

**Developing
Leaders Who
Are Becoming Like
Their Savior**

**Growing Christian Leaders Series
Manual 11**

by

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Growing Christian Leaders Series

The “Growing Christian Leaders Series” is the result of weekly topics which were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In these verses, Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God-given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world, people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Success produces rewards until we die, but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.’” 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The Growing Christian Leaders Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1.

Understanding What the World Is

Today, we are starting a new group of topics. The title for this group of topics is, “Developing Leaders who are Becoming Like Their Savior”. The title for this group of topics is taken from Luke 19:10 where we read, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” As a result, we want to develop leaders who also have a tremendous concern to join Christ in seeking the lost.

In John 3:16-17, Christ said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Yet in 1 John 2:15-17 we read, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

In these two passages, we see that God loved the world in one passage and at the same time we are told not to love the world in another passage. Unfortunately many Christians have misunderstood what is taught and as a result have little or no contact with those who are not yet Christians. That is why it is important to help developing leaders understand what is meant by the world.

In John 3:16, Jesus is talking about the love that the Father and the Son both have for the people of the world. The Father loved the people of the world so much that He sent the Son to die for the sin of the people of the world. The Son loves the people of the world so much that He chose to give His life to pay for sin so that the people of the world could have their sin forgiven. In the same way, we are to have a great love for the people of the world who have been blinded by the lies of Satan.

In contrast, in 1 John 2:15-17, we are talking about the world system that is the result of evil coming into the world. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve and they sinned, Satan persuaded them to satisfy their own desires. That resulted in rebellion against the clear command of God. That rebellion caused man to have a sin nature and so death passed upon all men according to Romans 5:12. As a result, the entire world system is based on rebellion against God. In John 15:18-19, Christ said, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

1 John 2:15-16 tells us, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” In verse 15, we see that we are not to love the world system, because that system is based upon rebellion against God. Then, in verse 16, we see that Christians are not to be controlled by the evil desires that are the result of the world system – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. As a result, we are not to love the evil world system and its evil desires.

This brings us to a second passage that Christians often misunderstand. 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 says, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among *them*. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from

among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” To have a full understanding of this passage, we need to go back to 1 Corinthians to get a little background. Some of the Corinthians were still offering sacrifices in the temples of their idols while trying to follow Christ. As a result, 1 Corinthians 10:19-21 says, “What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.”

Paul makes it very clear that joining together with unbelievers in offering sacrifices to idols is actually having fellowship with demons. As a result, in 2 Corinthians 6:14, Paul points out that being yoked together with unbelievers in their worship of idols would profane the temple of God since Paul had already pointed out in 1 Corinthians 6:14-20 that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. The focus of 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 is that Christians are not to join together with unbelievers in the worship of demons. Instead, as Christians, we are to totally separate ourselves from any form of demon worship.

2 Corinthians 6:18-7:1 goes on to point out, “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” We are to cleanse ourselves both from filthiness of the flesh and filthiness of the spirit because we are now in the family of God. We defile both our body and our spirit by joining ourselves together with unbelievers in demon worship.

By the way, although idols and not marriage is the context of 2 Corinthians 6:14, we can still share this verse when warning Christians about the dangers of dating and marrying a non-Christian. This is appropriate because every non-Christian is in bondage to sin and has replaced God with some idol such as money, pleasure or some other thing even if he does not have an idol made of wood or stone.

God loves the people of the world but He hates the world system that is controlled by Satan and his demons. In fact, God views those who are controlled by sin as being in bondage to Satan. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Here, we see that Christ came to destroy Satan and his works so that Christ could release those who are in bondage.

If we understand the difference between the world system and its lusts and the people of the world who are in bondage to Satan, it will change the way that we relate to those who are not yet Christians. We will realize that Christ has left us here on earth to help Him free them from their bondage to Satan by telling them the good news that Christ died to set them free from sin. We will share with them the good news that the Father showed that He was satisfied with the payment Christ made for sin by raising Christ from the dead.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, we read, “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.” Verse nine shows that the Thessalonians understood the meaning of repentance. Verses 5 and 6 show that the Thessalonians turned to Jesus Christ in true faith.

These verses also help us to see the Christian life from three viewpoints. In the past, we repented of our sin of unbelief (the only sin that will keep people out of heaven) by placing our faith in

Jesus Christ. In the present, we are to serve the living and true God. As we look to the future, we are to be eagerly awaiting the return of Christ from heaven.

If we understand what the Bible teaches about the world, we will become partners with Christ by sharing the message that Christ died to deliver people from the bondage of sin. We will share that Christ, “was delivered up because of our offenses and was raised because of our justification” – Romans 4:25. We will share that when people turn from whatever idols they are following and place their faith in Jesus Christ that they will receive forgiveness of sins and an eternal inheritance – Acts 26:18. We want every developing leader to clearly understand what the world is so that he or she will know that he is to avoid the sinful lusts of the world but he is to reach out with Christ’s love to the people of the world. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders grow in their understanding of these things.

2.

Jesus is a Friend of Sinners

In our last topic, we talked about what the world is and saw that we are to avoid the sinful world system and its lusts. However, that does not mean that we are to avoid sinners and separate ourselves from them. Instead, we are to help developing leaders learn to understand that Jesus is a friend of sinners and that if they are going to follow the example of Jesus, it also means that they will become a friend of sinners. That will be the focus of our topic today.

In Luke 19:10, Christ said, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” In Matthew 9:13b, Christ told the Pharisees, “...For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” Of course the attitude of the Pharisees is shown in Luke 15:1-2 where we read, “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’” Unfortunately today many Christians act like the Pharisees instead of following the example Christ.

Luke 19:10 mentioned in the previous paragraph shows us that the focus of the life of Christ was not to avoid the lost but rather to seek and to save the lost. Christ was continually seeking those who thought that they were too sinful for Jesus to forgive them. Early in His ministry Christ was seeking the Samaritan woman at the well when He said in John 4:7, “Give Me a drink.” The woman was a Samaritan woman with a bad background according to John 4:17-18, “The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.’”

In fact, Christ’s own disciples were surprised that Christ talked with the woman. John 4:27 says, “And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’ Later, in John 4:35, Christ told the disciples, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” Over the next three years, the disciples came to realize that Jesus is a friend to sinners and that became a part of their lives and ministries as well.

In Matthew 13:45-46, Christ taught the parable about the merchant seeking beautiful pearls. Those verses say, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” Here, we see that the merchant was diligently seeking beautiful pearls and was willing to pay the price to purchase the pearl of great price. Ephesians 5:25 tells us that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Romans 5:8 tells us that Christ did this while we were still sinners. Truly Jesus is a friend of sinners.

In Luke 15:8-10, we see that the woman seeks diligently until she finds the coin that is lost. In the prior parable, in Luke 15:3-7, we see that the shepherd diligently seeks the sheep that was lost until he found it. These two parables were spoken immediately after Luke 15:1-2 tells us, “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’” We have already mentioned that some Christians seem to be more like the Pharisees than they are like Christ.

However, we learn a second very important lesson from the fact that Jesus responds to this attitude by giving the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and later the lost sons. In each of these parables, we see that the main character represents Christ who is seeking the lost. These parables had to be a great encouragement to the tax collectors and sinners who drew near to hear Christ

because the parables told them that instead of Christ rejecting them, He was actively searching for them.

In addition to actively seeking those who were sinners, Jesus invited a tax collector that was closely associated with the sinners to follow Him. Luke 5:27-29 says, “After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them.” The tax collectors and sinners were both groups that were considered undesirable by the Jews and especially by the Jewish religious leaders. However, Christ invited Levi (Matthew) to follow Him and later chose Matthew to be one of the twelve – Matthew 10:3. The tax collectors and sinners knew that Christ was their friend when He chose one of them to be a part of the twelve.

