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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids



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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

What is spiritual leadership?

Spiritual leadership has its foundation in a life surrendered to God. A spiritual leader inspires others to be Christ-like in a nurturing, self-sacrificial manner which affirms and encourages others. He has no tolerance for sin and readily assumes responsibility for error without attempting to escape accountability. Spiritual leadership rests on trust, love, integrity, and honesty. (*Romans 12:17*) “*Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*”

Spiritual leadership is often referred to as “servant leadership.” Spiritual leaders are called to serve others, thereby serving God. They lead by example, striving to remain blameless by the grace of God. Spiritual leaders are conformed to the image of Christ through their victories and failings, knowing their faith defines them, not their success. A spiritual leader is open to counsel and willingly steps into the leadership roles the Lord has appointed him to even when he feels inadequate, fearful, or uncomfortable. Effective spiritual leadership requires a blend of assertiveness and humility which is grounded upon and guided by the Scriptures and leading of the Holy Spirit. Knowing the Word of God and intentionally allowing it to change his behaviors and attitudes is fundamental to a spiritual leader’s life as he leads others by example. This example serves as a witness both to the believer and the unbeliever alike. (*2 Timothy 3:10*) “*But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience.*”

What isn’t spiritual leadership?

(*2 Timothy 2:24*) “*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.*” Spiritual leaders do not lead by controlling or micromanaging others. They do not claim spiritual superiority but are gentle and patient realizing who they have become is because of God’s grace. (*1 Corinthians 15:10*) “*But by the grace of God I am what I am . . .*” True spiritual leaders are never demeaning to others and never use coercion to further their agendas. They follow the biblical principles of being submissive one to another in the spirit of humility. (*1 Peter 5:5*) “*Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility:*”

(*1 Timothy 3:4*) “*One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.*” Spiritual leaders do not shirk their duties at home and elsewhere, but they accept them willingly, modeling leadership through godly behavior and teaching biblical truths. (*1 Timothy 5:8*) “*But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*”

Who is a spiritual leader?

We might quickly assume a spiritual leader is only an elder, minister, Sunday School teacher, or those with an “official” position in church. However, since all Christians are called to a life of servitude and love toward others, all Christians are spiritual leaders with varying roles and responsibilities in the home, church, workplace, and community. It is easy and tempting to pass off opportunities for service with the mindset we are not qualified or authorized. We must all be open and available to that which God would have us to do. (*Galatians 5:13*) “*For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*”

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

Series 1: Foundational Principles of Spiritual Leadership

What is Spiritual Leadership?:

1. Faith
2. Trust
3. Integrity
4. Love
5. Selflessness
6. Humility
7. Holiness
8. Personal Worship

What Spiritual Leadership is Not:

9. Controlling
10. Spiritually Superior
11. Demeaning
12. Proud

Series 2: Spiritual Growth and Maturity

Spiritual Growth

1. Sanctification
2. Prayer
3. The Discipline of Growth
4. Exercising Patience
5. Accountability
6. Stewardship
7. Empathy

Spiritual Maturity

8. Submission
9. Contentment
10. Commitment
11. Discernment
12. Purity

Study method:

This Bible study discussion aid is best intended for small groups (2-10 brothers) which meet regularly. Assuming you are meeting as a group, when you come together, begin with prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to penetrate hearts with His Word. The individual lessons have been designed to be used singly or in combination with others. Each lesson begins with at least one verse from Scripture. This verse or subsequent verses could be used as a possible memory verse from session to session. It is suggested each member of the group complete the lessons individually and come to the group prepared to discuss the lesson. Another potential benefit of this group setting is the opportunity to create deeper relationships with each other through your time together. These relationships can be used to build accountability, share prayer requests, and strengthen each other both during these studies and at other times. Be confident that time in God's Word and in the fellowship of God's people has great potential to build up, convict and encourage your heart.

