

LT2

LT2

VINEYARD COLUMBUS
LEADER TRAINING 2
STUDENT MANUAL

LT2

MODULE 1

THE HEART OF A LEADER: CHARACTER

Introduction

Character influences _____ we say and do.

King Saul did not have a failure of _____ but of _____.

(The story of King Saul is found in 1 Samuel 9-15.)

King David is selected above others because “the Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but God looks at the _____.”

(The story of King David is found in 1 Samuel 16-1 Kings 2.)

The qualifications for elders and deacons (leaders in the church) in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 deal almost exclusively with character.

Broad Inventory

What makes you feel vulnerable?

What are you most proud of?

What are your self-defense mechanisms?

Pause the video and take 15-20 minutes to complete the inventory using the Exercise Sheet on the following page.

Outline

1. Observing our character with others: Paying _____ in everyday life.

- A. In the privacy of _____ (It's worth paying attention to what the people who know us best say about us and reflect back to us about ourselves.)
- B. In our _____ environment (What would our work colleagues say about us if they were asked?)
- C. When we are under _____ or in a _____ (What do you see in yourself when you don't get your way, something goes wrong, someone hurts you, or someone lets you down?)

2. Observing our character by our practices: What should we be looking for?

- A. By the _____ ("The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.")
- B. By the things we _____ (Growing in character means that we learn to increasingly monitor the various doorways to our hearts.)
- C. By how we use our _____ (We often tend to underestimate how closely our inner lives—our hearts—are linked to what we do with our bodies.)
- D. By the state of our _____ (Harmonious relationships where we are good listeners, willing to give up our "rights," and love others well should be our goal.)
- E. By what we do when we sin (Do we repent? Do we resist? Do we give up?)

Continue to exercise sheet.

MODULE 1

EXERCISE SHEET

Step 1

(Exercise to be done during the video at a specified time.)

Pause the video at the appropriate time and engage this exercise. This should take between 15-20 minutes. Having a journal to write in may be helpful.

“First, ask God to help you see what makes you feel most vulnerable and most like running for cover. It may be conflict. Or perhaps it is failure, pain, emotional upset or loss of face. Allow yourself to feel the distress that would be present if you did not avoid these things. Then, listening to God’s invitation to come out of the bushes in which you are hiding, step out and allow God to embrace you just as you are.

Second, prayerfully reflect on the image of yourself to which you are most attached. Consider how you like to think about yourself and what you are most proud of about yourself. Ask God to help you see the ways you use these things to defend against feelings of vulnerability. And then ask God to prepare you to trust enough to let go of these fig leaves of your personal style.”

(Taken from *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery* David G. Benner InterVarsity Press, 2009 P.89.)

Step 2

(Do at a time of your choosing.)

On a regular basis, visit the passages in scripture given on the next page to evaluate what area of character God is reshaping or desires to reshape in your heart. Pick ONE passage at a time and sit quietly with the Lord before you begin. The use of a journal is encouraged so that you may later see the progress God is making in your life!

Revisit this sheet again (at another date) and choose a different passage than the previous time. Each passage is a great option for heart-change and character formation.

Step 3

(This is a daily review exercise to do with God.)

To help stay in tune with our thoughts, feelings, and actions over any given day, take a short period of time to reflect with God. Ask God to lead and guide you as you think back over the course of your day. Pick a regular time that you do this to aid in creating this habit. This exercise should only take about ten minutes.

Review your actions, conversations, thoughts, and feelings from the past 24 hours. Be mindful of any areas God may be highlighting. If you need to be reconciled to God for any actions or thoughts, simply admit that you were wrong, ask God for forgiveness, and thank Him for His love. If you need to be reconciled to another person, then take time to repent, apologize, and be reconciled with him/her as soon as you are able.

God will use this to shape your heart more and more as you practice it!

Option 1

Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

⁹ Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.

¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.

¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

¹⁸ May it please you to prosper Zion, to build up the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Questions:

1. Verse 3 says, "I know my transgressions." Ask the Lord to bring to mind the sins you have committed and the things the Lord has asked you to do that you've avoided. What are these things? Ask the Lord to clean these areas of your heart. (Verse 7)
2. In what ways has God's unfailing love sustained you through challenging times? (Verse 1)
3. What comes to mind when you read this: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation"? What does that look like? (Verse 12)
4. What can you praise God for right now? (Verse 15)

Option 2

1 Timothy 3:1-12

¹ Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

⁸ In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

¹¹ In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

¹² A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.