These verses show a second way that Jesus showed He is a friend of sinners. He chose to accept an invitation to a great feast in the home of Matthew even though Christ knew that most of those invited were either tax collectors or sinners. This is just one of many times when Christ visited the homes of those who were rejected by the rest of the people because of their sin. Luke 19:6-7 tells what happened when Christ invited Himself to the home of Zacchaeus. Those verses tell us, “So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw *it*, they all complained, saying, ‘He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.’”

In both of the passages mentioned above we see that Jesus also spent time eating with sinners. These tax collectors and sinners knew that Jesus was their friend because He took time to eat with them. Many Christians would have to go back a long time to remember the last time they sat down and ate with those who are rejected by their culture because of their sin. Christ knew that in the context of eating together He would have the opportunity to invite these people to repent. Luke 5:32 says, “I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Christ also showed that He is a friend of sinners by healing a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years. The statement that Christ made to the man would suggest that He was probably paralyzed as a direct result of his sin. John 5:14 says, “Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’” For a man to be paralyzed for that long as a direct result of sin would give a man a long time to think about the wrong choices that he had made. However, Christ chose to show this particular man that He was his friend.

Christ took time to show that He is a friend to those who have been totally humiliated by others because of their sin. In John 8:1-11, the religious leaders brought a woman to Jesus as He was teaching in the temple. They said that they had caught this woman in the very act of adultery and asked if she should be stoned. Instead, Christ just wrote on the ground until everyone left because they had been convicted by their own consciences. That we read in John 8:10-11. “When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” Instead of condemning the woman, Christ forgave her and gave her a new future.

Christ took two more opportunities to show that He is a friend to sinners as He hung on the cross. In Luke 23:34, we read, “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’ And they divided His garments and cast lots.” He said this even as the rulers and the soldiers that stood around the cross sneered at Him and mocked Him.

Then, Christ reached out in love to one of the thieves that was hanging on the cross beside Him. Luke 23:39-43 tells us, “Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If

You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’” Truly this thief knew that Jesus was his friend in his hour of greatest need.

Christ wants every developing leader to follow His example and become a friend to sinners so that they can share with those sinners how to be set free from the bondage of sin. Christ gives each of us the privilege of showing developing leaders how to be a friend of sinners by our example. May the Lord richly bless you as you provide an example to developing leaders of the importance of being a friend to sinners.

3.

Jesus Understood that Sinners are Prisoners of Satan

If we are going to develop leaders who are becoming like their Savior, we have to help them learn to see people as Christ sees people. Sometimes Christians get angry as they see the sins of those that are not Christians and will have nothing to do with them. In contrast, Jesus understood the condition of those that have not yet placed their trust in Him. He knows that they are prisoners in bondage and He says that He came to set people free from that bondage. In John 8:36, Jesus said, "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

In Hebrews 2:14-15, we read, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." These verses tell us that every person that is born is in bondage. The word that is translated "bondage" speaks of the condition of being a slave.

One day Jesus told the Jews how they could become free and they showed by their answer that they did not even understand that they were in bondage. John 8:32-33 says, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* you say, 'You will be made free'?" The Jews were under the control of the Romans at that very moment. They had been under many other nations in the past. However, their answer shows that they still felt an inner sense of freedom.

In John 8:34, "Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." This verse and the verses quoted above from Hebrews show that it is the devil that is holding each person as a slave. Although the Jews may not have felt that they were slaves to any person, Christ made it very clear that they were slaves to sin and to the devil who originally tempted Eve to sin.

Christ understood how the devil maintains his control over people and keeps them in slavery. Hebrews 2:15 says that only Christ can, "...Release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." People may have many different kinds of fear. However, the one fear that all people of every culture have is the fear of death. If we are going to help developing leaders become like their Savior, we have to help them understand that all people without Christ are prisoners of sin and Satan.

A second thing to understand is that this fear of death is not primarily a fear of physical death. Romans 5:7 says, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die." Here, we see that some are willing to physically die for another person. Romans 5:8 goes on to say, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." This verse tells us that Christ died for us while we were still sinners and prisoners of sin.

Although most people do not understand it, the fear of death that they fear is the fear of spiritual death or eternal separation from God. That is why the Jews said that they have never been in bondage to anyone. They did not understand that they were already spiritually dead and separated from God. The same is true for the various other religions of the world. That is why the various religions can never take away that fear because they have no way to deal with the consequences of spiritual death and set people free from their bondage to sin and Satan.

The reason why it is so important for Christians to realize that all people are in bondage to sin is to understand that they are really prisoners who need to know how to be set free from their bondage to

sin. At physical birth, Ephesians 2:1 says that we were already in bondage to sin. That verse says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Since all people were already separated from God and in bondage to sin at birth, there is nothing that they can do through their own efforts to set themselves free from the bondage of sin. The only way that they will be set free from their bondage to sin is if someone will share the message that Christ can set them free.

If a person was in a building that collapsed and that person could not free himself, we would not stand there trying to determine if he should be rescued. We would not just say it was his fault for being in the building especially if we had earlier come out of the building ourselves. Instead, we would try to do everything possible to rescue that person because we would realize that he is a prisoner of the collapsed building and he will die if we just leave him there.

In the same way, we need to realize that every person who has not placed his trust in Jesus Christ is a prisoner of sin and Satan and each person will die in that sin and be eternally separated from God. If we do nothing to help a person learn that Christ came to set them free from that sin, we are doing the opposite of what Christ did. Christ understood that each person is a prisoner to sin and Satan. As a result, the Father sent Christ to this world to rescue people from their sin. Christ did His part to set people free by paying the penalty for sin by His own death on the cross. The Father showed that He was satisfied with the payment by raising Christ from the dead.

However, before Christ went back to heaven He said in John 20:20-21, “When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’” Christ showed what it had cost Him to set people free from their bondage to sin. As the disciples looked at those nail holes in His hands and the hole in His side where the spear had pierced Him, they saw the cost that Christ had paid to set them free from their bondage to sin.

In addition, Christ said that He was now sending them and all who would become Christians in the future to join Him in setting people free from their bondage to sin. Just like the disciples, we need to realize that people are prisoners of sin and Satan. We have been invited by the King of kings and Lord of lords to join Him in sharing this message so that people can be set free from their bondage to sin. We have been invited to help people learn how they can be set free from their fear of death.

In Luke 4:18-19, Christ read from the Scriptures, “The Spirit of the LORD *is* upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to *the* captives And recovery of sight to *the* blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” As Christ began His ministry He announced that He had come to proclaim liberty to the captives and set at liberty those who are oppressed. At the end of His ministry He passed that same commission on to us.

Sinners are prisoners of sin and Satan. Because they are prisoners, Hebrews 2:14-15 says that they have spent their entire lives controlled by fear. 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” Leaders who are becoming like their Savior want to help people be set free from this bondage and fear that has controlled their entire lives.

Leaders can either be driven by their own fear or they can be led by the love of Christ. If they are driven by fear, they will drive others. If they are led by the love of Christ, they will lead others in love. As we develop leaders who are becoming like their Savior, they will begin to show the same love for those who are prisoners of sin and Satan that Christ showed. They will ask Christ to give them wisdom to know how to make the message of forgiveness of sin and eternal life through Christ clear. They will help those who are in bondage to sin come to a true understanding of the fact that they can be set free from their bondage to sin and turn from their own way and come to

God through Jesus Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders understand that people without Christ are in bondage to sin and Satan.