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

1. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – FAITH

(Romans 10:17) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

(Ephesians 2:8) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

These verses tell us we come to faith by hearing the Word of God and through faith we are saved. Faith is reached by prayer, by experience, and by a humble obedience to God and His Word. Spiritual leaders must be firmly anchored in the Word and to the Lord or they will be ineffective.

(Hebrews 11:1) "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

1. How would you say *Hebrews 11* defines faith?

2. Describe what faith looks like in a spiritual leader in moments of victory and defeat. (Consider Moses, David or Abraham as examples)

(Mark 9:24) "...Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

3. Do you struggle with having faith? Identify examples when your faith was weak and when it was strong.

4. Review how your doubts and questions built trust and increased your faith.

(Romans 5:1-2) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

5. Examine the importance of faith being a foundational principle of spiritual leadership.

6. Summarize your testimony of faith.

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

2. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – TRUST

(2 Samuel 22:31) “As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.”

Trust in God is built by knowing Him to be faithful. His Word is tried, we’ve seen His work, and experienced His blessings. Spiritual leadership rests on that trust. We will likely not follow a leader in whom we don’t have adequate trust. The leader’s counsel will be doubted and his effectiveness will be minimal.

(Psalm 36:7) “How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”

1. In your own words, explain what it means to be trustworthy.

2. What does this verse imply is necessary before trust is placed in a leader?

3. On a scale of 1-10, how much do people trust you? Identify ways you know this.

(Psalm 9:10) “And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.”

4. According to this verse, how does God demonstrate His trustworthiness?

5. Explain how you have responded to those who have sought your help?

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

3. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – INTEGRITY

(Psalm 25:21) "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee."

Integrity, honesty, and character all seem to be woven together. One can scarcely be present without the other. Integrity incorporates consistent behaviors, beliefs, morality, and actions which are all grounded in honesty and truthfulness. Integrity of character is essential for an effective spiritual leader.

1. As the introductory verse indicates, explain how integrity is able to preserve us.

(Proverbs 11:3) "The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them."

(Proverbs 19:1) "Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool."

2. In your own words, define integrity. Why is it valuable?

3. Compare & contrast the actions and consequences of the above verses.

(Proverbs 20:7) "The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him."

4. Evaluate the far-reaching consequences of the above verse.

(Job 31:6) "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity."

(1 Corinthians 3:7) "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

5. Create a visual or diagram to illustrate the importance of Job 31:16.

6. According to 1 Corinthians 3:7, review the role God plays in our integrity. What role do you play? Where can you do more to fulfill your role?
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

4. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – LOVE

(1 Corinthians 12:25) “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.”

God is love and this love is evident in Christ. His compassion and love for us before we loved Him is unsurpassed. A spiritual leader must have a desire to serve others and to care deeply for their needs even when those emotions are not returned. When we demonstrate Christ-like love to others we create a place of safety and trust in which relationships can flourish. Without love, a leader can use his position to satisfy his own selfish aspirations. Such an individual cannot be an effective spiritual leader and can be a hindrance to others.

(Luke 10:33) “But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.”

1. This is an excerpt from the story of the Good Samaritan. As you reflect on the whole account, what was the Good Samaritan’s motivation?
2. List the elements of self the Samaritan needed to put aside to do this good deed. In what ways or situations do you need to recognize and meet the needs of those in your life and also set aside self?
3. Describe a time when God motivated you to do a kind deed.
4. In your own words, give a definition of compassion.

(1 John 4:18-20) “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

5. Describe the relationship love and fear have according to the above verses.

(1 John 4:10-11) “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

6. Examine a time where you’ve seen sacrificial love. What made it sacrificial? Why is sacrificial love difficult? Is there an area in your life where you can love more sacrificially?
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

5. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – SELFLESSNESS

(Philippians 2:8) “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

True humility and self-sacrifice are necessary attributes in an effective spiritual leader’s life. Jesus exemplified what it means to have a selfless nature and He gave everything without regard to Self. A godly spiritual leader will desire the best for others regardless of the sacrifice. Christ put our need of a Savior above His own glory and gave up His position in heaven to become sin for us. Because of their sufficiency thru Christ, only leaders possessing a selfless attitude can truly promote and nurture others as God expects.