Questions:

1. The descriptions above are particularly given to elders (Verse 1) and deacons (Verse 8) in the church. However, the pursuit of what is "noble" (Verse 1) should be a goal for all believers. Looking at verses 1 and 2, is there anything that God may be highlighting as an area of weakness? Ask the Lord to reveal where you have fallen short on these character traits. Ask the Lord to show you where you have grown in these areas.
2. Verse 9 speaks about having a clear conscience. Is your conscience heavy regarding any thought patterns or actions you've taken?
3. Have you been trustworthy, worthy of respect, and avoided malicious talk? (Verse 11)

Option 3

Galatians 5:16–25

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever[a] you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Questions:

1. Ask the Lord to lead you by His spirit during your time with Him. (Verse 18) Spend time thanking the Lord for His sacrifice that enables us to live by and keep in step with His spirit. What tangible steps have you made recently to follow the Spirit? (Verse 25)
2. Have you fallen in the areas of sexual immorality, impurity, self-centeredness, hatred, jealousy, angry speech, ambition, or stirring trouble? (Verses 19–20) Spend time with the Lord regarding any of these things. Ask for God's forgiveness and to cleanse you of these things. If you recognize a pattern of sin in any of these areas, share it with your accountability partner for support.
3. Where have you been joyous? Where have you been peaceful? Where have you suffered without complaining? Where have you shown kindness? Where have you shown goodness and faithfulness? (Verses 22–23)
4. Where do you want the Lord help you in the area of self-control? (Verse 24)
5. What will it look like for you to “walk by the Spirit” this week at home, at work, with family, and as a leader? (Verse 16) Share this with your accountability partner, a close friend, or your spouse.

MODULE 2

STUDYING THE BIBLE

Introduction

The Bible is more like an ancient _____, than it is a single book.

We approach the Bible with _____, _____, and by looking at the _____.

Where do we begin in our pursuit of studying and understanding the Bible?

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5).

We start with Jesus!

Outline

1. The heart of studying the Bible

- A. We stay closely _____.
- B. “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). (Additional helpful verses: 1 Corinthians 1:21-24; 2 Corinthians 2:15, 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; Romans 8:7)
- C. Our goal is not acquiring lots of information, but it is more about our _____ as a person.

2. The practice of studying the Bible

- A. Always consider the _____! Families, people groups, cities, nations, regions, and time of composition all provide context. Otherwise, we will miss what was intended for the original audience and how it applies to us!
- B. _____ is the best place to learn. The community of our local church body, our small groups, and the community of believers who have poured over this book for the last 2,000 years will all help us learn.
- C. Read the Bible _____. Everything that we want to get better at takes practice and repetition.

3. Resources that can help

- A. Our small group website: **vcsmallgroups.org**
- B. The website: **biblegateway.com**
- C. The website: **faithlifebible.com**
- D. Our Cooper Rd bookstore

Continue to exercise sheet.

MODULE 2

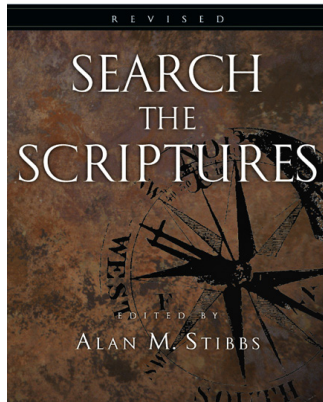
EXERCISE SHEET

52 Week Bible Reading Plan

Week	Epistles (Sunday)	The Law (Monday)	History (Tuesday)	Psalms (Wednesday)	Poetry (Thursday)	Prophecy (Friday)	Gospels (Saturday)
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 1-2
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 4-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 3-4
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 8-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 5-7
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 12-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 9-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 18-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 8-10
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 12-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 23-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 11-13
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 20-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 15-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 29-33	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 14-16
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 24-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 18-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 34-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 17-19
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 28-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge 12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 21-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 40-44	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 20-22
9	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 32-35	<input type="checkbox"/> Judge 17-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 24-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 45-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 23-25
10	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 36-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruth	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 27-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 19-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 51-55	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 26-28
11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 40-43	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 30-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 21-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 56-61	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 1-2
12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 44-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 33-35	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 62-66	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 3-4
13	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 48-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 36-38	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 25-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 5-6
14	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 39-41	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 27-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 7-8
15	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 21-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 42-44	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 29-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 9-10
16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 9-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 26-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 45-47	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 31-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 17-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 11-12
17	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 13-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 48-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 33-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 22-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 13-14
18	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 17-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 51-53	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 35-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 27-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 15-16
19	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 54-56	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 37-38	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 32-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 1-2
20	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 15-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 57-59	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 39-40	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 37-41	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 3-4
21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 11-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 20-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 60-62	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 41-42	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 42-46	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 5-6
22	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 63-65	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 47-52	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 7-8
23	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 37-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 66-68	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 2-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lamentations	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 9-10
24	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 10-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 69-71	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 11-12
25	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 14-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 72-74	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 7-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 13-14
26	<input type="checkbox"/> Phil 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 19-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 75-77	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 13-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 15-16
27	<input type="checkbox"/> Phil 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 78-80	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 8-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 19-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 17-18
28	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 81-83	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 25-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 19-20
29	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 16-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 84-86	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 31-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 21-22
30	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Thes 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 19-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 87-89	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 37-42	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 23-24
31	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Thes 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 22-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 21-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 90-92	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 14-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 43-48	<input type="checkbox"/> John 1-2
32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Thes	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 25-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 93-95	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Dan 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> John 3-4
33	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Tim 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 96-98	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Dan 7-12	<input type="checkbox"/> John 5-6
34	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Tim 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 99-101	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 19	<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> John 7-9
35	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Tim 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 9-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 15-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 102-104	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 20-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> John 10-12
36	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Tim 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 13-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 20-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 105-107	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 22	<input type="checkbox"/> Joel	<input type="checkbox"/> John 13-15
37	<input type="checkbox"/> Titus	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 17-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 25-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 108-110	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> John 16-18
38	<input type="checkbox"/> Philemon	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 111-113	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 25	<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> John 19-21
39	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 114-116	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 26-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Obadiah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 1-2
40	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 5-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 117-118	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 28	<input type="checkbox"/> Jonah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 3-4
41	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 8-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 119	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 29-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Micah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 5-6
42	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 11-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 120-121	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 31	<input type="checkbox"/> Nahum	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 7-8
43	<input type="checkbox"/> James 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 122-124	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Habakkuk	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 9-10
44	<input type="checkbox"/> James 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 125-127	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Zephaniah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 11-12
45	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Pet 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 128-130	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Haggai	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 13-14
46	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Pet 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezra 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 131-133	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Zechariah 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 15-16
47	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Pet	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezra 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 134-136	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Zechariah 8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 17-18
48	<input type="checkbox"/> 1John 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 20-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 137-139	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Malachi	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 19-20
49	<input type="checkbox"/> 1John 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 23-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 140-142	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 21-22
50	<input type="checkbox"/> 2John	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 26-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 10-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 143-145	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 23-24
51	<input type="checkbox"/> 3John	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 29-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 146-148	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 25-26
52	<input type="checkbox"/> Jude	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 32-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 149-150	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 18-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 27-28

