Discuss.)

We find the answer to this question in Philippians 4:4, 6, 11: joy always, thankfulness in everything, and contentment in whatever state we’re in.

LESSON TWO

GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE

What is God's plan for your life?

"For *my* life?" you ask. "Well, I guess I'll go to college after I finish high school. Then, when I finish college—if I don't sign a professional basketball contract—I'll probably get a high-paying executive position with some Fortune 500 company and make a lot of money. I'll buy a big house and a Porsche—or maybe I'll get a Lamborghini! When I can afford it, I might even marry and have a couple of kids. I'll retire when I'm fifty and just sort of enjoy myself the rest of my life. I plan to live the good life!"

Oh, you will, will you? But this sounds more like *your* plan than *God's* plan. Where does God fit into that plan of yours?

"God? Oh, well...I'll go to church most of the time. And I'll read my Bible, and..."

Does this sound like you? Most people have little, if any, room for God in their plans; He's crowded out by their concerns about material wealth, professional advancement, and other selfish interests. God does sometimes enable some Christians to obtain fabulous wealth, but more often He calls His people to lives of sacrifice. God sometimes allows some Christians to attain high levels of professional success and renown, but He calls more of them to lives of relative obscurity and less-than-opulent circumstances. Sometimes He gives some Christians wealth and success only to take it from them, much as Job lost everything he had.

When things don't turn out the way we planned, when we lose a lot of what we've obtained, or when things "go against us," we're tempted to grumble and complain. Instead, we should have the attitude of Job and Paul. We should be more concerned about God's plan for our lives than with our own plans for ourselves.

During the early days of the Civil War, especially after Thomas J. Jackson earned the nickname "Stonewall" at the First Battle of Manassas, his wife, Anna, was impatient for her husband to be promoted and publicly recognized for his critical contribution to

that Southern victory. Sensing her impatience, Jackson wrote to her from his encampment, "...I am thankful to an ever kind Heavenly Father that He makes me content to await His own good time & pleasure for commendation, knowing that 'all things work together for good.' Never distrust our God, who doeth all things well. In due time, He will make manifest all His pleasure, which is all His people should ever desire."

Jackson's advice to his wife is still good advice for each of us today. With it in mind, let's consider God's plan for our lives.

STUDENT WORK

Let's focus on God's plan for the individual. Remember that our purpose as a school is to produce mature, God-focused youth. Our study this year emphasizes the following two major themes:

- Spiritual maturity
- Leadership qualities

This lesson begins our study of the first of these two topics, spiritual maturity. Included in our plan and purpose for this study is an ennobling view of:

- God
- Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit

Various lessons, beginning with this one, focus on each of these Persons of the Trinity. Our prayer is that by studying these lessons you will have a fresh appreciation of what God can and will do with your life.

To bridge the gap between the previous lesson and this lesson, state what Ephesians 4:12 says Christians are to be.

- "Perfect" or "equipped" to be able to do works of the ministry or works of service

Thus, God's plan for you includes making you mature, complete, and qualified to serve Him.

The Plan

- According to Romans 8:28, what is God's plan for every Christian? _____
to work all things together for our good _____
- According to this verse, what two things must be true before all things can work together for our good?
 1. must love God _____
 2. must be called according to His purpose _____

Thus, Paul qualifies his statement so that it is equally true that things do *not* work together for *anybody* or *everybody*, but only for those who meet those two qualifications.

- According to this verse, can tragedy be good? yes _____
Illness? yes _____ Financial loss? yes _____
Losing a ball game? yes _____.

So *everything* that happens in the life of one who loves God and who is in His will is for his “perfecting,” that is, it serves to make him what God wants him to be.

The Analysis

An examination of this verse shows us the following four things about God's plan for man.

God's Plan Is Beneficent (Kind and Good)

- All things work together for good. What does that mean—money, popularity, and success or spiritual good? spiritual good _____
- Job teaches us the proper meaning of this phrase. God allowed Satan to take all of Job's physical comforts. What was Job's response to this loss in Job 1:21? Even though God had both given and taken away things in Job's life, Job blessed the name of the Lord. _____

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- Paul explains in Romans 8:29 what he means by the word good. What is it? _____
conformed to the image of Jesus _____

So anything that makes us more like Christ is good, regardless of its effect on our comfort, health, wealth, or fame. Thus, a broken leg can be for our good. A disappointing loss in sports might be God's power seeking to mature us.