(Titus 2:14) “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

1. According to this verse, who benefitted from Christ’s self-sacrifice? Explain what was gained.
2. Who might benefit from your self-sacrifice? Give some examples of when you did sacrifice self for others. Give examples when others sacrificed self for your benefit.

(Philippians 2:4) “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

3. What does this verse say about certain priorities of leadership? Identify an example of when you perhaps sacrificed to be a leader to others.
4. Discuss how putting God first will appropriately guide our selflessness.

(Genesis 20:2, 10-11) “And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. . . . And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife’s sake.”

(Esther 4:16) “. . . I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”

5. Compare and contrast these verses and comment on the selflessness (or lack thereof) of both Esther and Abraham. How do these examples apply to your own life?
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

6. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – HUMILITY

(James 4:6) "...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

(James 4:10) "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

Being humble indicates having an attitude of reverence, and submission to God. We must realize what we are and have comes from God and we are totally dependent upon Him. A humble person never seeks his or her own glory but rather is self-effacing, seeking to glorify God in all things. Humility is not arrogant, high-minded, or rude. Humility is also not self-destructive or excessively self-condescending bearing in remembrance the gifts God has given are to be used to His name's glory and honor. Humility is a process, not a destination and is the manifestation of our heart's attitude toward God.

(Romans 12:3) "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

1. What does God give to everyone and how, according to this verse, can this truth cultivate humility in your life?

2. Discuss the importance for genuine humility in a spiritual leader.

(Proverbs 15:33) "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility."

(1 Peter 5:6) "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

3. Explain what these verses teach us about humility and the result of humility.

4. Analyze and list characteristics which make humility difficult. Circle ones that are most difficult for you.

5. List and discuss specific ways in which to display humility in your leadership.

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

7. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – HOLINESS

(1 Peter 1:15-16) *“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”*

The definition of holiness includes words like: pure, clean, sanctified, and sacred. Holiness is not obtainable outside of Christ; it is a gift from God. God desires for us to conduct ourselves *“in behaviour as becometh holiness.”* (Titus 2:3) Living a holy life demonstrates we belong to God and as His children are brought into holiness by the power of His Spirit through the cleansing blood of Jesus. We are called to exemplify Christ-likeness and holiness. (2 Timothy 3:17) *“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

(1 Thessalonians 4:7) *“For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.”*

1. This verse indicates God’s call for us from impurity to holiness.. Discuss how purity and holiness fit together.

(Hebrews 12:14) *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”*

2. What does this verse say about living peaceably and being holy?

3. Comment on why being peaceable and holy are so important to God.

(1 Thessalonians 3:13) *“To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”*

(Colossians 1:21-22) *“...yet now hath he reconciled ²²In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:”*

4. Explain how Christ’s death allows us to be “holy, unblameable, and unproveable.” Why are these attributes important to live out?

5. In what areas of your life can you ask the Lord for grace to walk in greater holiness?

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

8. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – PERSONAL WORSHIP

(Psalm 29:2) "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

(1 John 4:19) "We love him, because he first loved us."

Worship is defined as having a reverent love and devotion toward God as well as the expression of that love. For us to grow in spiritual leadership, our personal devotion to Him is a prerequisite. We can express our love to God in many ways including song, prayer, and spending time in His Word. Corporate worship, like we do in church, is very important but personal worship is also essential. Satan will try to keep us busy and distracted but this daily personal worship is beneficial. The Psalmist tells us the Lord is due glory and worship in the beauty of holiness. Our worship of a sovereign God should come from the depths of humble obedience and gratitude for what His love has accomplished in our lives. It should flow unchecked from a heart that desires to be one with the Master.