Jesus Showed Compassion for People

As we develop leaders who are becoming like their Savior, one of the key areas that we want to develop in their lives is compassion. In Matthew 9:36, we read, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” In this verse, we see that Christ saw the people as helpless and hopeless. As a result, Christ was greatly moved within Himself as He saw the spiritual condition of people. As he saw the spiritual condition of the people, Jesus recognized that they were weary and scattered. This speaks of the desperate spiritual need of people who have not placed their faith in Jesus. In fact, Christ was so moved that He asked the disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

This compassion is seen so well in Luke 19:41 where we read, “Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it.” Jesus was riding into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey on the Sunday we call Palm Sunday just a few days before His crucifixion. Christ again saw the desperate spiritual need of the people and that need brought Jesus such sorrow that He cried over the city as He saw their desperate spiritual need. As we help developing leaders become like their Savior, we want to see this kind of compassion develop in their lives as they see the spiritual needs of the people around them.

In Mark 6, Christ sent the Twelve out in teams of two to share the Gospel. Then in Mark 6:30 the disciples returned and gave a report of what they had done and what they had taught. Mark 6:30-34 tells us, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.”

In these verses, we see several key principles about the way that Jesus developed compassion in the lives of the Twelve. First, He had sent them out to share the Gospel. They had shared the Gospel with people in many different towns and villages. As the Twelve returned, they reported to Christ the things that they had done and the things that they had taught. One of the things that we notice is that the disciples focused on what they had done and taught rather than the spiritual needs of the people to whom they had ministered.

This is normal in developing leaders. At first, they are more focused on what they are doing than they are on the people to whom Jesus sends them to minister. However, it creates a problem if these developing leaders do not continue to mature and develop compassion for people. Leaders who focus on what they say and do will eventually make programs the center of their focus instead of people. Jesus wanted the disciples to mature and develop compassion for people so that their ministry became people centered rather than program centered. Jesus knew the only way to teach compassion to the disciples was by example.

In Matthew 9, before Christ sent the disciples out two by two, Jesus was moved with compassion because the people were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd. In that passage, Christ demonstrated the first lesson in how we show people by example how to develop compassion. He revealed His compassion for the people and asked the disciples to pray that the Lord would send

forth laborers into His harvest. People will never develop compassion until they really begin to pray for the spiritual needs of others.

Christ demonstrated the second lesson in how we show people by example how to develop compassion by letting the disciples become the answer to their own prayer as Jesus sent them out to share the Gospel. They did exactly what Christ had sent them to do but they were focused on what they said and did rather than on the people to whom they were sent. That is why Christ now takes them aside into a deserted place so that He can demonstrate compassion again. Of course, Jesus knew that the place would not be deserted by the time they got to the place.

The disciples were looking forward to a time of rest. Instead, a crowd of 5,000 people who had great spiritual needs met them as they arrived. This gave Jesus an opportunity to demonstrate compassion a third time. We see that Christ was again moved with compassion as He saw this crowd because He saw them as sheep not having a shepherd. The fact that both Matthew and Mark record the statement that Jesus saw people as sheep not having a shepherd means that Christ took time at different points in His ministry to describe how He saw people. Jesus told the disciples what He felt and urged them to have that same kind of compassion.

Fourth, Jesus showed the disciples how to respond in compassion to the spiritual needs of people. Mark 6:34 says that, "He began to teach them many things." Christ and the disciples had come to this area to rest. Instead of resting, Christ ended up spending His time teaching the people many things. Christ demonstrated that the way to meet the spiritual needs of the people was to change His plans and teach the people while they were open to have their spiritual needs met.

Fifth, Jesus also used this occasion as an opportunity to show the disciples the need for compassion for the physical needs of the people. Mark 6:35-37a says, "When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.' But He answered and said to them, 'You give them something to eat.'" Here, Christ was showing them that compassion will cause us to be concerned about the physical needs of people as well as their spiritual needs.

Christ demonstrated this same compassion for the physical needs of people when He said to the disciples in Matthew 15:32, "Now Jesus called His disciples to *Himself* and said, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.'" Christ had been meeting their spiritual needs for three days and now the people had no food to eat. This time, He told the disciples about His compassion for the physical needs of the people. The result was that the disciples joined Him in feeding a crowd that numbered 4,000 this time.

Christ also showed compassion by touching people. In Mark 1, a man came to Jesus with leprosy. Mark 1:41-42 tell us, "Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out *His* hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed." Most people avoided lepers so that they would not catch their disease. Because Jesus was moved with compassion, He touched this man and healed Him. Many people who are weary and downcast with their spiritual needs also need the touch of Jesus in their lives. Jesus has called us to follow His example by ministering to these spiritual needs.

Jesus also showed compassion to a woman whose son had died. Luke 7:12-14 says, "And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried *him* stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.'" In this case, Jesus showed His compassion to the widow by raising her son from the dead. By

example, Christ showed us the need to minister with compassion to the grieving.

Christ also told the parable of the Good Samaritan to show the need for compassion. Luke 10:33-34 says, "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him." Christ later taught the importance of compassion in the parable about the lost son. Christ spoke about the father in Luke 15:20 and said, "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."

Christ provided an example and taught the importance of compassion in many ways. In the same way, we need to show developing leaders how to follow the example of Christ and have compassion for others whether their needs are spiritual, physical or emotional. May the Lord richly bless you as you help growing Christians develop compassion for others.

Jesus Confronted the Religious with Love

As we develop leaders who are becoming like their Savior, one of the things we want to show them is how to confront the religious with love. The religious are depending on their own efforts to be right with God. As a result, they think that their own efforts are good enough to get them to heaven. Jesus confronted such individuals with the truth but He always did it with love. In the same way, we want to help developing leaders learn to reach out in love to those who are depending on their own efforts to be right with God. We will illustrate this by the way that Jesus confronted Nicodemus with love.

One night early in His public ministry, Jesus had a key Jewish religious leader come to Him. John 3:1-2 says, “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’” Nicodemus thought that he had an ideal relationship with God. He was a Pharisee. He was a spiritual leader of the Jews. He knew the Old Testament very well. He recognized that Jesus was a teacher that had come from God. He recognized that only God could give Him the power to do the signs that He was doing. He only had one problem. He was depending on his own efforts to be right with God.

In most cases, Jesus usually took time to build a relationship with a person. However, in the case of Nicodemus, Jesus immediately confronted Him. John 3:3 says, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” Jesus told him that there was one requirement in order to even see the kingdom of God. Christ also used a phrase that would help Nicodemus to recognize his lack of spiritual understanding. The phrase “born again” caused Nicodemus to ask a question because he had no idea what that phrase meant. (Phrases like this can be very helpful when we are talking to people one-to-one, but they are very confusing to people who are in a group and have no opportunity to ask to have them explained. Notice the question of Nicodemus.)

Nicodemus immediately responded. John 3:4 says, “Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’” Here, we see his lack of spiritual understanding. This phrase immediately made him think of a second physical birth. To him, the statement of Jesus was very confusing and had no meaning. This statement was the way Jesus chose to confront in love. Instead of bluntly telling Nicodemus he was headed for hell, Jesus chose to arouse his curiosity so that he asked a question that would make it possible for Christ to explain the difference between physical birth and spiritual birth.

Jesus then answered in John 3:5-7, “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” Christ said there must be both a physical birth (born of water) and a spiritual birth (born of the Spirit). Jesus said that physical birth produces physical life. Jesus said that only the Holy Spirit could give spiritual life. Jesus told Nicodemus not to be surprised that he also needed a spiritual birth in addition to his physical birth. Notice that Jesus patiently answered his question and explained His statement that Nicodemus had not understood.

Christ also followed His statement with an illustration. John 3:8 says, “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus could see the effects of the wind but he could not understand where the wind comes from or where it goes. Christ here is illustrating that the life of a

person will be changed when he is born of the Spirit but he will not understand the full process. This immediately caused Nicodemus to ask another question.

John 3:9 says, “Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’” At this point, Nicodemus recognized that he had no understanding of spiritual things and that he needed to begin to understand how the Spirit could give spiritual birth and spiritual life. Nicodemus had been confronted in love and now he was ready to have spiritual life explained so that he could understand it. In the same way, when we confront the religious in love, they will be open to have us explain to them how they can receive eternal life.