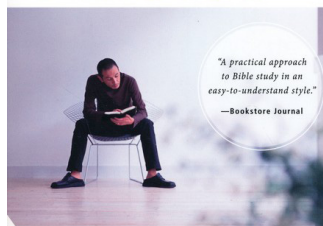
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Douglas Stuart

The study of God's Word is essential to spiritual growth. Still, a daily encounter with the Bible can be difficult to sustain. *Search the Scriptures* can support you in your discipline of daily Bible study. Using a question-and-answer approach, it helps you discover God's truth for yourself. Its built-in flexibility and clear presentation allow you to use its content according to your own needs.

Understanding the Bible isn't for the few, the gifted, and the scholarly. The Bible is accessible for all. It's meant to be read and comprehended by everyone from armchair readers to seminary students. A few essential insights into the Bible can clear up a lot of misconceptions and help you grasp the meaning and application of Scripture to your 21st-century life.

Reading the Bible doesn't need to be a haphazard journey through strange and bewildering territory. Like an experienced tour guide, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* takes you by the hand and walks you through the Scriptures. For each book of the Bible, the authors start with a quick snapshot. Then, they expand the view to help you better understand the book's key elements and how they fit into the grand narrative of the Bible.

MODULE 3

NATURALLY SUPERNATURAL SMALL GROUPS

Introduction

What is the _____?

This was the main theology of Jesus, riddled throughout the Gospels. The Kingdom simply refers to how things would look if GOD's will was always done. It means that God is King, He rules, and what He says goes!

How did Jesus demonstrate the Kingdom of God?

Jesus spoke the _____ of God and demonstrated the _____ of God. We want to be Kingdom people. We want to live in a way that expects God's will to be done and that He will come. We do not want our weekly small groups to grow into nice conversations and discussions around the Bible without the life-changing presence of the Holy Spirit.

As leaders, Jesus should be our model for ministry. Both our words and actions should reflect the Kingdom. We want our small groups to change lives by the _____ and _____ of the Holy Spirit.

That being said, the Kingdom has not fully come. Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection initiated the Kingdom of God. We live in the tension of the "_____ " and the "_____."

Outline

1. How do we _____ the Kingdom of God?

- A. _____ for people to hear from God.
- B. _____ God to come and _____ Him for whatever the need or want is.
- C. Exercise _____ and trust in God's good character.
- D. We need to be motivated by _____.
"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick"
(Matthew 14:14).
- E. We believe that God has given us His _____ to intervene.
"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

F. We value “non-hype” and a low-key _____. During ministry, we want to allow God’s agenda to be done and not our own. God can hear us without screaming. God can hear you without fancy or super formal language. Pray from the heart. There’s no reason to use a lot of words. Be yourself before God.

2. What ways might the Holy Spirit interact with people in your group?

- A. God communicates miraculously to us through His _____.
- B. God communicates through _____.
- C. God communicates through an experience of _____.
- D. God communicates through Words of Knowledge or “_____ words.”
- E. There are common _____ of the Spirit’s presence.
 - 1) Swaying
 - 2) Hands shaking
 - 3) Weeping
 - 4) Fluttering eyelids
 - 5) Warmth/heat
 - 6) A glow and/or laughter

3. God wants to _____ with you and your group!

Here are three questions to REGULARLY ask yourself regarding your group:

- 1. In our small group, do we regularly create a space to hear from God and wait on Him to speak to us?
- 2. Are we seeing any evidence of His presence in our small group life?
- 3. How can we teach and train our group to hear God’s voice in this setting but also in each member’s everyday life? (We could . . . go through a series on the Holy Spirit, take Meeting God together as a small group, practice regular ministry time in group, and explain weekly what we are doing and why as we engage in our ministry time.)