(John 4:24) "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

1. When considering the word worship, what thoughts and images come to your mind?

2. Where or when do you feel most like you are worshipping God? When is it difficult to worship Him?

3. Describe some personal values or benefits you find in worshipping God.

(Psalm 138:2) "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

(Ephesians 3:20-21) "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

4. How do these verses inspire you to worship?

5. As you review these verses, what principle(s) does God want you to understand about Himself? About yourself?

6. Explain the long-reaching effect(s) of personal worship.

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

9. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – NOT CONTROLLING

(Titus 3:2) “*To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.*”

An individual with a controlling spirit and attitude cannot function effectively as a spiritual leader. There is no room in the life of a spiritual leader for over-lording or micro-managing. The Bible clearly reminds us God alone is in control and all of nature is subject to Him. Although we may have a position of leadership, we have no right to manipulate control over another person.

1. Comment on the attributes of a spiritual leader as listed in *Titus 3:2*.

2. Analyze if control is one of your weaknesses. Is this a common struggle for you? Why or why not? If so, list some root causes of your control.

(1 Peter 5:3) “*Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples [models] to the flock.*”

3. Contrast the two halves of this verse and identify the lesson given against being controlling.

(Leviticus 22:29) “*And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the Lord, offer it at your own will.*”

4. What does this verse say about God controlling us and our allegiance to Him?

(Ephesians 1:22) “*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*”

5. Who is this verse referring to? According to the above verse, where is our place in this?

 6. Describe some action steps you can put into place to more yielded to Christ and less controlling of others.
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

10. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – NOT SPIRITUALLY SUPERIOR

(2 Corinthians 1:24) “Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.”

(Romans 12:6) “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;”

We are all given gifts according to the grace of God. They are wonderful and to be used in His service but they do not make us better than others. Claiming spiritual superiority over another individual because of the gifts we’ve been given is wrong. Everything we have and all we are comes from God and we are to conduct ourselves in such a way so as to glorify God and not elevate self. We have no right to have dominion over someone else’s gifts but rather are called to help them.

(James 1:17) “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

1. What does this verse say about God’s distribution of gifts?

(2 Peter 1:20) “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”

2. Explain what this verse says about any of us claiming spiritual levels of understanding above that which is available to anyone.

(James 1:5) “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

3. Does this verse give any exclusive rights of spiritual knowledge to anyone? Why or why not?

(Luke 18:11) “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

4. Compare the self-proclaimed superiority of the Pharisee to the true spirituality of the publican.
List characteristics.

5. Explain a time when you maybe played the part of the Pharisee. The publican? What did you learn?

6. Evaluate whether spiritual superiority or pride/judgment of others is one of your weaknesses. How do you know? What verses can assist in overcoming this weakness/sin?
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

11. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – NOT DEMEANING

(Philippians 2:3) "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

Portraying a demeaning attitude is unacceptable behavior for a spiritual leader. No one enjoys being humiliated, degraded, disrespected, and otherwise dishonored. Scripture tells us we are equal in Christ because we have nothing of ourselves for which to boast. *(Romans 3:27) "Where is boasting then? It is excluded..."*

(Ephesians 5:33) "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

1. Explain what this verse illustrates regarding the relationship between a husband and wife. What is it? What isn't it?

(Colossians 3:15) "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

2. Consider these three thoughts: peace, one body, and thankful. How does being demeaning fit (or not fit) with this verse?

(2 Corinthians 6:3) "Giving no offence in any thing..."

3. Explain how being demeaning would be offensive.

4. Often a demeaning attitude is an attempt to elevate self. Explain this principle.

(1 Corinthians 4:7) "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

5. What does this verse say about our right to elevate ourselves above another? Explain what we are really doing when we do that.

6. What are some verses you can use to keep proper perspective in regard to this principle?

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

12. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES – NOT PROUD

(Proverbs 16:5) “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord...”

