

## CLI Leadership Bible Study: Lesson 10

*How to positively influence the attitudes and actions of others for Jesus Christ*

### **Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader** (Day One) *God's Faithfulness*

In Lesson 9 we used an example of a diamond to give us a visual of how precious and brilliant we shine the light of Christ when we pray. God uses our prayers to reveal His glory and make Himself known. Prayer also makes Scripture clear; for example we learn that *without Christ we can do nothing* (John 15:5-8). We must seek the triune God through the Son (John 14:6-7).

Our prayers reveal that all good things come from God; He is the gift giver. Our prayers also disclose that it is not us who affect changes in others lives, but God alone. God deserves credit and praise for everything and prayer makes this fact evident.

It reminds me of a missionary in China in the early 1900s. He was working with two different villages in remote areas. In one of the villages the people were growing in faith and becoming a godly community. The other village was not doing well in maturing and growing in their faith.

He began to analyze the situation and talk to God about it. He lived in one of the villages and spent a great deal of time preaching, teaching and counseling the Chinese people. The other village was over a mountain range; he did not travel or spend as much time with these people.

Against human wisdom, the village that he lived with and spent the most time with, was not the one thriving in Jesus. The Lord began to show him that since the missionary could not spend much time with the villagers across the mountain range, he spent much more time in prayer.

The saintly missionary concluded that there were four basic elements in making disciples: (1. prayer, (2. prayer, (3. prayer, and (4. the Word. Let us take this story into our heart and seek the Lord in prayer for ourselves and others. God will use you to affect others, whether near or far.

Just like prayer is based on God's faithfulness, so is your faith as a leader. Since God can be trusted, you are secure in placing your faith in Him. You can step out and lead because of His faithfulness.

*Advancing Christ's Light in Prisons*

*For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.* Psalm 33:4

1. Read Psalm 33:4 and fill in the blanks: For the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_; He is \_\_\_\_\_ in all he \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*See end of lesson for repeat of questions and blank spaces for you to write your answers.** *When all the questions have been completed, return your answer sheets to CLI. You may keep this lesson for your own study or review. You may also pass it on to another or discard.*

**Definition:** The Hebrew word emunah (אֱמוּנָה), which we translate as faithfulness in Psalm 33, is defined as firmness, steadfastness and fidelity. It means that God is constant, strong and sure. He is loyal, unchanging and consistent. He is trustworthy, dependable and reliable. Fidelity is defined as loyalty to an allegiance, promise or vow.

2. How has God been faithful in our world?

3. How has God been faithful in *your* life?

4. Think deeply (meditate) on God's faithfulness described in the above paragraphs. How does this part of God's character help you to trust Him?

**Definition:** Faith is defined as "trusting commitment of one person to another, particularly of a person to God. Faith is the central concept of Christianity. One may be called a Christian only if one has faith."<sup>1</sup>

We are placing our faith in a God who is totally trustworthy at all times. His faithfulness is grounded in His righteousness, justice and unfailing love. Therefore we are secure in our commitment to God because He is faithful. We trust God because He is dependable, reliable, unchanging and true with us and with all people.

*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made. Psalm 145:13*

5. Read Psalm 145:13. The LORD is faithful to \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ toward \_\_\_\_\_ He has \_\_\_\_\_ (13b).

**Definition:** The word promise can be defined as a vow or pledge to do or provide something. A promise will cause someone to expect something. In Christianity, *promise* is God's announcement of His plan of salvation and blessing to His people.

God can be trusted to keep His promises. His promises tell us what He will or will not do. They declare how we are affected by the past, the present and the future. The Old and New Testaments are united and resound with God's promises to mankind.

<sup>1</sup> Butler, Trent C., Holman bible Dictionary, Homan bible Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1991, p 469.

In many translations of the Old Testament, God's *word* is translated *promise* because His word is true. What He says, He will do. Also, the Old Testament did not use a specific Hebrew word for promise but used quite ordinary words such as speak, say and swear to convey key promises.

Man's word is not always a promise. That is, you or I may say we are going to do something and then forget about it or just not do it. You have heard children say, "Yes I will clean my room, I promise!" They are saying, "not only am I telling you that I will clean my room, I really will do it."