MODULE 3

EXERCISE SHEET

As you practice the habit of creating space to meet with God in your group, it is important to incorporate these practices into your own life! As you try new things in your private life with God, you are better able to incorporate these practices into how you practice meeting God in your group.

Here is a really simple practice that you can do alone with Jesus but then also within your group.

This is a stillness exercise. The reason this is done is to learn to be present. To live in the present is really the only actual place to live! To live in the past or worrying about the future keeps us from seeing what is actually happening in our lives—what is happening in us, through us, and what God is up to around us. We want to be people who are present so we can sense and experience God's presence in our current circumstances.

We have busy lives. Let's stop regularly, turn our attention to God's nearness, and settle into reality.

Five Minutes of Stillness

Sit down and say, "I am seated, I am doing nothing, and I am doing nothing for five minutes," and then relax, and then continually throughout this time (one or two minutes is the most you will be able to endure to begin with) realize, "I am here in the presence of God, in my own presence, and in the presence of all the furniture [or people, or natural surroundings, etc.] that is around me, just still, moving nowhere." There is, of course, one more thing you must do: you must decide that within these two minutes, five minutes, which you have assigned to learning that the present exists, you will not be pulled out of it by the telephone, by a knock on the door [by an incoming email or text or tone on your phone, etc.], or by a sudden upsurge of energy that prompts you to do at once what you have left undone for the last ten years. So you settle down and say "Here I am," and you are. If you learn to do this at lost moments of your life when you have learned not to fidget inwardly, but to be completely calm and happy, stable and serene, then extend the few minutes to a longer time and then to a longer while still.

(From *Beginning to Pray* (1970), by Anthony Bloom, pp. 85-86.)

You can easily do this exercise alone or in your group. We encourage you to do this as a way of remembering that God is in control and that without Him, you can do nothing. This practice will also remind you that the world won't end if you stop moving.

MODULE 4

MISSION IN SMALL GROUP

Introduction

Our mission is to develop a community of disciples who experience God, love one another, and partner with Christ to heal the world. This mission statement includes five purposes for our church. We call these the 5M's. They are as follows: Membership, Maturity, Meeting God, Ministry, and Mission. Before we address the process of working out "mission" in our small groups, it is important to see where we get it. Mission first comes from God's mission to rescue us and change the world we live in.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

God's love came first. Before we think about how we can love the world, we need to remember that God's love came first. God's mission started way before we came along. Way before we wanted to be in relationship with Him, He was and is pursuing us.

Outline

1. The mission model of _____

A. Invite and share.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

B. Commit and plan for the long haul.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

2. "_____ " in the mission

A. We actively _____ what we've received and _____ others into it.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation . . . We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

B. Doing _____ as a small group can look a lot of *different ways*.

3. How to _____ doing mission

A. We start with _____.

“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing” (John 5:19-20).

B. Ask valuable _____.

1) What needs are you seeing that move your heart? What makes you weep?

2) What makes you say, “This shouldn’t be”?

3) What gifts does your small group uniquely have that could bless a specific community or part of town?

C. _____ where you and your group want to focus your energy.

D. _____ to what you’ve picked!

E. Find someone in your group to _____ the activity.

F. Have the _____ of _____ in mind.

G. Be _____.

Continue to resource sheet.

MODULE 4

RESOURCE SHEET

Websites & Books

Opportunities to Serve – Vineyard Columbus

vineyardcolumbus.org/ministries/urban-ministry/serve-lead/

This is a link to Vineyard Columbus' Urban Ministry where you can find information to serve at one of our food pantries, our homeless outreach, prison ministry, nursing home outreach, and many other opportunities.

HandsOn Central Ohio – Non-Profit & Website

volunteercentralohio.org

This link is to a quite comprehensive volunteer website for Central Ohio where you can search very specifically for ways that your group can serve together one time or on a consistent basis.

“HandsOn Central Ohio is a multi-faceted organization, with a diversity of programs connecting those in need to resources, and pairing available volunteers to the nonprofit sector.”

The Art of Neighboring – Website & Book

artofneighboring.com

[amazon.com/The-Art-Neighboring-Building-Relationships/dp/080101459X](https://www.amazon.com/The-Art-Neighboring-Building-Relationships/dp/080101459X)

A great book and website full of resources on how to begin to get to know your actual neighbors and serve your neighborhood well.

“In the spring of 2010, twenty-one churches in the metro Denver area came together for a shared sermon series centered on neighboring. Our goal was to challenge the people in our congregations to be intentional in relationships with their literal neighbors.

Our hope is that the people who are a part of this movement will move from strangers to acquaintances, then from acquaintances to relationship with the people who live closest to them.

If you are interested in starting a neighboring movement in your community, or if you would just like more information about what we're doing, please visit the resources section of the website.”