Pride, as defined in this verse, means arrogant and conceited. Much could be written about the dangers of pride in leadership positions and the Bible is filled with examples and warnings against it. There is no room for pride in a heart that wishes to serve God, much less in a spiritual leader’s heart. A proud, haughty nature is contrary to the desire of God and hinders the effectiveness of leaders. It elevates accomplishments as our own. A humble appreciation of what God has given to us and how He has used us helps us keep proper perspective.

(Psalm 100:3) “Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves...”

1. Explain how this verse relates to pride.

(Proverbs 29:23) “A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.”

2. Contrast the two descriptions in *Proverbs 29:23*.

3. Explain how honor and humility can coexist.

(Jeremiah 13:15-16) “Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. ¹⁶Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.”

4. According to these verses, what are the consequences of having pride in our lives?

5. Share a couple of examples in your life when pride caused you to make a poor decision.

6. List ways you can actively overcome pride.

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

1. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY– SANCTIFICATION

(Hebrews 10:14) "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are [being] sanctified."

Sanctification is a process in which a Christian enters at conversion and continues until life's end. A believer is initially sanctified (set apart for a special purpose) through faith in the offering of Christ (*Hebrews 10:10*) "...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." However, sanctification should progressively continue throughout a believer's life as they are conformed into the image of Christ through obedience to His Word and following His example. This process of sanctification is critical to the growth of a spiritual leader.

(1 Thessalonians 5:23) "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1. Fill-in-the-blank: According to this verse, you are _____ by God. List some actions you can do to keep your heart accountable and life Christ-centered so sanctification occurs.

2. Explain what it means to be "preserved blameless."

(John 17:17) "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

3. This is a portion of Jesus' High Priest's prayer. Discuss the concept of being sanctified through God's Word. Choose 2-3 truths with which you feel God is personally sanctifying your heart right now.

(2 Timothy 2:21) "If a man therefore purge himself from these [iniquities], he shall be a vessel unto honour [value], sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

4. According to this verse, what is your role in becoming sanctified? Summarize ways in which you can improve the "purging" of yourself?

5. Describe some examples of being "prepared unto every good work."

6. Comment on why being valuable to the Master and a "vessel unto honour" is important for a spiritual leader. Why is this important to the Gospel?

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

2. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY– PRAYER

(1 Thessalonians 5:17) “Pray without ceasing”

Prayer has been defined as the avenue in which we speak to God through Jesus Christ our Intercessor. To pray without ceasing appears to be a difficult suggestion until we view ourselves and our lives from God’s perspective. He alone is able to provide what we need in order to serve Him. Spiritual leaders must recognize their sufficiency rests in God and any other source is inadequate and uncertain. To be connected with God and His direction for our lives is paramount for effective leadership and prayer is an essential way to stay connected.

(Romans 12:12) “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;”

(Ephesians 6:18) “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

1. What does “all prayer and supplication being in the Spirit” mean?

2. Describe the connection between prayer and perseverance. Analyze this in your prayer life-do you give up easily? Why or why not?

(Philippians 4:6) “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

3. List descriptive words regarding your prayer life. Do you praise? Petition?

(Matthew 26:42) “...O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”

(John 14:13-14) “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”

(1 John 5:14) “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: ¹⁵And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

4. Summarize what these verses say about our prayer requests being granted.

5. Share some specific answers to prayer(s) you have experienced. Share an instance where prayer was answered differently than expected.

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

3. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY—THE DISCIPLINE OF GROWTH

(Acts 7:30) “And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.”

An effective spiritual leader must lead as directed by the Word of God. We continue to grow as we learn from our mistakes and successes. There are many examples throughout Scripture of leaders who were required to wait and learn prior to being sent by God for a particular purpose. One of the most effective leaders in the Old Testament was Moses yet he herded sheep in Midian for forty years until the time came when God asked him to lead His people. A spiritual leader must continue to grow in grace and faith as he waits and depends on the Lord for his leadership.