**Read Joshua 21:45 in the NIV and NKJ versions below:**

*Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.* Joshua 21:45

*Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.* <sup>NKJ</sup> Joshua 21:45

**6.** According to both translations of Joshua 21:45, why can you place your faith in God?

Bible versions depend on the translator's interpretation as he translates from the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. After he determines what the original word meant in the original language, he has to choose a word in his own language that best fits its meaning. Greek and Hebrew words do not always translate word for word into another language and culture. The translator studies the word and context carefully and chooses a word or words that he or she believes accurately portray the meaning of the text. This would be true of any kind of translation process.

Sometimes one translation seems to capture the essence of what the original author intended better than another. Nevertheless, if you compare various translations, you will find that most transmit (communicate) the meaning quite well even if the passage is described in different words. Just like the two versions of Joshua 21:45 above, the meaning is clear and anyone reading either one will come up with the same truth: *God is faithful and keeps His word.*

Although we don't have the original, inerrant (without error) autographs or manuscripts, we can be assured of the reliability of the copies that we do have. No other books of antiquity (distant past) have been copied as much as the New Testament. We have 5,686 copies of the Greek manuscripts and 19,284 ancient manuscripts in other languages. The importance of the copies is twofold: (1. Copies can be compared with other copies for an accurate reconstruction or restoration of the original text. (2. No other historical book or ancient literature comes close to these numbers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> McDowell, Josh, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville 1999, p.34-35

One of the impressive ways that we have in confirming the Old Testament’s reliability is the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. A shepherd boy, looking for his goat, threw a rock into a cave and heard something break. Upon investigating he found several large jars containing leather scrolls of the Hebrew Bible. They had been well preserved for nearly 1,900 years.<sup>3</sup> They are named the Dead Sea Scrolls because they were found on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is a salt lake bordered by Israel, the West Bank and Jordan.

Just as scholars compared all the Greek manuscripts (written by hand) to determine the original words, scholars took the Dead Sea Scrolls and compared them with other copies of Hebrew manuscripts. In particular the complete book of Isaiah that was found in one of the clay jars was compared with the Hebrew text (Masoretic) of 916 A.D. The comparison is highly accurate with 95% of the two manuscripts being identical. The other 5% have to do with letters or copyist errors that do not significantly change the meaning of the passage.<sup>4</sup>

7. Explain in your own words why God’s faithfulness and the reliability of the Bible are related:

8. As a Christian leader, how will you improve in your own faithfulness to God and to others?

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**Personal Application:** Meditate on God’s Faithfulness: Deuteronomy 7:9, 32:4; 1 Corinthians 1:7-9, 10:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 and 1 John 1:8-10.

**Read Psalm 89:1-2 and answer questions 9-11:**

*I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. <sup>2</sup> I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself.* Psalm 89:1-2

9. Pray about this and then share with one person today or tomorrow how God has been faithful to you and how this helps you place your faith in Him. Please write the person’s response(s):

10. Ask God if there is anything else He would like you to do in regard to the person that you shared about His faithfulness (Question 9). Share what God said and how you followed up:

11. What is another practical way that you can help others trust in the Faithful One?

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p78.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p78-79

**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader (Day Two) *Trust the Promises of God***

**Definition:** Bless means to give someone a desirable quality, state, gift or talent. God is the source of *all* blessings. When we bless God, we praise Him for His faithfulness, goodness, mercy and love. Being blessed is a state of happiness and well being that is found in a faith relationship with God and obedience to Him.

Your faith as a leader is interwoven with God's promises. You trust what God says and you help others believe God as well. However, not everything written in the Bible is a promise that God wants us to claim personally.

For example, the book of Proverbs contains godly principles that we should follow, but are not necessarily promises. We should honor the Lord with our money (Proverbs 3:9-10), but this is not a promise for everyone to claim in order to receive more money from the Lord. There are devoted Christians who are poor in regard to monetary wealth and there are ungodly people who are wealthy.

When God blesses you, it does not mean that you will have lots of money and never have any trouble in your life (Proverbs 10:22). The point is that when you follow these rules you will generally have a good result. When you do not follow the wisdom of the proverbs, you will generally have a bad result.

Christians are living with an eternal perspective (viewpoint). Our blessings have a spiritual dimension both on earth and in heaven. For example, Jesus taught disciples to sell their possessions and give the money to the poor. In this way, they would have treasure in heaven (Matthew 19:21; Luke 12:32-34). Jesus took the word *bless* and gave it a divine, and radically different, sense than how it was viewed in the first century (Matthew 5:3-10).