Jesus answered in John 3:10, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?’” Nicodemus was one of the best known teachers among the Jews. He was highly respected by the Jews for his teaching. The fact that he had no understanding of spiritual life meant that the other religious teachers also lacked that understanding (In verse 2 Nicodemus had used the word “we”.) They understood the activities of religion, but they had no understanding of the reality of spiritual life. Today, many people have the same problem. They understand the activities of religion (going to church, praying for help when they have problems, reading their Bible etc. without spiritual understanding), but they have no understanding of how to have a personal relationship with God. They need to understand the difference between religious activities and true salvation.

Jesus shows in John 3:11-12 that the reason for this lack of understanding is unbelief. Those verses say, “Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” In verses 11-21, Christ shows that spiritual life requires belief. In fact, the word “believe” is used seven times in these verses. The Jewish leaders did not believe what Jesus said about earthly things so it was impossible for them to believe what Jesus said about spiritual things.

Jesus then told Nicodemus in love how to believe. He said no one had been able to go to heaven and come back to tell a person how to get to heaven. Jesus then illustrated what it meant to believe with an Old Testament illustration. John 3:14-15 says, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” All people could do in the illustration was look to what God had provided and live. In the same way, the Father sent the Son to provide eternal life to all that would believe in the Son.

Jesus also stated that God took the initiative to send His Son down from heaven to make eternal life possible. John 3:16-17 show that both the Father and the Son want to save in love, instead of condemn. Those verses say, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Jesus shared with Nicodemus that God wanted to give him eternal life. Jesus said he could receive that life by believing in the Son. He said that the Son came to save life not to condemn. This is a perfect illustration of confronting in love.

Then Jesus points out that those who have not believed are already condemned. John 3:18 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Jesus shows His love by showing that He wanted all those who are already condemned to believe in Him so that they will no longer be condemned. The religious need to realize their present condition and recognize the love that Christ showed to set them free from their present condemned condition.

Jesus concluded this confrontation by giving Nicodemus a choice. John 3:19-21 says, “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” Nicodemus was told in love that he could choose darkness or he could choose the light. He could continue to live in spiritual darkness or He could believe in the One who would give him light. In fact, Jesus had made it clear that He wanted Nicodemus to come to that light because He had reached out to him in love.

That loving confrontation changed the life of Nicodemus. John 19:38-40 says, “After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.”

Nicodemus was so changed by the spiritual life that Jesus provided that he was eager to show his love for Jesus by preparing him for burial. His life was changed because Jesus loved him enough to confront him. In the same way, developing leaders will see lives changed as they learn to confront the religious in love and show them their need for belief. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to confront the religious in love.

Jesus Provided a Model of Servant Leadership

As we develop leaders who are becoming like their Savior, one of the things we want to show them by our example is what it means to be a servant leader. Today, such examples are greatly lacking. Some Christian leaders follow the example of the world. They act like they are the CEO (boss) of a large corporation. Such leaders have never even heard of servant leadership. Christ says in Mark 10:42-43, “But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant...’”

Other Christian leaders claim to be servant leaders because they obey Christ and they expect others to obey them. They use as their model the centurion whose servant Jesus healed in Luke 7:1-10. Verses 7-9 say, “‘Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does *it*.’ When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, ‘I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!’” This is a military leader, telling how he exercises military leadership, who recognizes the authority that Christ has over sickness. It is not an example of servant leadership; it is a recognition of the authority of Christ over all things – Matthew 28:18.

Mark 10:42-45 give us the meaning of what Jesus means by servant leadership. Those verses say, “But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” Three things are mentioned about servant leadership in these verses:

- ◆ A servant leader chooses to serve others.
- ◆ A servant leader chooses to become a bond slave of all.
- ◆ A servant leader chooses to give his life for the sake of others.

As you can see from these three things, servant leadership is a choice by a leader to follow the example of Christ and lead by serving, becoming a bond servant and giving his life for others. It says nothing about what those who are being led are to do. Servant leadership is an inner attitude of the heart by which a person chooses to place himself or herself under the leadership of Christ (submission). Christ often invited people to follow Him. Some followed, but many did not - Luke 9:57-62; John 6:66.

One of the things to understand is the difference between obedience and submission. A person in authority can command obedience. The centurion recognized that he had to obey his commanding officers. Her also recognized that his soldiers had to obey him. He knew that Christ had that same kind of authority over sickness. In contrast, submission is a choice by the follower to choose to follow a leader. Submission is an inner attitude of the heart and can never be commanded. Some chose to submit to Christ and follow Him. Many chose not to submit to Christ and they followed other things. Christ gave them the freedom to make the choice not to follow or submit.

Christ did give a promise that He would serve those who did choose to follow and submit to Him. Mark 1:17 says, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’” Christ said to those who chose to follow Him that He would invest His life in them and

show them how to become fishers of men. He would show them by His example how to become something that was not presently true in their lives. In fact, He would even give His life in the process of helping them become fishers of men. He would serve them by giving their lives eternal meaning and value. That is the meaning of servant leadership. Servant leadership means we promise to serve those who are following us.

After more than three years of following Him, Christ gave these men one commandment. In John 13:34-35, we read, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” True servant leadership means that we choose to obey this command of Christ. We show our love to one another by serving one another.

In fact, Christ has set us free so that we have the power to serve one another. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” True servant leadership means that because Christ has set us free, we are now free to serve one another instead of living to please ourselves.

Earlier in His ministry, a lawyer asked Christ what is the great commandment in the law. Christ answered in Matthew 22:37-40, “...You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second *is* like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” As we put these commands of Christ to love together, we see that they summarize our three relationships:

- Our relationship to God – Love the Lord our God with our whole heart, soul and mind.
- Our relationship with the people of the world – Love our neighbor as we love ourselves.
- Our relationship with other Christians – Love one another as Christ has loved us.

Christ showed that love and servant leadership meant doing the will of the Father. In John 6:37-39, Christ said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.” In these verses, we see that Christ showed His love for the Father by doing His will. That meant that Christ received all that came to Him. It also meant that He did not lose any that the Father gave Him.

Christ also showed that love and servant leadership meant loving the lost and serving them. When a lawyer tested Christ by asking Him the question, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan. In that parable, Christ made it very clear that to love our neighbor means to show mercy to those who are lost. We love the lost and become a servant leader to them when we share with them how they can receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Just as the Good Samaritan also showed that love by actions, we are to show our love by actions as we share the Gospel with those who do not know Christ.

A servant leader is one who has chosen to lead people by serving them and adding value and meaning to their lives. This is true whether the people are Christians or have not yet come to believe in Christ. For those who are not yet Christians, the servant leader chooses to show them how they can receive forgiveness of sins with the result that they receive eternal life. For those who are Christians, value and meaning are added to their lives because the servant leader chooses to show them by his life how their lives can make a greater impact for eternity. This kind of service will produce spiritual results that will last for eternity and not just earthly works that will perish with this world.

It is a great privilege to show developing leaders how to love and serve God, love and serve the lost

and love and serve other Christians as servant leaders by our example. As we serve them by showing them how to love and serve others, we will show them how their lives here on earth can have eternal purpose and value because we show them how to focus on spiritual things and not just worldly things. May the Lord richly bless you as you show developing leaders how to follow the example of Christ and become effective servant leaders.

Jesus Clarified Truth for those who were Searching

In His ministry, while He was here on earth, Jesus chose to hide truth from some people while making it clear for others. In order to help developing leaders become more like their Savior; we need to help them understand to whom they should make truth clear. We also need to help them understand how to make truth clear.

In Matthew 13:10-16, we read, “And the disciples came and said to Him, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables’ He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: “Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.” But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear...”