(2 Timothy 2:15) “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

1. List practical ways to live out 2 Timothy 2:15?

(1 Kings 9:4-7) “And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: ⁵Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. ⁶But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: ⁷Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people:”

2. Diagram the cause-effect relationship in these four verses. Use the adjectives and verbs from scripture.
[i.e. keep my statutes --- establish the throne of Israel forever]

3. Examine and list the spiritual leadership role(s) God has placed you in.

4. How would you describe your growth as a spiritual leader? What ways can you continue to grow as a spiritual leader?

(Matthew 25:29) “For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.”

5. This verse is the conclusion of the account of the distribution and use of talents. Analyze how this account applies to spiritual leadership. Given many or few talents, to what degree are you and I accountable for using them as spiritual leaders? Identify God’s standards for increasing our responsibility.

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

4. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY— EXERCISING PATIENCE

(James 1:4) “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

The quality of being patient refers to bearing with annoyance, pain, provocation, etc. without complaint or the loss of temper. He or she is able to suppress negative reactions and maintain an even and controlled demeanor when confronted with these difficulties. Patient leaders stay composed in times of trouble. Growing in patience can be difficult for most and requires us to exercise discipline over our thoughts when we become anxious or expectations are not met.

1. Discuss how *James 1:4* might be lived out in your life.

(Psalm 59:9) “Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.”

(Psalm 62:5) “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.”

2. These two Psalms, attributed to David, demonstrate his desire to exercise patience. What are the reasons he gives for waiting on God?

(Hebrews 6:12) “That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

3. Using *Hebrews 6:12*, how are faith and patience connected?. Why is patience “worth it” according to the above verse?

(Romans 2:7-9) “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: ⁸But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, ⁹Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil...”

4. Contrast “contentious” and “patient continuance” in the above verse.

(Romans 5:3b-4) “but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴And patience, experience; and experience, hope:”

5. Life experiences can often be the best lessons in spiritual leadership and growth. How does the above verse illustrate this? Discuss 2-3 life events/situations in which “tribulation worketh patience and patience, experience and experience, hope.”
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

5. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY— ACCOUNTABILITY

(Hebrews 13:17) "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Honesty, humility, and accountability are keys to maintaining a right relationship to God and others. *Romans 14:12* states "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." A spiritual leader not only is required to be responsible for his behavior but is also expected to give an account for how he may influence others. We are first accountable to God for our actions and then accountable to others. The attitude of willful accountability is necessary in the life of every Christian but especially in that of a spiritual leader.

1. List and analyze the following areas of accountability in your life: Who or what are you accountable to and why? Who is accountable to you and why? How are you accountable to those under your authority?

(Matthew 12:36) "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

2. Identify the specific area of accountability *Matthew 12:36* describes. On a scale of 1-10, where would you stand in this area? Why?

(2 Corinthians 5:10) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

3. Explain the above verse: who is accountable and to what degree?

(James 5:16) "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

4. Fill-in-the-blank: This verse underscores our need for _____ to help us stay accountable. Discuss how accepting accountability can be proactive in our battle against sin.

(Proverbs 27:5-6) "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

(Proverbs 27:17) "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

5. *James 5:16* highlights how important relationships are for accountability. Summarize what these two verses in Proverbs stress regarding accountability in relationships.
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

6. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY– STEWARDSHIP

(Luke 16:2) “And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.”

Stewardship and accountability go hand in hand. Stewardship involves being responsible for something which is entrusted to our care and is not our own. A spiritual leader must recognize the first responsibility for stewardship is to God and we will eventually be called upon to give an account of that stewardship. Sometimes positive results follow your stewardship, and sometimes they do not. It is important to remember we are called to faithfulness, not always success.

(Matthew 25:14-15) “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.”

1. These verses are the beginning of the parable Jesus told about the distribution of talents to three individuals. Describe how the talents were distributed and why? Who retained ownership of the talents?
2. This parable also demonstrates stewardship has limits or boundaries. Name some of the limits each of the three servants had in their stewardship of the talents.
3. As you read the rest of this parable (*Matt. 25:14-30*), who was successful in their stewardship and who was not? What was the standard(s) used to judge this success?
4. Examine your stewardship roles. List some of the boundaries you have in those roles. Why is it important to realize those limits?