MODULE 5

CARING FOR OURSELVES AS LEADERS

Introduction

What does it look like to care for ourselves in the ways God is asking us to? How can we ensure that we ourselves remain strong and fit in heart, soul, mind, and strength for the long haul? How can we build into our lives a resilience that keeps us growing and flourishing in our journey with Jesus through good times and bad? And how can we model for our groups how to do the same?

As leaders, you are people who have chosen to step out and give yourselves away for the sake of Jesus and others. You are leading a 2 Timothy 2:2 lifestyle where you are actively investing in others the things you have learned about the life of faith with the hope that the members of your group are passing along those same things to others.

This training module presumes that your life is a reservoir with streams flowing out to others. And any reservoir that has streams flowing out must also have streams flowing in, or eventually it will simply dry up. This training module is meant to help ensure that you don't dry up—that you are consistently filled by the streams God intends—and that the groups under your care are also nourished and fed by God as well. This module is all about helping you care for yourself in the Lord and as a result, helping maintain an atmosphere of care in the groups God has entrusted to you.

Outline

1. The importance of taking care of ourselves

- A. _____ modeled it.
- B. _____ teaches us the importance of self-care.
- C. _____ requires it.

2. How to care for ourselves practically

- A. We must _____. (Get good sleep and observe the Sabbath.)
- B. We must be _____. (We need a consistent relationship with God in prayer, worship, and reading the Bible.)
 - 1) Prioritize spending relaxed time with friends and family.
 - 2) Pay attention to what you eat and drink.
 - 3) Get moving and get outside.
 - 4) Pay attention to and do what feeds your soul.

C. We must _____. (Participate with God in ways that will help mature and deepen us in some aspect of our life and faith.)

- 1) Read, take classes, attend conferences or seminars as God gives you grace to do so.
- 2) Covenant Groups – Become part of one of these groups that are focused on intentional development of their members in some specific area of Christian maturity, ministry, knowledge, or growth.
- 3) Small Group Leader Training 3 – Take our online and/or on-site classes designed to help you grow in some area of Christian maturity or competency.
- 4) Vineyard Institute – Sign up for any/all of the dozens of classes that are available to help you grow in Biblical literacy, theological depth, competency in ministry, and personal maturity.
(usa.vineyardinstitute.org)

Continue to exercise sheet.

MODULE 5

EXERCISE SHEET

Understanding and Living the Sabbath

Sabbath is the intentional rest of God’s people for the purpose of spiritual and bodily renewal. Before reading through the outline and participating in the exercises, take a few minutes and read Genesis 1 and the first three verses of Genesis 2. Then, pray and ask God to reveal what Sabbath rest you may need to engage in as you study and do the exercise.

Outline

1. The existence of Sabbath

- A. Our example is six days of work and one day of rest.
 - 1) The existence of Sabbath presumes a life of rest. We are participatory partners with God in all the work of the Kingdom—in the work of creation, the work of stewardship, and the work of redemption.
- B. Leadership is characterized by diligence.
 - 1) In Romans 12, Paul instructs each of us as members of the body to exercise the gifts—the particular graces given to us to contribute to the health and work of his body, the church—and to exercise those gifts in a particular way. He says one thing about each gift, and to those gifted with the grace of leadership, he says one thing—to lead with diligence.
 - 2) “If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously” (Romans 12:8b NLT).
- C. So our starting point is the assumption that each of us is diligent in our labor and is given to fruitful work unto the Lord, whether it is in our leadership in the church or in your regular daily work—diligence is a given.

2. The priority of Sabbath

- A. God Himself rested on the seventh day.
 - 1) “On the seventh day God had finished His work of creation, so He rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when He rested from all His work of creation” (Genesis 2:2-3 NLT).
 - 2) “See, the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day” (Exodus 16:29a NASB).
 - a) The pattern is that God provides for us sufficiently so we need not constantly work—the flourishing of our lives does not, in the end, depend on our work but on God’s provision. Sabbath teaches us this fact.

- 3) “[The Sabbath] is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed”(Exodus 31:17 NASB).
 - a) A looking back on past labors and a look forward to future labors—even for God, who is all powerful, the practice of savoring the work He has already done and reflecting on future labors is somehow “refreshing” (and this is indeed a theological mystery).
- 4) "Tell the people of Israel: ‘Be careful to keep My Sabbath day, for the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between me and you from generation to generation. It is given so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy’” (Exodus 31:13 NLT).
 - a) Sabbath is a step of faith—to cease the stream of our words and the flurry of our deeds and to trust what Paul says in Roman 9:16: “It does not depend on the one who wills or the one who runs, but on God who has mercy.”