Read with discernment (sensitivity). Even if a particular promise is not meant for us personally, we are to learn about God, how He works, and respond to Him accordingly. The Bible is a record of God's working with individuals and nations at certain points in time in order to accomplish His main goal of redemptive (buying back sinners) history.

*"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."* Genesis 3:15 (\*Note: God is speaking to Satan in the Garden of Eden. Enmity describes the hatred and hostility that will exist between mankind and Satan. Through Eve's offspring (descendants), a Savior is to be born to defeat Satan.)

**12.** Read Genesis 3:15. What is the one unifying (makes into one unit) promise of the Bible?

From Genesis through Revelation, the promise of the Messiah, the Christ, brings together the whole of Scripture. We are blessed to live in a time when the promise of

Jesus Christ can be fully understood. However, as with many of God's promises there are conditions to meet.

**Definition:** Condition in the sense of a promise or agreement means that something must exist for something else to happen. In order for God's promise to take place or occur, we must be in a state of faith or do something.

**Read Romans 10:9-10 and answer questions 13-14:**

*That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.<sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

Romans 10:9-10

**13.** What is the condition for being saved from God's wrath and eternal punishment?

The condition for salvation rests in a person's outward and inward response to Christ as Savior and Master. It is not a one time response but a lifetime commitment of faith. It is a state of being. Jesus is always our Master and we always follow Him.

**14.** How are you meeting the qualifications of this promise of salvation?

God speaks to believers through His Word in various ways. He may take Scripture and impress it upon you in such a way that you are to apply it specifically to yourself or your personal situation. He may give you instructions and answers as you meditate on passages of Scripture. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern how God is speaking to you through Scripture and be aware that God will not ask you to do anything that is sinful or evil.

God spoke to Abraham and he believed. From the beginning, Abraham's was not a passive (inactive) faith. God told him to start moving (Genesis 12:1) toward an unknown destination and he did. Can you relate to Abraham? Perhaps God has you moving and you do not know where you are going.

If Abraham had not trusted, God could have easily raised up another leader. God's plans are never dependent on anyone or anything. In the same way, if we fail to act when God calls, He may give our assignment to another.

Many times when God calls a leader there will be a radical life change. This life change will test one's faith as it tested Abraham's. However, the testing serves a purpose. God is fitting that person for service; He is deepening and strengthening his or her faith.

*"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12:2-3*

15. Read God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3. List the seven parts of this promise:

**Read Galatians 3:6-9 and answer questions 16-19:**

*Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."<sup>7</sup> Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.<sup>8</sup> The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."<sup>9</sup> So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. Galatians 3:6-9*

16. Fill in the appropriate blanks and think about the words carefully as you write them:

17. Are you a child (descendent) of Abraham (v. 7)? Yes No (Circle one)

18. If you answered yes, that you are a child of Abraham, how did you become his descendant?

19. What do you think the value is of knowing that you are a child or an offspring of Abraham?

20. If you answered no, that you are not a child of Abraham, explain your answer:

In Galatians 3 Paul explains the phrase "all nations will be blessed" through Abraham. It means that Christ will come through his seed or through his descendants (offspring). Abraham's first children became the Israelites, later called the Jews. These were the people that God chose to carry forth His word and promises to the world.

Jesus was born into the family of Mary and Joseph, descendants of Abraham. Now, in Christ, Abraham is also our spiritual father and we can rightfully trust the promises that are meant for Abraham's children. In other words, we are in the family of God and are blessed. In Christ, we have the ability to bless the people of the earth by carrying forth the truth of the gospel.

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**Personal Application:** Pray for guidance, read, and meditate on Romans 4:13-25.

21. What did the Holy Spirit impress upon your heart from this passage of Scripture?

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**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader (Day Three) *Faith is Progressive***

The faith of a leader is not static or stationary. It moves and advances. In a word, your faith is progressive. That means that you will go forward in faith in steps or increments. Sometimes your movement will seem slight, barely noticeable, and other times you may feel like you are on a space shuttle.

*We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.* 2 Thessalonians 1:3

**22.** Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3. Paul writes to the church at Thessalonica and comments on their *faith*. What does he write about it?

*Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.* 2 Thessalonians 1:4

**23.** Read 2 Thessalonians 1:4. Under what conditions was the believer's faith growing?

The Thessalonians' faith was growing through persecutions and trials. Suffering, though not at all pleasant, can be used by God to increase our faith. It teaches us perseverance or determination to cling to Christ no matter what difficulty we are facing. One of the ways that we cling to Christ is by seeking His strength and encouragement through prayer.

In Lesson 9: Prayer of a Leader (Day One) we touched on praying in faith. Faith is the first step into the cleansing blood of Christ and hence into a relationship with God. We are talking primarily about the *Faith of a Leader*, but as a leader, your responsibility will be to pray for those you shepherd so that they will have a strong and unwavering faith. No only will they need faith to step into the Kingdom, but they will need faith for a steady and uninterrupted journey.

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.* Hebrews 11:6

**24.** Hebrews 11:6 states that without \_\_\_\_\_ it is \_\_\_\_\_ to please \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Luke 22:32 and answer questions 25-26:**

*"But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."* Luke 22:32

**25.** Why did Jesus pray for Simon Peter?

**26.** After Peter turned back, what was he supposed to do?

Peter denied that he knew Jesus, but repented and turned back to the Lord. Jesus wanted Peter, his chosen leader, to use his denial as a lesson of faith in order to strengthen others. In Peter's trial is a guiding, biblical principle: Our lessons, talents, and resources are not for us alone but are to be used to help others, especially Christians.

**Definition:** The Greek word that is translated faith in the above two scriptures is *pistis* (πίστις). It is a noun that means the state of believing on the basis of the reliability of the one trusted. It is trust and confidence in God in the active sense.<sup>5</sup>

For a Christian it means placing your faith, trust and confidence in Christ. You rely on God's promises in the Bible and what He says about Jesus. You can expect help from Christ in both the spiritual and physical sense.

Faith is active in the sense that you believe in God and act upon those truths as set forth in the Bible. If one does not act and live according to what God has said, that person is without faith; he is faithless. Faith is not a passive belief. One cannot say the "sinner's prayer" and continue to live according to his or her own wishes. Accepting Christ in faith is a lifetime commitment of loyalty and service to the King. When Christ is trusted as Savior and Lord, one is saying, "I trust, rely, depend, serve and place my hope in the triune God."

**Definition:** The "sinner's prayer" is a name given to a prayer whereby a person admits that he or she is a sinner and accepts by grace Christ as Savior and Lord. The prayer is meant to be a first step and decision to give up control of one's life and follow Christ forever. Sadly, some misunderstand and think it is a one time prayer and then, life as usual.

*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,<sup>20</sup> by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,<sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God,<sup>22</sup> let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*  
Hebrews 10:19-22

**27.** Read and meditate on Hebrews 10:19-22. List three things that your faith in Jesus makes possible for you:

The Church Doctrine of Justification states that man is saved by faith in Christ and His work on the cross. Christ alone is our righteousness, and we are justified (freed from guilt) by His blood alone. It is a free gift; no works are involved on our part. However, it takes active participation with our minds. The Holy Spirit prompts, but we must answer.

We choose by faith to have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus. We know Christ paid the penalty for all of our sins. We choose to draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith that we have been cleansed.

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<sup>5</sup> Frederick William Danker based on Walter Bauer's A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and the Early Christian Literature, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 2000.

Therefore we choose not to entertain guilty consciences for past sins for which we are clean, holy and pure. However, although we will not pay for our sins in hell, there may be consequences on this earth for past actions.

Some have mistakenly taken the free gift of salvation to mean passivity and that activity becomes works of the flesh. Not so! Your life in Christ is a dynamic one from the moment you recognize your sin and choose the Spirit's prompting of grace. You are to actively seek God and actively do what He says. When you are following God, He provides the strength and power to accomplish His directives (orders).

Satan and his demons believe God exists and they know He wrote the Bible through men. They know without a doubt that Christ died for the sins of the world. Nevertheless, they act against God's plans and purposes. A person can also believe God exists and even that Christ paid the punishment for man's sins and still act against His commands and purposes. Both the evil spirits and these evil humans are faithless. They will not share in a joyful, eternal life.

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**Personal Application:** Meditate on and memorize Hebrews 12:2.