In these verses, we see that Christ made the mysteries of the kingdom clear to His disciples but He did not make those mysteries clear to the multitudes. Christ made it very clear that the reason why the multitudes could not see, could not hear and could not understand was due to the fact that their hearts had grown dull. Paul quoted these same verses and said the same thing in Acts 28:25-28. Verse 28 adds, “Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!” The fact that this statement was made both by Christ and Paul, about the Jews, shows that they had heard and continued to reject. That generation of Jews was not searching. However, the Gentiles were searching and Paul said they would hear.

We need to realize that many people are searching for answers in life today. It is our privilege to share with them because they will hear. We want to help developing leaders begin to learn to recognize when they are talking to people who are searching for answers in life. Many times the people who are searching do not even realize that they are searching. That is why we need to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us to people. One of the things that we see about Christ is that He was continually taking the opportunity to talk to people. In the process of talking with people, some became open because they were searching for truth.

A good illustration is the Samaritan woman in John 4. When Jesus first began talking with her, she was not very open. In fact, she responded in John 4:9, “Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” From this answer, it almost sounds like she was suspicious. For the next few verses, Jesus talked about living water and she interpreted what He was saying from her natural thinking. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

However, she quickly revealed that she was searching for spiritual life when she said in John 4:19-20, “...Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” She showed by her statement that she thought worship happened by going to a certain place. Jesus explained the meaning of true worship in John 4:23-24 where we read, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

As a result of that meeting at a well, a whole town was changed. John 4:41-42 says, “And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’” Here, we see that Jesus found a whole town of people who were searching and He shared the Word of God with them. The result was that many believed. The previous verse said that Jesus had spent two whole days teaching these people who were searching.

In Mark 12, we see that Christ recognized when another man was searching. Mark 12:32-34 says, “So the scribe said to Him, ‘Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.’ Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’”

In this case, Jesus recognized by the answer that the man gave that he was searching for spiritual life. One of the things that the scribe recognized was the need to love God and not just offer sacrifices. Many times people will show that they are searching for spiritual life by the questions they ask or the statements they make. We need to help developing spiritual leaders realize that whenever we talk with people, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to make us sensitive to what they are saying so that the Holy Spirit shows us those who are open.

We also need to help developing leaders learn how to make truth clear to those who are open. One of the things that we notice about the ministry of Christ was that He used illustrations of things that the people understood to help them understand things that they did not understand. The Samaritan woman had come for water, so Jesus began talking about living water and helped her make the transition in her thinking from physical water to spiritual life.

In John 9, Jesus met and healed a man that was blind from birth. The man who had been blind was inwardly searching as is shown by his growing understanding through the chapter. Jesus asked a question to help the man understand and believe. John 9:35-38 says, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’ He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’ Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him.” This man was searching and so Jesus told him who he needed to believe.

Some Pharisees had been listening to what Jesus said to the man. However, these Pharisees had no desire to believe. As a result, John 9:40-41 says, “Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, ‘Are we blind also?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, “We see.” Therefore your sin remains.’” These Pharisees had not been able to understand when Christ used physical blindness and physical sight to introduce the need for spiritual sight. They did not believe because they wanted to remain in their sin rather than seek spiritual sight. The man who had been blind could understand the comparison between physical sight and spiritual sight. The Pharisees could not because they were not open.

Nicodemus was one Pharisee who was searching for spiritual truth. In his case he showed that interest by talking to Jesus one night. Jesus helped him to understand spiritual life by comparing physical birth and spiritual birth. At first, he did not understand. John 3:9 says, “Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’” Jesus used an illustration from the Old Testament to help Nicodemus understand what it meant to believe. Jesus then explained to Nicodemus that every person must make the choice to believe and come to the light or reject and remain in darkness. The fact that Nicodemus was one of the men who buried Jesus shows that he chose to come to the light. Jesus had clarified truth for him and the result was that he believed.

We want to help developing leaders learn to become sensitive to the Holy Spirit so that they recognize when people are searching. We also want to help them realize the need to use illustrations the person understands to help make the truth clear to them. That way they will become effective leaders who will be able to help people come to recognize that they must make the choice to choose life or reject the life that Jesus has already paid for by His death and resurrection. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to clarify truth for those who are searching.

Jesus Gave People the Choice to Believe

As Jesus talked with people, He would share with them the need to believe, what to believe and then give them the opportunity to make the choice to believe. As we help developing spiritual leaders in their development, we also need to show them how to do these same things.

First, Christ showed people the need to believe. When Nicodemus came to Jesus one night, Jesus immediately shared with him the need to believe. In John 3:3, we read, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” Nicodemus was a Jewish religious leader and a member of the Pharisees. Like the other Pharisees, he thought that he would certainly make it to heaven because he was making every effort to obey the law. Nicodemus first had to come to the point where he realized that he needed to believe.

Later, Jesus healed a man that had been born blind. Since Christ put clay on his eyes and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, he did not see Jesus at that time. Later, Jesus came to him after he had been cast out of the synagogue. John 9:35-36 says, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’ He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’” Jesus helped the man to realize that he needed to believe.

Second, Christ showed people what they needed to believe. In John 3:16-17, Jesus told Nicodemus what he needed to believe, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Jesus made it clear to Nicodemus that he had to believe in the Son of God in order to have eternal life.

As Jesus talked with the man that had been born blind, Jesus asked him if he believed in the Son of God. Then to make it clear who the Son of God is, Jesus said in John 9:37, “And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’” Jesus told the man that he had seen the Son of God. Since the man had only had sight for part of the day, he had only seen a limited number of people. Then, Jesus became even more specific. Jesus said that the Son of God was talking to him at that very moment. Jesus wanted to make certain that there was no question in the mind of the man what and whom he needed to believe.

Jesus also made it clear to groups of people what they needed to believe so that they could have their sins forgiven. One day Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees in the temple at Jerusalem. In John 8:23-24 Jesus said to them, “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” Jesus made it very clear to the Pharisees that they had to believe in Him in order to have their sins forgiven.

Jesus had made it very clear to them that they needed to believe in Him. However, they continued to question. Finally, Jesus told them why they could not understand. John 8:43-45 says, “Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.” They could not believe in Christ because they chose to continue to follow their father, the devil.

At a later feast, the Jews confronted Jesus again. John 10:24-25 says, “Then the Jews surrounded

Him and said to Him, ‘How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me.’” Jesus was not leaving them in doubt. He was telling them very clearly that He is the Son of God and that they needed to believe in Him.

Third, Jesus showed these Jews that they had a choice to believe. As the Jews continued to confront Him, Jesus told them one more time that they needed to believe in the Son of God and that He is the Son of God. John 10:35-38 says, “‘If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.’” It was not a case that Jesus did not make it clear that He was the Son of God and that they had the choice to believe in Him, instead, it was a case that they made the choice not to believe.

Three years earlier, Jesus had also shown Nicodemus that he had the choice to believe. John 3:18 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Nicodemus learned that night that He had the choice not to believe and remain condemned or he had the choice to believe and no longer face condemnation. The choice was made very clear so that he had the choice to believe.

One day a rich young ruler came to Christ. Again, Christ told him that he had to make a choice to believe and choose to follow Christ in order to have eternal life. Mark 10:21-22 says, “Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.’ But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” In this case, the young man made the choice not to believe and place his faith in Christ. We see that he clearly understood his choice and he decided that things were more important to him than following Christ. Christ showed His love by allowing that young man to make the choice to reject. Christ did not try to force him to follow or even give him an easier choice.

Even when people chose to reject Him, that did not change the attitude of Christ toward those people. This is illustrated most clearly by the way Jesus responded to Judas. Matthew 26:48-50 says, “Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.’ Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Friend, why have you come?’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.” At the very moment that Judas was betraying Him, Jesus still treated Judas with love and respect and called him ‘Friend’”. He gave Judas the freedom to make the choice to reject and even betray Him and still treated him as a friend.