3. The practicalities of Sabbath

- A. Biblical Sabbath exists in the context of a life given to diligent labor, even as God Himself is by His very nature given to diligent labor.
 - 1) Sloth is Sabbath that has overflowed its banks, and it brings no true rest in the biblical sense, for biblical rest is always accompanied by fruitfulness.
 - 2) Sloth is rest without diligent labor and leads to a deteriorating life.
 - a) “I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. ‘A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, then your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man’” (Proverbs 24:30c-34 NASB).
- B. Sabbath is the ceasing of our labor accompanied by the practice of more fully opening ourselves to God in some way so that we might be refreshed. We do not approach Sabbath legalistically. For example, some weeks it is “sabbatical” for me to rake leaves in the yard, while other weeks, it is not. We need to be sensitive and honest before ourselves and God when determining what constitutes Sabbath rest and genuine refreshment on any given day or week. Some “sabbatical” activities are listed below, but this is by no means an exhaustive list. These are activities that are, of course, refreshing any day of the week, whether it is a day you are designating as Sabbath or not.
 - 1) Worship
 - 2) Time in the Word
 - 3) Prayer
 - 4) Solitude
 - a) Being alone allows us to encounter God in ways that we may miss when we are always with other people.

- (1) Jesus on repeated occasions retires alone to a remote place for prayer or solitude.
 - (a) Extraverts: This is particularly important for you.
 - i) It is sometimes easy to lose all sense of self-awareness and God-awareness in the midst of your actions and interactions.
- 5) Silence
 - a) "Be still ("Cease striving" in the NASB), and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world" (Psalms 46:10 NLT).
 - b) Eat a silent meal alone with God.
 - c) Take a walk without your phone.
 - d) Fast from the Internet for a day a week.
 - e) Leave the radio off in the car.
- 6) Sleep
 - a) "Unless the Lord builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the Lord protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good. It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to His loved ones" (Psalms 127:1-2 NLT).
 - b) "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep (or "He gives sleep to His beloved")" (Psalms 127:1-2 NASB).
 - c) Jesus models this when He sleeps on the boat in the face of crisis in Matthew 8, Mark 4, and Luke 8.
 - d) There are times when the most spiritual thing you can do is to go to bed, take a nap, or sleep a little longer.
 - e) Be honest about how much sleep you actually need to be rested and do what you need to do to get that sleep.
- 7) Celebration
 - a) Friendship
 - (1) Calendarize renewing relationships.
 - b) Food and drink
 - (1) Sharing an ordinary meal with your family is one of the chief graces of life.
 - (2) Pay attention to what you eat and drink, taking time to savor it. Ask God how you can better learn to love Him with your sense of taste.
 - c) Fun
 - (1) Figure out what is renewing to you and make it a regular part of your life.
 - (a) Examples: cycling, hiking, hanging out with your spouse or significant other, hanging out with family or with close friends, reading poetry and philosophy, etc.

d) Creativity

- (1) Find out what creative outlets give you life and take some time to do those things.
- (2) Examples: writing poetry, doing simple art, working with your hands, etc.

4. Resistance to Sabbath

A. Cultural resistance

1) Work

2) Social media

- a) You may actually find that there is more spiritual benefit to fasting Internet connectivity or social media than there is to fasting food and drink in the 21st century.

3) Our inner voice

4) Fear of missing something

- a) We do not need to know everything about everyone all the time, and we fray our inner life when we attempt to do so.

5. Responding to Jesus

A. Stillness exercise

1) Five Minutes of Stillness (From *Beginning to Pray* (1970), by Anthony Bloom, pp. 85-86.)

- a) Sit down and say, "I am seated, I am doing nothing, and I am doing nothing for five minutes," and then relax, and then continually throughout this time (one or two minutes is the most you will be able to endure to begin with) realize, "I am here in the presence of God, in my own presence, and in the presence of all the furniture [or people, or natural surroundings, etc.] that is around me, just still, moving nowhere." There is, of course, one more thing you must do: you must decide that within these two minutes, five minutes, which you have assigned to learning that the present exists, you will not be pulled out of it by the telephone, by a knock on the door [by an incoming email or text or tone on your phone, etc.], or by a sudden upsurge of energy that prompts you to do at once what you have left undone for the last ten years. So you settle down and say "Here I am," and you are. If you learn to do this at lost moments of your life when you have learned not to fidget inwardly, but to be completely calm and happy, stable and serene, then extend the few minutes to a longer time and then to a longer while still.

6. The voice of Jesus

A. There is nothing more important in your life than maintaining a close and loving relationship with Jesus and living in such a way that over all other voices, you maintain your ability to hear His. This is a struggle and an increasingly bloody battle in the face of 21st century technology. Sadly, it will only get harder with each passing year.

- 1) "After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice" (John 10:4 NLT).
- 2) "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27 NLT).
- 3) Listen to Jesus' voice.
 - a) "Then, turning to His disciples, Jesus said, 'That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. Look at the ravens. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to Him than any birds! Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? And if worry can't accomplish a little thing like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things? Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, He will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? And don't be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don't worry about such things. These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and He will give you everything you need. So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12:22-32 NLT).
 - b) "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32 NASB).

MODULE 6

CARING FOR OUR GROUPS

Introduction

What does it look like to do a good job of caring for the group you are leading? Paul warns us against thinking that any one of us, including small group leaders, is meant to carry all the weight of responsibility for caring for those in our churches and groups. The single most important thing you can do to help care for your group is to take care of your own relationship and walk with Jesus. Only when you yourself are full of the life of Christ will you be able to care well for others and to nurture spiritual life in them. A proper understanding of ourselves and of the church requires us to recognize our own limits, as well as the grace that God gives to every member of the body to support and care for every other member. It is not merely the responsibility of pastors and leaders to care for the body.