God's Plan Is Active

All things *work*.

God is always busy. Just because we don't see great things happening, we shouldn't suppose that God is asleep. The daily happenings of our schoolwork, conflicts, unjust criticism, ridicule, praise, tests, sickness, and deadlines are the threads with which God weaves our maturity.

- Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. The passing away of the old and the coming of the new indicate continuous action. These phrases can be translated literally “are passing” and “are becoming new.” So what is God doing every day in your life if you meet the two qualifications of Romans 8:28? He is making old things pass away and all things to become new; He is taking away old desires and habits and replacing them with godly desires and practices. _____

Because God is working through all of our circumstances, complaining is unthinkable! Gripping is evidence of immaturity and the inability to comprehend the good hand of God in everything. It is sin.

In the apostle Paul's day, people reacted to adverse circumstances according to one of the following four philosophies, and we see many of the same reactions today:

- Epicureans—“Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” This is the attitude of indifference.
- Cynics—“I dare you to hurt me, Fate. Nobody can beat me; no circumstance will cause me to curse you or bow my head in defeat.” This is the attitude of defiance.

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- Stoics—"I can't avoid it, so why fight it? I'll just grit my teeth and force myself to accept it." This is the attitude of resigned acceptance.
- Christians—"I will rejoice, happily embracing bad circumstances or sorrow because God is using it to work out my good and His glory." This is the attitude of joy in all things.

Which attitude do *you* have?

God's Plan Is Inclusive

All things work together.

- According to Romans 8:28, is there such a thing as chance or luck? no
Why? because God is working in all things
- Read the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3:1–30. How did their ordeal in the fiery furnace work for God's glory? Nebuchadnezzar blessed God and ordered that anyone who spoke against God be cut into pieces.
- How did it work for their good? Nebuchadnezzar recognized them as servants of the Most High God and promoted them.

God's Plan Is Harmonious

All things work *together* for good.

All of the events of life are interrelated. Like a formula, they combine and intermingle for our good. Taken separately, the individual experiences of life might seem anything but good, but, blended together, the result is always good.

- Joseph is a good example of how numerous tragedies work together for good. Note the tragedies in each of the following passages:

- Genesis 37:4— His brothers hated him; they couldn't speak to him peaceably.
- Genesis 37:18–28— His brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites.
- Genesis 39:1— The Ishmaelites sold him to Potiphar in Egypt.
- Genesis 39:7–15— Potiphar's wife falsely accused him.
- Genesis 39:20— He was thrown into prison and forgotten for two years.

It must have been hard for Joseph to see how all of these experiences could be for his good. Yet, years later, Joseph faced his brothers and maturely summarized all of the events.

- Read Genesis 50:20. What had his brothers meant to accomplish? They intended evil against Joseph.
- Instead, what had God worked through all of their evil? good
- According to Genesis 50:20, what good came from all of these circumstances? Many people's lives were saved.
- Who were these people that had been saved? the Israelites
- From what had they all been saved? famine

The Conclusion

- What is the mature reaction to brothers or sisters who seek to torment you? We should rejoice and look for God's lesson in the experience.
- Why should you not gripe when a teacher gives you a heavy homework assignment? God will use it to work on you, to help you become more mature.

- What is wrong with fussing and fretting and griping about school rules? God uses them to mold and make us into what He wants us to be. When we complain, we act as if He doesn't know what He's doing.
- How does 1 Thessalonians 5:18 apply to us in this regard? Christians should give thanks in everything, for it is God's will for them.
- Thus, everything is working according to God's will in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. 5:18).