We want to teach developing leaders to follow the example of Christ and keep loving people whether those people choose to follow Christ or to reject Christ. Christ still continues to reach out to people even when they reject Him and we want to show developing leaders the importance of giving people a clear choice but continue to love them and reach out to them even when they reject.

Christ illustrated this principle by the way He kept reaching out to Saul even when Saul was rejecting and persecuting Him. Saul showed his rejection of Christ by disputing with Stephen. Acts 6:9-10 says, “Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.” Saul had made the choice not

to believe.

Saul continued to reject. Acts 7:58 says, “And they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.” Acts 8:1a says, “Now Saul was consenting to his death.” Acts 8:3 says, “As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.” Christ continued to love Saul and even gave him another opportunity to make the choice to believe.

Acts 9:4-6 says, “Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’” Christ never changed His love for Saul. He loved him even when Saul was persecuting those who followed Christ. Christ continued to give him a choice until he responded to that choice by believing in Christ.

The Lord calls us to help developing leaders learn to share the need to believe, help them understand how to explain clearly what people need to believe and then give those people the opportunity to make the choice to believe. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to become more like their Savior.

Jesus Spent Time with People Needing Eternal Life

Today, we live in a very busy world. It seems like there is always more to do. It is very easy for Christian leaders and developing Christian leaders to become so busy that they think they do not have time to spend with people who are not yet Christians. In contrast, Jesus loved people and He purposely chose to make time to spend with people who needed eternal life.

Certainly Christ was very busy. He knew that He only had three and a half years of public ministry to complete the work that the Father had sent Him to do. However, as Christ prayed to the Father the night before His crucifixion He said in John 17:4, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." In spite of the fact that Christ had to select and train the men who would carry on His work when He returned to heaven, Christ chose to spend much time with people needing eternal life.

The disciples were learning many things from Christ and they did not want to have their learning interrupted. One day, Jesus was teaching the disciples in the area of Tyre and Sidon. While they were there, a woman of Canaan came to Jesus and asked Him to help her daughter who was vexed with a demon. Instead of seeing an opportunity to serve a woman and her daughter who needed eternal life, the disciples did not want to be bothered. Matthew 15:23 says, "And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, 'Send her away, for she cries out after us.'"

Christ took time and talked with the woman. The result is seen by the statement of Christ in Matthew 15:28. That verse says, "Then Jesus answered and said to her, 'O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour." This woman was not a Jew. It would have been easy for Jesus to ignore her or tell her to leave. However, Christ spent time with people needing eternal life and He wanted to teach His disciples by example that they also needed to reach out to people needing eternal life.

In this case, we see that Christ was actually doing two things. He ministered to the woman and her daughter. However, Christ also showed the disciples by His example the need to spend time with people needing eternal life. The disciples did not want to be bothered by a foreign woman who had a daughter that was being tormented by a demon. Christ remained silent so that their attitude toward the woman would be revealed by their words. Christ both took time with this woman and showed the disciples by example the importance of reaching out to those who had little or no hope. In the same way, we want to show developing leaders by our example the importance of spending time with people who have no hope and share with them how to have eternal life.

Jesus also spent time with groups of people needing eternal life. In Matthew 9:10-12, we read, "Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard that, He said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.'" As you can see by the statement of the Pharisees, they thought Christ was wasting His time to spend time with the tax collectors and sinners.

A meal provides one of the greatest opportunities to build relationships with people who need eternal life. Christ was taking this opportunity to show the disciples how to build relationships with tax collectors and sinners. The disciples were learning to sit and eat with people who needed eternal life. They were being shown how to build relationships with these people so that they could share eternal life with them. They were also being shown how to invite those people to repent and believe. Matthew 9:13 says, "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'" For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Before the dinner

was over, the tax collectors and sinners had the opportunity to believe in Christ, because He had chosen to spend time with them.

Jesus also chose to spend time with the scribes because they also needed eternal life. One day a scribe asked Christ what is the first commandment of all. Jesus answered by saying that the first commandment of all has two parts in Mark 12:29-31, “Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments is: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.”

After discussing this commandment with the scribe, Jesus said in Mark 12:34, “Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ But after that no one dared question Him.” Jesus told this scribe that his answer showed that he was searching and that he was not far from the kingdom of God. Because Jesus reached out to all people needing eternal life, Mark 12:37b says, “And the common people heard Him gladly.” The common people realized that Jesus chose to spend time with them so that they could hear how to have eternal life.

Christ also chose to spend time with the Pharisees so that He could share with them how to have eternal life. Luke 7:36 says, “Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat.” Here, we see that Jesus had time to have dinner with a proud Pharisee who needed to have eternal life. This Pharisee even had a negative attitude toward Christ. Luke 7:39 says, “Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, ‘This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.’” Here, we see that the Pharisee had a negative, critical attitude but Jesus knew that he needed eternal life.

In this case, Jesus gave Simon and the other Pharisees a short parable. Luke 7:41-43 says, “‘There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?’ Simon answered and said, ‘I suppose the one whom he forgave more.’ And He said to him, ‘You have rightly judged.’” Jesus told Simon he was correct that the one who is forgiven the most loves the most.

Later, Jesus showed Simon and his guests that He can forgive sins and give eternal life. Luke 7:47-50 says, “‘Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.’ Then He said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this who even forgives sins?’ Then He said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.’” Simon and the others saw Jesus forgive the sins of the woman and give her eternal life. They saw that they could also ask Jesus to forgive their sins and give them eternal life. Jesus chose to spend time with Simon and his friends so that they could see and hear how to have eternal life.

Just as Christ spent time with people from many different backgrounds that needed eternal life, we need to help developing leaders learn to spend time with people who need eternal life. We will show developing leaders by our example as we show that one of our priorities is to spend time with people who have not yet placed their faith and trust in Christ. The best way to show developing leaders the importance of spending time with those who are not yet Christians is to take them with us as we visit those who are not yet Christians. They will see by our example what to do to develop relationships with those who are not Christians and they will hear what to share as they listen to us.

At the beginning of this topic, we quoted John 17:4 where Jesus said, “I have glorified You on the

earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” The work that He had been doing for the previous three and a half years was training the disciples who would continue His work when He returned to heaven. He trained them by taking them with Him as He spent time with people needing eternal life. We will train others by taking them with us as we visit those who are not yet Christians. May the Lord richly bless you as you take developing leaders with you and show them how to build relationships and share the Gospel with those needing eternal life.

Jesus Used the Physical to Explain the Spiritual

Often one of the major questions of developing leaders is, “How do I make the Gospel clear as I explain it to a person who is not a Christian?” Today, we will focus on that topic as we share how Christ used the physical to explain the spiritual. Two of the illustrations that we will see are events that happened near the beginning of the public ministry of Christ and close to the end of that public ministry.

Near the start of His public ministry, Christ had the opportunity to talk to Nicodemus. As they talked, Christ used physical birth to explain spiritual birth. In John 3:3, we read, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” Here, we see that Christ introduced the subject of spiritual birth. The answer of Nicodemus shows that he had no understanding of spiritual birth, but could only think of a second physical birth. John 3:4 says, “Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?’”

Jesus answered by sharing that there is both a physical birth and also a spiritual birth. John 3:6-7 says, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again.” Then, Christ went on to explain to Nicodemus how he could experience a spiritual birth. By the time Jesus and Nicodemus had finished the discussion, Nicodemus knew the difference between physical birth and spiritual birth. He also knew that the way to experience a spiritual birth was by believing and placing his trust in the fact that Christ died to pay the penalty for his sin so that he could be forgiven.