(Mark 12:43-44) “And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: ⁴⁴For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”

5. These verses talk about money and giving, but what do they also imply about stewardship in general? How much did the widow retain for herself?
 6. Identify a few areas in your life in which you have a steward role. How faithful is your stewardship? How can you improve?
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

7. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY– EMPATHY

(1 Peter 3:8) “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:”

To have empathy for others means to share in their experiences. It includes having the ability to feel what they are feeling and to be able to understand their emotional and mental state. Effective spiritual leaders are perceptive individuals who reach out with a loving, caring heart and seek to understand others. Often our past experiences can give insight to the needs of those around us and enable us to better share in their joy, grief, suffering, disappointment, etc. We can also become “mind-blind” or apathetic and not recognize the needs of others or even care because we are lost in our own needs. Effective leaders realize it’s not about them and they need others more than others need them.

(Matthew 7:12) “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

1. Describe the biblical principle in *Matt 7:12*. List ways you can implement this.

(Luke 18:2-5) “... There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: ³And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. ⁴And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man ⁵Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.” (Romans 12:15-16) “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. ¹⁶Be of the same mind one toward another...”

2. Compare these two Scripture passages and contrast the Apostle Paul’s advice to the Romans with mans’ natural tendencies as demonstrated in Luke.

3. Relate how you can avoid reacting like the judge in Luke 18.

4. Is it easy for you to reach out to others and share in their suffering or joy? Share experiences when others reached out to you and/or when you reached out to others.

(Philippians 2:19-21) “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. ²⁰For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. ²¹For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.”

5. The Apostle Paul was sending Timothy to Philippi for a purpose. Discuss what that purpose was and whether or not Timothy was perceived as empathetic. Why was there no one found locally to care for the Philippian believers? What warning does this hold for us?
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

8. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY– SUBMISSION

(Ephesians 5:21) "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

The Bible is clear submission to God and to each other is not optional if we want to live according to His will and receive His blessings. Proper submission to God and His authority is a key factor in any relationship and failure to submit leads to dysfunction. Sometimes the concept of submission can be misunderstood and leadership becomes dominating, contributing to ineffective spiritual leadership. Submission to our Heavenly Father is essential if submission to relationships here on Earth is to happen.

(James 4:6-7) "...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

1. According to this scripture, why are we called to submit to God?
2. Compare "submitting" and "resisting" and how those actions can affect a Christian's life.
3. Identify areas you can be more submissive to God.

(1 Peter 2:13-15) "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;¹⁴Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. ¹⁵For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:"

4. Explain the importance of submission to mans' ordinances in God's eyes.
5. How could you submit more in thoughts, words, and actions?

(1 Peter 5:5) "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility:..."

(James 3:16) "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

6. Compare and contrast these two verses. Analyze characteristics when submission and subjection are lacking in an individual's life. Describe what these situations would look like. Does this describe you?
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

9. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY– CONTENTMENT

(Proverbs 30:7-9) “Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.”

We might consider this prayer in Proverbs to be very difficult to say and mean it. Contentment can be elusive especially in our society where advertising and marketing are designed to create continual discontentment, desire, lust, and covetousness. Success and desire of themselves are not the problem; the problem is when the desire for success is motivated by self-glorification. Contentment might be defined as “wanting what we have rather than having what we want.”

(Philippians 4:11-13) “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

1. In society, are people generally content? Why or why not?

2. Define what it means to be “abased” and “abound.” Share a time when you were each. Which is easier? Why?

(Hebrews 13:5) “Let your conversation [character, lifestyle] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

3. According to this verse, why should we be content?

4. Creating a small diagram, list the following areas on either the content or discontent side: job, ministry, wife, family, home, church, lifestyle, friends. Analyze why you placed each where you did.