NOTES FROM THE TEACHER'S LESSON

God's Plan for My Life

God Brings _____ Good _____ from Every Circumstance

Examples:

- William Carey
- Joseph
- His brothers _____ hated _____ him.
- They sold him to the _____ Ishmaelites _____ .
- They sold him as a _____ slave _____ .
- Potiphar's wife _____ falsely accused _____ him.
- He was cast into _____ prison _____ .
 - The Israelites
 - David

Complaining and _____ Griping _____ are not Christian _____ Virtues _____

STEPPING TOWARD EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

- Write a two-page paper describing a first-hand experience that at first seemed tragic but later proved that God was working even that incident together for good in your own or your family's life.
- Explain how Paul's own life experiences demonstrated the truth of his statement that all things work together for good.
- Explain the role that the character trait of patience plays in our practical realization that all things work together for good.
- If you're a football fan, read Dennis Byrd's book *Rise & Walk*. Explain briefly what happened to him and how his experience illustrates the truth of the lesson in this chapter.
- If you're a baseball fan, read Dave Dravecky's books *Comeback* and *When You Can't Come Back*. Explain briefly what happened to him and how his experience illustrates the truth of the lesson in this chapter.

LESSON 3

THE GOD I SERVE

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

1. To reveal God for who He is
2. To share biblical examples of how people reacted to the revelation of who God is
3. To encourage the students to see God for who He is and to have a reverential fear of and awe for Him that results in a desire to obey and serve Him

A well-known Bible teacher tells of a soul-shaking experience. During a blessed time of devotions, he was so full of the Holy Spirit that he found himself calling out for God to allow him to see His face. As he told God how wonderful it would be if only he could see Him, he suddenly heard soft, slow steps coming down the hallway. He wondered if perhaps God was answering his prayer and was going to allow him a view of His face!

As the steps came closer, he felt a lump in his throat, and then he began to tremble as he thought of the prospect of coming face to face with God Himself. At last, as the footsteps entered his room, he fell on his face and cried, “No, God! No! I don’t want to see You! I can’t look upon You!”

Then his wife touched his shoulder; her footsteps had been what he had heard.

Ask: When we ask God for a vision of His greatness and power, what are we expecting? A streak of lightning? A tingling sensation? A blast of air and an earth-shaking roll of thunder? A feeling of floating in the air or some other ecstatic sensation?

A study of the men in the Bible who had a vision of God shows quite the opposite. Each vision left the viewer in awe, abhorring himself, and sobered by a new sense of responsibility.

THE NEED FOR A VISION OF GOD

Exodus 33:11–23; 34:5–8, 28–35 record a fantastic event in history—a human being who was in close proximity to the very presence and bodily person of Almighty God. (Read the passages aloud to the students.)

Ask: Why did Moses want and need this vision of God?

If Moses was to serve God, he needed to know the following three things.

1. God’s Thoughts and Actions

In Exodus 33:13, Moses prays to God and asks Him to reveal how He thought and acted. Just as an ambassador can ill-represent his country if he doesn’t know how his country acts or how his president thinks, so Moses needed to know about God. In essence, he was asking, “How do you think, Lord?”

2. God’s Character

Moses made this request because he wished to know God—to know His character. He wondered, “Are you a God of love? Are you strong or weak? Are you merciful, or like the gods of other nations?” He realized that the better he knew God, the better he could serve God’s wishes.

3. God’s Goodness and Glory

Moses also needed to know God’s goodness and glory (33:18–19). The more one sees of the goodness and glory of God, the more he is willing to serve Him. Thus, Moses needed to know if God would provide for him, if he would protect him, and if He would stand by him.

Even as Moses needed a vision of a glorious, holy God, so we need a vision of our Lord if we are to be effective leaders in His service.

THE FORM OF THE VISION

In the Old Testament

Hebrews 1:1 tells us that God revealed Himself in many ways in Old Testament times. He appeared in the following ways:

- In person to Moses (and others, too)
- By inspiration to the prophets
- Through dreams and interpretations (Daniel)
- In a whirlwind (Job 38:1)
- In a still, small voice (Elijah, 1 Kings 19:12)
- In a burning bush (Moses)
- Through a donkey (Balaam’s donkey, Num. 22:30)

In the New Testament

In New Testament times, God spoke through His Son, Jesus Christ. Read John’s testimony of this fact in John 1:14, 18.