Near the end of His ministry, Christ used physical death to explain the meaning of spiritual death. This happened when Christ came to Bethany where Lazarus had experienced physical death four days earlier. His sister, Martha, believed in the future resurrection. When Christ told Martha that her brother would rise again, she said that she knew he would rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus responded in John 11:25-26, “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’” Her answer shows that her understanding was not clear.

This lack of understanding is clearly revealed a few verses later. John 11:39 says, “Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, ‘Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.’” Then, in John 11:43-44 we read, “Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose him, and let him go.’” In this case, Jesus showed that physical life was restored as soon as He spoke the word. In the same way, a spiritual life begins at the moment a person places his or her trust in Christ. As John 11:25-26 in the previous paragraph says, those who believe will never die. They immediately receive spiritual life and it will last forever.

In addition to using physical life to explain spiritual life, Christ also used many physical things to explain spiritual things. In Mark 4:1-20, Christ uses four kinds of ground that had seed sown in them to show the condition of men's hearts. There are four kinds of responses that people make to the message of the Gospel. Some people hear the Word and immediately forget it. Some people hear the Word, get all excited about what they hear but quickly get sidetracked by their own problems. Some people hear the Word, but they are so focused on their problems or their desire for riches that those things sidetrack them. The people whose hearts are like the good ground, hear the Word, accept what they hear and the Word brings forth fruit in their lives because they respond and place their trust in Christ.

Christ gave a second parable a few verses later to explain how the Word of God works in the hearts of those who are like the good ground. In the previous parable, the focus was on the hearts of those who hear the Word of God. In this second parable, the focus is on how the Word of God works in the hearts of those whose hearts are like the good ground.

Mark 4:26-29 says, “And He said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’” This time, Christ used the seed to explain how the Word of God works in the lives of those who are not Christians to draw them to Christ. We see that there is usually a period of time from the time when the seed is first planted until the time when the seed produces a harvest. Developing leaders need to recognize that as they continue to share the Word with individuals who are not yet Christians that the Lord is working in their hearts. It will usually take time but one day the harvest will come.

Of course we also have many other cases where Christ used something physical to explain about spiritual life. The following are just a few examples from the book of John:

- word – the Word became flesh – John 1
- lamb – the Lamb of God – John 1
- water – living water – John 4 and John 7:37-39
- bread – bread of life – John 6
- light – light of the world – John 8
- physical sight – spiritual sight – John 9
- door – Christ is the door – John 10
- shepherd – Christ is the Good Shepherd – John 10

As we look at the things that Christ used to explain spiritual life, we see that they were all things that the people who were listening understood. One of the key things is that most of the things used in the book of John can be explained easily in almost every culture. That means that we can help developing leaders learn to use common things that everyone understands to explain about spiritual life because these things are clearly understood in the culture in which they are sharing the Gospel. Every culture uses words, water, bread, light, physical sight and doors in daily life. Every culture experiences physical birth and physical death.

In addition, to things that people see and use, Christ also used things that people feel to help them understand about spiritual life. John was in the boat when the disciples experienced fear in the storm. It is not a surprise that John would later speak of the fact that perfect love casts out fear in 1 John 4:18, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” John knew how the love of Christ changed both his physical fear and his spiritual fear.

Hebrews 2:14-15 tells us that the fear that all people without Christ have is the fear of death. Those verses say, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” This is a fear that everyone understands because it is the thing that Satan uses to hold each person as a prisoner.

One of the things we see is that Christ used physical things that everyone understands to make clear spiritual things that they did not understand. One of the ways to help a developing leader learn how to use common things to explain spiritual life is to help him learn to explain these common things

the way that Christ explained them.

One way to help a person learn to use these things to explain spiritual life is to have the person read any of the passages mentioned in this topic every day for a month. If a Christian will read John 3 every day for a month and ask the Holy Spirit daily to teach him how to explain spiritual life from that passage, by the end of the month that person will know how to use physical birth to explain spiritual birth. Once the Holy Spirit has taught the person how to use physical birth to explain spiritual birth, that person can choose one of the other passages mentioned. He can read about the bread of life, the water of life, the light or physical and spiritual sight and read that passage every day for a month while asking the Holy Spirit to teach him how to use the physical to explain the spiritual.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” As developing leaders learn to use the Word of God to explain spiritual life and as they pray for boldness to share the Gospel in love, they will see the Lord work through their lives to lead others to Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to use various physical things to explain to others how to have spiritual life.

Jesus Shared the Message of Forgiveness Through Parables

One of the things that Jesus used to help make the Gospel clear to people was parables (someone once defined a parable as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning). As we help developing leaders grow in their understanding of how to share the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians, one of the things that we want to do is help them learn to explain the parables that Christ spoke.

One day, Jesus had a large group of tax collectors and sinners come to Him to hear Him. Christ knew that they came to Him because they wanted to know how to have eternal life. The Pharisees and scribes had just the opposite reaction. Luke 15:1-2 says, “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’” The scribes and Pharisees did not want to have eternal life and they did not want others to hear how to have eternal life. The tax collectors and sinners were thankful that Jesus accepted them and would talk with them.

In order to help the tax collectors and sinners understand how to have eternal life, Christ used three things that they understood very well to help them understand how to have eternal life. That is exactly what we want to teach developing spiritual leaders. We want to help them learn to take things that people understand and use those things to help people understand how to have eternal life. Let’s look at some lessons from those three parables.

The first parable is about a lost sheep. Luke 15:4-7 says, “‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’” I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” In this parable, Christ helped the tax collectors and sinners to understand several things:

- ◆ The shepherd had a great concern for a lost sheep – John 10 tells us Christ is the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep.
- ◆ The shepherd kept searching for the lost sheep until he found it – Jesus shows that He never gives up as He seeks those that are lost.
- ◆ The shepherd was filled with rejoicing when he found the lost sheep – Christ is filled with joy every time a person places his or her trust in Christ.
- ◆ The shepherd brings the sheep home – Christ continues to bring every sheep that He finds to the fold – John 10:16 “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”
- ◆ The shepherd calls the neighbors to come and rejoice with him – Christ wants others to rejoice with Him when a person receives forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
- ◆ Jesus said there is great joy in heaven over one sinner who repents – Jesus was letting the tax collectors and sinners know that they would be forgiven and it would bring great joy to Christ if even one of them would repent.

The second parable is about a lost coin. Luke 15:8-10 says, “‘Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost.’” Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” In this parable, Christ again helped the tax collectors and sinners to understand several things:

- The woman had a great concern for the lost coin – Jesus has a great concern for lost people.

- The woman worked hard to find the lost coin – Jesus will do whatever is necessary to find those who are lost.
- The woman kept looking until she found the coin – Jesus will keep seeking one who is lost.
- The woman called her friends together to rejoice with her – Jesus wants Christians to rejoice with Him every time a person becomes a Christian.
- Jesus said there is great joy in heaven over one sinner who repents – Jesus tells the tax collectors and sinners for a second time that they will be forgiven and it would bring great joy to Christ if even one of them would repent.

The third parable is about two lost sons (one knows he is a sinner and the second thinks that his own efforts are good enough to please God). The one who knows he is a sinner represents the tax collectors and the sinners. The one who thinks he is good enough to please God through his own efforts represents the scribes and Pharisees. We see in this parable that one son was lost and is found while the second son is lost but does not know he is lost and will not come into the house of the father. Developing leaders need to be shown that the father had a concern for both lost sons.

As Christ talked about the choices of the younger son, the tax collectors and sinners were probably identifying with choices that they had made earlier in their lives. Luke 15:11-13 tell us, “Then He said: ‘A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.’” The younger son shows us several things about the earlier life of the tax collectors and sinners and they could all see themselves:

- The son demanded his rights – “Give me the portion of goods that falls to me.”
 - The son wanted to leave home and the rules of his parents.
 - The son wanted to get far away from home so his parents would not know what he was doing.
 - The son chose to live for today and forget about tomorrow – He wasted his possessions.
 - The son chose to live a sinful lifestyle – A prodigal lifestyle (wild sinful living).
- Many of the tax collectors and sinners knew that Christ had just described their own choices.