The members of your group will flourish if they are connected to the True Vine (Jesus), if they are learning to increasingly get what they need directly from Him, and through receiving from one another the grace He has given each member of the body to share with others. To care for your group does not consist of you being some kind of superstar leader who meets every need, answers every question, wipes every tear, and is always available to everyone all the time.

Presuming you are doing a good job of taking care of yourself, here are the steps good leaders take in caring for their groups.

Outline

1. Caring well for the members of your group

- A. Recognize your own limits.
- B. Cultivate an _____ of care. (This is an environment where every member of your group is turning to and participating with Jesus to both experience and pass along His care and His love to others.)
 - 1) An atmosphere of care is _____.
 - 2) An atmosphere of care is _____.
 - 3) An atmosphere of care embraces vulnerability and _____.
 - a) Make space in your meeting where people are encouraged but not obligated to share personally.
 - b) Coach your group in simply letting people share, without commenting, giving advice, or cracking jokes—simply listen and receive as a gift the things you share with one another.
 - 4) An atmosphere of care establishes a culture of _____.

5) An atmosphere of care requires _____.

C. Build a culture of _____.

- 1) Encourage group members to get together with one another informally on their own and to be proactive about inviting one another to share their lives in simple ways.
- 2) Another helpful way to encourage your group members to support and care for each other is to encourage them to meet in single-sex groups of two or three for confession, sharing, communion, and prayer.

D. Caring well for your group will also _____ you something and require you to sacrificially _____ the people in your group.

2. Resources for helping you care for your group

A. Your greatest source of wisdom and counsel for your group members is the _____.

B. Other Vineyard Columbus resources

- 1) Support for Life
- 2) Marriage and Family Life
- 3) Vineyard Columbus Financial Ministry
- 4) Vineyard Columbus Counseling Center
- 5) Vineyard Community Center
- 6) Visitation Care Team

Continue on to the Group Care Resources and the Confession & Communion in Group on the following page.

MODULE 6

GROUP CARE RESOURCES

Many or most of the needs you and your group members experience can be met informally in family, community, and small group contexts. But when you encounter needs beyond the resources of your group, here are a few key resource centers at Vineyard Columbus that may be able to help.

- **Support for Life:** Support for Life provides resources to help people in our congregation and community gain mental, emotional, and spiritual health and healing. Trained volunteers lead groups and meet one-on-one with individuals in difficult seasons through Lay Counseling, Support Groups, Recovery Groups, and Classes/Events. For members of your group who are facing life crises, struggling with addictive and compulsive behaviors, or who need emotional or spiritual support beyond your group resources, Support for Life is a great place to look.

For more information about Support for Life, check out Support for Life on the Vineyard Columbus website, contact Debbie Johnson at 614.259.5289, or email supportforlife@vineyardcolumbus.org.

- **Marriage & Family Life:** Marriage & Family Life offers classes on marriage and dating, courses and coaches for people preparing for marriage, classes and groups to support marriages in crisis, parenting training and support, and a range of other marriage and family related resources. You can always contact and refer people to Marriage and Family Life to provide marriage and family resource to your group members.

For more information about our Marriage & Family Life ministry, check out Marriage & Family Life on the Vineyard Columbus website or contact Mindy Layman at 614.259.5365.

- **Vineyard Columbus Financial Ministry:** Our Financial Ministry provides financial education opportunities, one-on-one financial counseling, and other key resources regarding financial matters such as giving and estate planning. Also, the Financial Ministry oversees our deacons who consult with church members regarding acute financial need and in some cases, can make church resources available for short-term help.

For more information about the Financial Ministry, check out our Financial Ministry on the Vineyard Columbus website or contact Kent Irwin at 614.259.5505.

Also, every holiday season, Vineyard Columbus offers Vineyard Christmas for Kids to help kids and families in our church who might not be able to purchase Christmas gifts for their family without assistance.

For more information about Vineyard Christmas for Kids, contact Myra Gaiters at myra.gaiters@vineyardcolumbus.org.

- **Vineyard Columbus Counseling Center:** For people in your group struggling with issues including grief, addictions, depression, anxiety, marital issues, eating disorders, sexual abuse, family issues,

behavioral problems, ADHD, and more, Vineyard Columbus Counseling Center has a team of professional counselors available to you and your group members.

For more information about Vineyard Counseling Center, please contact Yolanda Zellars at 614.259.5409.

Vineyard also offers free counseling by trained lay counselors to individuals looking for someone to listen and provide Biblical input about life struggles.

For more information regarding lay counseling, contact Debbie Johnson at 614.259.5289.

- **Vineyard Community Center:** For members of your group in need of medical and legal assistance, Vineyard Community Center offers free medical, dental, vision, legal, and immigration counseling services, as well as programs focused on the arts, education, exercise, the English language, citizenship, career help, and more.

*For more information about Vineyard Community Center, please go online to **vineyardcommunitycenter.org**.*

Continue on to the next sheet.