In the Church Age

Today, in what we call the Church Age, God speaks through His Word (1 Cor. 13:9–12). Some people interpret the thing that’s “perfect” or “complete” in verse 10 as referring to Jesus Christ. However, one can argue strongly that it refers to the complete revelation of the Word of God. For one thing, the operative nouns in this verse are in the neuter gender—not masculine. If this referred to Christ, the masculine gender would be required.

If the Word of God interpretation is correct, then verse 12 states that when the Word is complete, we can see the Lord face to face. This view parallels Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 3:18. Later, 2 Corinthians 4:6 states that God has shined in our hearts the knowledge of the glory of God, as revealed through Jesus Christ.

J. Oswald Sanders wrote, “On the canvas of holy Scriptures, with master strokes and in vivid colors the Holy Spirit has painted the face of Jesus Christ, image of the invisible God.” This same Spirit delights to illumine the canvas to all who long to see God’s glory. If we would have our spirits lifted, our spiritual temperatures heated, our minds sobered, and our bodies surrendered, we must get a fresh, full vision of our mighty God in His Word.

THE EFFECT OF THE VISION

Moses Worshipped

When Moses saw God, he bowed his head and worshipped (Exo. 34:8). In spite of all of his learning and training in Egypt, he was struck by God’s power and glory. He spoke boldly before Pharaohs in Egypt, but he trembled and bowed before a mighty God.

His countenance was also changed. Exodus 34:29–35 describes the shining face of Moses after forty days with the Lord. The very glory of God had left its impact on Moses’ countenance! Godliness shows in one’s face. Neither can godliness be hidden; it shows. You can’t fake it, and you can’t hide it. When you’ve been with God, your appearance will be changed.

Isaiah Cried “Woe Is Me!”

When Isaiah saw God, he immediately cried, “Woe is me!” (Isa. 6:1–8). He saw his sin and utter unworthiness to face God. Then he became willing to serve. He surrendered his life in verse 8. He was so smitten by God that he would do anything God wanted.

Ask: Have you been so smitten that you were willing to surrender to do whatever God demanded of you?

Joshua Served

Joshua’s first reaction was to fall on his face and worship (Josh. 5:13–15). His second reaction, like Isaiah’s, was a submissiveness to serve the Lord.

Thus, we see that in each episode in the Word the pattern is the same: first, the vision, then self-abhorrence followed by self-abasement, worship, surrender, service, and a changed life.

THE AWESOMENESS OF THE VISION

Ask: What did each of these men see about God that struck them with such awe?

Goodness and Glory of God

Moses was impressed with the goodness and the glory of God (Exo. 33:18–19). God is a glistening, brilliant light. He is so bright that He told Moses that a man could not look upon His face and live. Imagine that! The Scriptures abound with references to His glory. (Read as examples Psalm 104:1–2; Daniel 10:6–9; Habakkuk 3:3–4; 1 Timothy 6:15–16.)

Holiness of God

The holiness of God bowed Isaiah to the ground. He realized that he was in the presence of One so holy that his very lips felt dirty. God is so pure that all who see Him have the same self-abhorring experience.

Authority and Power of God

Joshua was awed by the authority and power of God. Joshua, who was a great soldier and general, felt like a worm beside the Captain of the Lord's Host.

Thus, we should never be ashamed of our Lord! There is a dignity and glory in serving Him that far exceeds that of any earthly king, queen, president, or prime minister.

LESSON THREE

THE GOD I SERVE

Unbelievers and shallow Christians have a distorted, perverted idea of who God is. Popular references to God as “the Big Guy,” “the Man upstairs,” and “my Heavenly Buddy” are certainly not derived from Scripture. A study of every Bible character who saw God gives a much different impression.

The ancient Jews had such a reverential awe of God and His Word that after they wrote His name as they copied the Scriptures they were not allowed to continue using that quill; they had to get a new quill. Imagine their writing verses that contained multiple uses of God’s name. They kept quill manufacturers busy supplying writing utensils!

For God to use a man or a woman, especially in a leadership role, He first causes that person to see Him for who—and what—He really is, and this revelation revolutionizes the person’s service. An effective Christian leader who experiences such a revelation of God will not be proud or self-seeking; he will seek only to please God. He will be less likely to fall into sin because he knows and recognizes the holiness of God and his personal responsibility to Him.