Christ then showed the consequences of those choices because all choices have consequences. Good choices have good consequences and bad choices have bad consequences. Luke 15:14-16 says, “But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.” The tax collectors and sinners understood that they were living with the following consequences of their choices:

- ◆ There came a time in their lives when they had wasted all that they had.
- ◆ There came a time when they began to have needs in their lives.
- ◆ There came a time when they had to make choices that they did not like in order to survive – No good self-respecting Jewish man wanted to be associated with pigs but this young man was more concerned about survival than self-respect.
- ◆ There came a time for many when they lost all self-respect – Would you poke a pig in the side and say move over so I can share your food?
- ◆ There came a time when the respected people would have nothing to do with them.

Christ showed the fact that a person could turn from former choices and make the choice to repent of his or her sin. Luke 15:17-19 says, “‘But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’”” The tax collectors and sinners learned that they could now make new choices:

- They could repent – “But when he came to himself”.
- They could remember that their father cared for his servants.
- They could remember that the servants of the father had their needs met.
- They could go to their father.
- They could confess their sin.
- They could become a servant of their father.

Christ showed the love of the heavenly Father for all those who repent of their sin and rebellion which caused them to go their own way. Luke 15:20-24 says, ““And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.” But the father said to his servants, “Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” And they began to be merry.”” The tax collectors and sinners saw that God would receive them if they would repent and come to Him. Just as the earthly father showed his son, the Heavenly Father would:

- have compassion – the heavenly Father has great compassion.
- come to meet the repentant sinner – the son’s father ran to him.
- show his love – the son’s father fell on his neck and kissed him (regardless of the pigpen smell or the pigpen dirt).
- accept his repentance from his sin.
- give him a new robe – the robe of righteousness.
- put a ring on his finger – the father would identify him as his son.
- put shoes on his feet – feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace – Ephesians 6:15.
- kill the fatted calf – the calf that had been saved for a special guest.
- give life to the son – eternal life.
- celebrate the new life of the son.

These three parables show why the tax collectors and sinners came to Christ to hear Him. Christ showed them compassion instead of judging them. Christ offered them hope instead of condemnation. Christ offered them forgiveness and eternal life. Christ promised that heaven would celebrate when they repented and came to Christ for forgiveness. These three parables and many others can be shared with a developing leader to help him understand how to reach people for Christ that feel like they have been rejected by society because of their sinful lifestyle. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to share the compassion of Christ with those who have no hope.

Jesus Shared the Message of Forgiveness as He Met Physical Needs

One of the ways that Christ shared the message of forgiveness was by meeting both physical and spiritual needs at the same time. Christ showed compassion as He met physical needs. However, His greater concern was also to meet the spiritual needs. This was true whether He was healing a person of a physical problem or providing food to a large group of people.

In Mark 2:1-12, we see that four friends brought a man who was paralyzed to Christ. The first recorded thing that Christ said to this man is given in Mark 2:5 which says, “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven you.’” This would seem to indicate that this man might have been paralyzed because of his sin. Here, we see that Christ focused on the spiritual need of the man before even beginning to deal with his physical need. Christ wanted him to experience forgiveness of sins as soon as Christ saw the faith of the friends.

Of course, the fact that Christ forgave the sins of the man immediately stirred up some opposition from the people and they questioned in their hearts whether Christ had the right to forgive sins. Christ then showed that He had power to forgive sins by healing the man. Mark 2:9-11 says, “‘Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’--He said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.’” In these verses, Christ began to show very early in His public ministry that He had an even greater desire to forgive sins than to heal although He also healed the man.

When Christ healed the man at the pool of Bethesda, Christ showed again that His greatest concern was to deal with the issue of sin even though the man had been paralyzed for 38 years. John 5:14 says, “Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.’” Christ had a great concern to help this man deal with the sin in his life and receive forgiveness.

There were also times when Christ healed a physical problem that was not the result of sin. One day Christ and the disciples met a blind man and the disciples asked if the man had sinned or if his parents had sinned. Christ made it very clear that the blindness was not a result of sin. John 9:3 says, “Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’” However, Christ also used this opportunity to meet the spiritual need of the man as well as the physical need. John 9:35-38 says, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, ‘Do you believe in the Son of God?’ He answered and said, ‘Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.’ Then he said, ‘Lord, I believe!’ And he worshiped Him.” Christ met His need for physical sight and Christ also met his need for spiritual sight.

From these three illustrations, we see that Christ was always concerned to meet spiritual needs even while He was meeting physical needs. Christ wanted people to experience forgiveness of sins and eternal life. One day, Christ met the physical need of five thousand people by providing them with a meal. The crowd showed up the next day and Christ said that they wanted another free meal. John 6:26 says, “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.’” Christ made it very clear in the following verses that He was more concerned about their spiritual needs and He was not going to give them another free lunch the next day.

John 6:27-29 says, “‘Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on

Him.’ Then they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’” Christ pointed out that the physical food would not last. Instead, Christ let the crowd know that what they needed was spiritual food that would give them everlasting life. Christ said the only way they could receive that spiritual food was to believe in Him.

In Luke 17:11-19, we read about Christ healing ten lepers. Nine were only healed physically, but one was healed both physically and spiritually. In Luke 17:14, we read, “So when He saw them, He said to them, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’ And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.” Here, we see that all ten were cleansed of their leprosy.

Then in Luke 17:15-19 we read, “And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?’ And He said to him, ‘Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.’” Christ gave this man the assurance that his faith had met the spiritual need as well as the physical need.

One of the things that we want to show developing spiritual leaders is the importance of being concerned about meeting spiritual needs as well as physical needs. Christians do kind deeds to help others just because of the fact that having Christ in their lives has given them a desire to do good. Through the years Christians have often been the leaders in providing humanitarian aid in times of emergency. However, true Christian love will mean that we are equally concerned to meet spiritual needs while we are meeting physical needs. Christ used His deeds of physical kindness as opportunities to share with people how they could have forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Meeting physical needs meets a short-term need while meeting spiritual needs meets an eternal need.

A second thing that we want to help developing leaders understand is how to use the times when Christ met physical needs to explain to people how Christ can meet their spiritual needs. An evangelistic Bible study can be a key way to help a person or small group of people come to an understanding of how Christ can meet their spiritual needs by sharing how Christ met spiritual needs as well as physical needs as He ministered to people. The book of John can be an especially effective book for an evangelistic Bible study because the first half of the book provides many illustrations of Christ meeting spiritual needs while meeting physical needs.

John begins the book by showing that Christ came from heaven to meet spiritual needs and help people become children of God. John the Baptist introduces Christ as the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world. This focus by John the Baptist on spiritual needs caused two of the men who were following him to begin following Christ. Chapter one concludes by showing that the fact that Christ meets spiritual needs is good news to share with both relatives and friends.

In the first miracle recorded in John, Christ met a physical need at a wedding. John 2:11 says that the miracle also met a spiritual need. That verse says, “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.” In the same way, each of the miracles recorded in the book of John are designed to help people believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. John 20:30-31 says, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

The purpose of all of the miracles recorded in the book of John is to help people believe. That is why the book of John can be so effective in an evangelistic Bible study. One of the key things we can teach a developing spiritual leader is how to use the book of John for evangelistic Bible studies.

Over and over there are opportunities to help people understand how to have forgiveness of sins including each of the times when Christ met physical needs. In this way, we are equipping the developing leader to share the Gospel and the message of forgiveness in many different ways.

It is a great privilege to help developing leaders become like their Savior. That will happen as they learn many different ways to help them use physical needs to begin discussing spiritual needs with people. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to share the message of forgiveness as they meet needs.