5. Do you rejoice when others are blessed or do their blessings make you envious? Are you truly content if you don't rejoice with others? Why/why not?

6. Differentiate between discontentment and career motivation. How does this apply to your life?

Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

10. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY– COMMITMENT

(1 Corinthians 16:15) “I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)”

(1 Peter 2:23) “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:”

Being “*addicted to the ministry*” is perhaps the most graphic description of consecrated devotion and commitment exhibited by people in service of others. Spiritual leaders need to be motivated toward commitment. We are not committed to anything without being moved or driven somehow by emotion, intent, and desire. Committed believers are commanded to self-discipline and temperance. Taking into consideration the good of others, effective leaders are motivated to serve out of love. Christ is the perfect example of commitment. He gave everything out of His commitment to our salvation and was motivated by love.

2 Timothy 1:12 “...for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

1. Explain how commitment and trust are woven together.
2. List at least 10 items/individuals which/who are entrusted to you.
3. For each of the items listed in #2, individually rank your level of commitment to the item/individual with 5 being the highest level of commitment and 0 the lowest level. According to Scripture, how should they be prioritized?
4. From the list in #3, identify areas of commitment which need strengthening. Is the motivator love for each of these people/areas?

(Daniel 1:8) “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank:...”

(Daniel 3:17-18) “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

5. Describe the level of commitment exhibited in these familiar passages. How much were they willing to pay to remain committed?
 6. Discuss the need for spiritual leaders to be committed to: God, family, others, service, purpose, job, etc. How does this list you have created apply to your life personally?
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

11. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY– DISCERNMENT

(1 John 4:1) “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God...”

Discernment is a process in which Biblical absolute truth is sorted out from untruth. It is more than simply making good decisions based on knowledge and experience. Through prayerful consideration of God’s Word, each individual must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in sorting out what is the right or the wrong decision to make. Discernment is listed in the Bible as a spiritual gift and is necessary for spiritual leadership and Christ-like behavior. Discernment requires a desire for, and commitment to, truth.

(Hebrews 5:14) “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

1. In this Hebrew’s verse and the verse above in 1 John, what is the reason for applying proper discernment?
2. According to these two verses, what are key characteristics of discernment?
3. Explain the meaning of the phrase, “*by reason of use have their senses exercised.*”
4. Life will provide plenty of opportunity to use discernment. List some experience(s) of what items/events you’ve needed to use discernment. What do these verses say about what we need to discern? Describe the meaning of the term “*full age.*”

(Philippians 1:9-10) “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge [discernment] and in all judgment [perception]; That ye may approve [discern] things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;”

5. Demonstrate how this verse weaves together love, discernment, and sincerity.

6. Distinguish how spiritual leadership and discernment relate.

7. Share examples from your own life how you are learning the process of discernment.
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Spiritual Leadership Discussion Aids

12. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY– PURITY

(Matthew 5:8) “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

(1 Timothy 4:12) “...be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Purity is being untainted. Purity applies to attitude, motive, and behavior. A spiritual leader strives for purity in his relationships, business dealings, personal life, and his walk with Christ. We all experience temptations to violate the purity we have been given through Christ. Overcoming self and maintaining an accurate view of our vulnerability and natural inclination to sin is a key to staying pure.

(2 Timothy 2:22) “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

(Mark 14:38) “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.”

1. These verses talk about lusts and temptations. Choose 2-3 temptations you struggle with and share with the group.

2. Describe how you have been able to overcome those temptations.

(2 Timothy 1:3) “I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience...”

3. Explain the necessity of a pure conscience and how that applies to spiritual leadership. Is your conscience pure? If not, what steps will you take to get there?

(Galatians 5:16) “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

4. Identify the key principle this verse describes about the believer and purity. In your mind, what are some attributes which lead to achieving said principle?

5. What resources has the Lord given us to follow this instruction?