But neither will he be helpless and inactive. Rather, he will serve the Lord with power, enthusiasm, animation, and confidence regardless of what obstacles or problems might come his way—because he knows that he serves the Almighty God. He knows that he is on the winning side.

As we continue our study of the foundational principles of spiritual leadership, let’s look at the God we serve, see how some major Bible characters reacted to God’s revelation of Himself, and glean from their experiences lessons that will help us become effective leaders for Christ.

STUDENT WORK

The great leaders of the Bible had one thing in common—they had experienced a soul-stirring vision of an infinite, awesome God. They were never the same again.

The purpose of this lesson and the following four lessons is to give you just such a vision of God. Nothing is so important to one’s attitude and service as his or her view of God. But beware! Instead of an exalting, exhilarating, ecstatic experience, such a view of God might thrust your face and soul to the ground with feelings of insignificance and unworthiness.

- According to Zechariah 3:3, how did the clothes of Joshua—not Joshua the General, but Joshua the High Priest—appear when he stood before a holy God? They looked filthy.

The dazzling white of God’s holiness made everything else appear faded and yellow. Joshua, dressed in this fashion, would be totally unworthy to serve as the high priest. Therefore, a view of God might cause one to see how sinful and unworthy he or she really is before the holy God.

Job

- How did Job see himself before he saw God (Job 33:9)? He saw himself as clean, pure, innocent, and free from sin.
- According to Job 1:8, how did God see Job? God saw Job as His servant. He said there was none like him on earth. Job was blameless and upright, a man who feared God.
- Few men have ever been so highly praised by God. But when he got a correct view of God, what was Job’s reaction (Job 42:5–6)? He detested himself and repented in dust and ashes.

Jacob

- Jacob saw God at Peniel. According to Genesis 32:24, 30, what surprised him? He was surprised that he had seen God face to face and lived.
- Jacob's view of God forced him to face his own character and admit what he wanted to hide—that he was a deceiver like his name indicated. What did the Lord ask him in Genesis 32:27? He asked Jacob what his name was. (i.e. What did his name say about his character?)
- The name Jacob means “deceiver, supplanter, cheat, or swindler.” According to Genesis 27:1–12, how had Jacob cheated and swindled his brother Esau? He stole Esau's birthright and tricked him out of the blessing.

Jacob did not want to admit that he was what his name said he was. But God would not use him or bless him until he faced his true character and admitted his secret sin. Note that after Jacob wrestled with God, the Lord changed his name from Jacob to *Israel*.

Moses

- Moses grew up in the Egyptian palace and faced kings and queens regularly as the virtual son of pharaoh's daughter. They apparently did not scare him. But in Exodus 3:2, 6, he faced God. What was his reaction? He hid his face and was afraid to look on God.

Elijah

- Elijah was undoubtedly one of the greatest and most unusual characters in history. He had such power that he could stop the rain, kill thousands of prophets of Baal, call down fire from heaven, defy a wicked king time after time, and go up to meet God in a chariot of fire. But in what form did God appear to him in 1 Kings 19:11–13? He came in the form of a still, small voice.

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- What was brave Elijah's reaction? He wrapped his face in his mantle and stood at the entrance of the cave.

This fiery man was subdued by a tiny voice.

Isaiah

- Isaiah was not afraid to thunder forth God's warnings, woes, and judgments on king and people alike. What word did he use repeatedly as he warned the nation of Israel (Isa. 3:9, 11; 5:8, 11, 20)? woe
- But when he was face to face with God in Isaiah 6:1–8, on whom did he pronounce woe? himself
- How did his lips seem to him when he was in the presence of a holy God? unclean
- What was he immediately ready to do? to serve the Lord, to be sent wherever God wanted him to go

Ezekiel

- According to Ezekiel 1:1, what did Ezekiel see? a vision of God

Describe the scene as Ezekiel tells us that he saw it in Ezekiel 1:26–28:

- Above the firmament or sky— the likeness of a throne
- The throne itself— like a sapphire stone; above it was the likeness of a man
- The color surrounding the throne— amber (like fire)
- The glory of the Lord as it appeared in verse 28— like the rainbow in the clouds after it rains, bright
- How Ezekiel reacted to all this— fell on his face, heard the voice of God

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Daniel

- Daniel seemed to be a faultless man. Even his enemies could find no wrong in him, except perhaps that he prayed too much. An angel was even sent to tell him how much God loved him. But what happened to Daniel when he caught a glimpse of God in Daniel 10:7–9? Daniel lost all of his strength as he heard the voice of God. It was as if he was in a deep sleep with his face to the ground.