MODULE 6

CONFESSION & COMMUNION IN GROUP

In much of the Protestant tradition, and certainly in the Vineyard tradition, we have not been taught a simple model for making confession accessible and practical to people in the church. The text from James 5 below, however, links the healing of our bodies and the effectiveness of our prayers with the practice of confessing our sins to one another and praying for each other. While there is no guarantee that confession will always lead to healing and effective prayer, there is nonetheless a relationship between them. Confession isn't to be offered only to pastors and leaders but to one another—to our ordinary brothers and sisters in informal contexts. The guidelines here are designed to make Biblical confession easier and more accessible to our groups and us.

We have found the practice of confession in triads—groups of three—to work really well, sometimes even better than confession in pairs or in larger groups. While there is no hard and fast rule here, there seems to be some real value in there being two witnesses to our confession. Perhaps this is because of the power of two witnesses as opposed to one, or perhaps because it helps guard against unhealthy dynamics that may potentially arise when we only ever confess our sins privately and to one person, especially if that person is in a position of official spiritual authority over us. Whatever the reasons, the dynamics of confessing our sins in single-sex triads has been received enthusiastically among many who have practiced it. Therefore, we provide a simple model here to help you get started. That being said, feel free to adapt this model to groups of two or of four or more as seems best.

To start, simply arrange a time for your triad to meet. It often helps to have one person appointed as the triad facilitator to ensure that someone takes the lead in setting up the time and place for the triad to meet. This person would also make sure that the communion elements are on hand. You may choose to meet together as a triad for several months and then reform the groups to place different people with one another, or you may choose to keep your triads fixed for a longer period of time. Also, you may choose to meet as a subgroup during a regular small group meeting or as a separate, freestanding meeting at another time. Whatever you choose on these accounts, it is best to set a one-hour slot at a time convenient for everyone. Leaving it as no more than an hour and ending on time is ideal, as it helps people to commit to the time and be consistent. It's often easiest if people live near one another as well.

When you meet, here are the basic parts of your time together. This is meant as a flexible guideline, not a rigid script. Feel free to adapt it in ways that seem helpful.

Continue on the following page.

1. Gather at your appointed place, informally connect for a few minutes, get a cup of coffee, etc. Then, move to sitting down and beginning your intentional time of confession and communion.
2. Have one of your triad members read the scriptures below out loud to start your time.
 - “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5:16 NIV).
 - “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us” (John 1:8-10 NIV).
3. As you prepare to confess your sins to one another, pray the following prayer of general confession out loud together (adapted from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer):
 - *“Almighty and most merciful Father, I have sinned and wandered from your ways like a lost sheep. I have followed the plans and desires of my own heart. I have rejected your holy commandments and have lived disobediently in many ways. I have left undone many things you have asked me to do, I have done many things you have asked me not to do, and truly, Lord, I am in need of your forgiveness and healing, for there is no health in me. But You, O Lord, are merciful to me, and I come to you for mercy. Free me, O God, as I confess my sins before you and my brethren. Restore me according to the promises you have declared to all people in Jesus Christ my Lord. And fill me with your Holy Spirit, most merciful Father, that from now on I might walk forward in a life of obedience that pleases you and brings you glory. In your name I pray, amen.”*
4. Take some time for silent reflection together. Begin by praying this text from Psalm 139.
 - “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24 NIV).

Then take a minute or two to pause quietly and reflect before God. Ask God “Where have I rejected your instructions?” or “What have I left undone that I should have done?” or “Where in my life have I turned myself away from you?” Quietly attend to whatever He shows you.

1. Choose one person to begin with his/her confession. When that person is ready, he/she can begin his/her confession by saying, “I confess to the Lord and to you . . .” Then, follow this by confessing the things God has brought to mind. When that person is finished confessing, he/she can indicate so by simply saying, “This is my confession.”
2. After each confession, have one of person pray a prayer affirming the confessor’s forgiveness before God. Feel free to pray along these lines:
 - *“Lord, in your Word you say, “If we confess our sins, [you are] faithful and just and forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We therefore declare and affirm your forgiveness over our dear brother/sister here with us today. Please, Lord, give this sister/brother the gift of true repentance, and fill him/her with Your Holy Spirit, so that she/he will find freedom from these sins and true joy from you. Cleanse her/him from these sins, give her/him true peace and rest in your love,*

and make him/her able to serve you with his/her whole life going forward. We pray this in the name of your Son Jesus, whose precious blood cleanses us from all sin. Amen."

3. Offer communion to the person who has just confessed. Many people find it to be a powerful experience to take communion immediately following confession, but this is in no way obligatory. If the confessor would like to take communion, offer it to him/her according to the following simple order of service from 1 Corinthians 11.
 - "The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me'" (1 Corinthians 11:23-24).
(Offer the bread.)
 - "In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me'" (1 Corinthians 11:25).
(Offer the cup.)
4. Pause briefly in silence after the confessor has taken communion, and then have one person pray a brief prayer of blessing over the brother or sister, closing with a simple "Amen."
5. Move on to the next person who needs to confess, and after all of you have confessed and taken communion (if you chose to do so), simply close your time with a brief prayer and be on your way.

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