Paul

- According to Acts 9:3–8, what did Paul—called Saul at the time—do when he heard God and saw His glory? Paul fell to the ground, blinded by the brightness of God's glory.

John

No one seemed as close to Jesus as John the Apostle. He leaned on Him at supper and followed Him every day of His ministry. Of all the disciples, only he followed Jesus to the Cross. Years later, as an old man in exile on the Isle of Patmos, John received a supreme view of Christ in all of His glory.

- Read Revelation 1:13–17 and describe John's vision.
 - His head— hair white like wool
 - His eyes— like a flame of fire
 - His voice— like the sound of many waters
 - His face— as the sun shines in its strength
 - His feet— like brass/bronze burning in a furnace
 - John's reaction to seeing his Lord in His glorified state— John fell down before the Lord like a dead man.

The Purpose of the Vision

God's purpose in revealing Himself to these men was not to humiliate them but to prepare them for greater usefulness. Humiliation merely prepared the way for blessing and service.

- Job received double what he had lost
- Jacob's character was changed
- Moses lost his *self*-confidence but gained *God*-confidence
- Elijah was reminded of the source of his real power
- Isaiah's lips were prepared for prophesying for God, and he remained humble
- Daniel was prepared to receive a great prophecy
- Paul was chosen and called to preach the gospel to the Mediterranean world, and that gospel eventually spread around the globe
- John was prepared to write the book of Revelation

Conclusion

God has a job for *you!* But before you can begin to perform that job, you must have a vision of God through the Word of God. He's not going to reveal Himself to you through a dream or miraculous appearance. But do you *want* to see Him? Are you prepared for the consequences? When God grants such a view of Himself, it will shake your soul and sober your mind. You will never be the same again. The pattern in these visions of God was always the same:

- The vision
- Self-abhorrence—a hatred or despising of oneself
- Self-abasement—casting oneself down and humbling oneself
- Worship—deep, soul-stirring worship
- Surrender—a deep sense of obligation and a willingness to serve God
- Service—with no regard for one's own welfare, but only to please God
- A changed life

Are you ready for such a vision of God?

NOTES FROM THE TEACHER'S LESSON

The God I Serve

The _____ Need _____ for a Vision of God

- We must know God's thoughts and actions
- We must know God's character
- We must know God's goodness and glory

The _____ Form _____ of the Vision

In the Old Testament (Heb. 1:1)

- In person to Moses (and others)
- By inspiration to the prophets
- Through dreams and interpretations
- In a whirlwind
- In a still, small voice
- In a burning bush
- Through a donkey

In the New Testament through Christ

In the Church Age through His Word

The _____ Effect _____ of the Vision

- Moses worshipped
- Isaiah cried "Woe is me!"
- Joshua served

The pattern was the same: vision, self-abhorrence self-abasement, worship, surrender, service, and a changed life.

The _____ Awesomeness _____ of the Vision

- Goodness and _____ glory _____ of God
- _____ Holiness _____ of God
- Authority and _____ power _____ of God

STEPPING TOWARD EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

- Why is humility before God so important in the life of a Christian leader? How does a clear picture of who God is contribute to a humble spirit and attitude?
- Produce three comic strips portraying the following three attitudes: lack of self-confidence, proud egotism, and true godly humility.
- Define a proper Christian self-image. Use Scripture proofs for your definition and the book, *The Biblical View of Self-Esteem, Self-Love, & Self-Image*. Check the Recommended Reading List for bibliographic details.
- Explain how an accurate understanding of who God is can keep a Christian leader from sin and help him continue serving with the proper motives.
- On a sheet of paper make two columns headed with the titles "Truth About God" and "Truth About Myself." Under each heading, list at least 10 verses that help you develop the proper Christian view of both God and yourself.