*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2*

**28.** Write Hebrews 12:2 from memory:

**29.** What assurance do you have that your faith will progress or go forward in the right way?

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**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader** (Day Four) *Attitudes Affect Faith*

You must have the right attitude about yourself to be a faithful leader. Be confident that you are a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Recognize that you have the mind and sweet fragrance of Christ. Know that you are loving and giving. God is pleased with you and has an excellent plan for your life! God wants you to have friends and healthy relationships. He desires your success and happiness in His Kingdom (Psalm 37: 4). He is a relational God (John 3:16).

Sometimes because of our past sins and faulty relationships we may believe that there is something wrong with us. Even our current sins and faulty relationships can make us wonder "what is the matter with me!" We may even have a wrong attitude about our race, gender, appearance, intelligence or skills. God does not have favorites based on any of these things (Acts 10:34-35). God made all and accepts all who do what is good and right in Christ.

In your relationships, as in all areas of your life, God is in control. Therefore, He may allow difficult relationships to help you grow in Christ's likeness. God may also block certain friendships for your own spiritual welfare. He may have bigger (i.e. more fruitful) plans for you than being part of certain fellowships, even if they are believers.

We live in a fallen world, and this will also adversely (negatively) affect our relationships. This includes family, friends and really anyone on the face of the earth. However, if you are concerned about your ability to make friends and keep them or your relationships in general, pray the following prayer:

*Almighty and Loving Father, You are faithful and delight to answer our prayers. Please reveal to me any unknown sin or incorrect personality trait that is keeping me from healthy relationships. Are there sins of jealousy, self righteousness, pride or selfishness in my life that is hindering my progress? Cleanse me of any of these unholy characteristics and help me to correct them. I trust You to help me with any necessary changes and I thank You that I am a likeable and loveable person. Heal all my relationships, especially (insert your own) and establish good Christian friends in my life. Make me a good family member, friend and employee (employer). Thank You in Jesus, Amen.*

Sometimes, we are *our own worst enemy*. We find fault with what we say, how we look, what we do or what we do not do. We are an easy target because we are always around! You may even think that to put yourself down is the humble thing to do. It is just as wrong to put yourself down as it is to puff yourself up. Neither are honoring to our Creator.

If you grew up with parents, relatives or caregivers that were constantly putting you down, you might actually have a "mental" recording telling you untrue things about yourself. You may even be in a situation right now where you are being verbally abused. Satan, the source of these lies and false accusations, will use them to steal your joy and peace. It will take constant prayer and vigilance (attention) to overcome false thought patterns.

*In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* Ephesians 6:16

**30.** Read Ephesians 6:16. What do you take up when Satan, the evil one, begins his attack or character assassination on you?

Paul is using the picture of a large, leather shield. The Romans could soak it in water so that when their enemy shot flame-tipped arrows, the fire would be quenched. Your faith is like that shield. When you trust who you are in Christ, Satan's fiery arrows of destruction are put out.

**Read Psalm 139:13-14 and answer questions 31-34:**

*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.<sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139:13-14*

**31.** Who created your inmost (deepest) being? \_\_\_\_\_

**32.** Who knit you together in your mother's womb? \_\_\_\_\_

**33.** When you have a bad attitude about yourself or others, who are you ultimately putting down and why?

God created every single part of you. He gave the DNA<sup>6</sup> instructions for every microscopic detail of your being. You are perfectly put together.

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27*

**34.** Man, which includes male and female, is created to be like God, resembling Him in certain ways. How does this affect the way that you think about yourself?

You are made in the image or likeness of God. Recall, in Lesson 7: The Name, we learned about some of God's characteristics or attributes that He shares with us. For example, God shares His faithfulness, wisdom, mercy and goodness.

*God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Genesis 1:28*

**35.** Read Genesis 1:28 and fill in the blanks: God told the man and the woman to "fill the earth and \_\_\_\_\_ it. \_\_\_\_\_ over the fish of the sea and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the air and \_\_\_\_\_ every \_\_\_\_\_ creature that moves on the ground."

God is the Ruler and Master Controller. He made us in His image to rule and control the earth. As a Christian leader, you are called to govern all things in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24). You are called to a godly state of authority.

*"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,<sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." Luke 6:27-28*

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<sup>6</sup> Deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA is a nucleic acid molecule that contains the genetic instructions used in the development and functioning of all living organisms. The main role of DNA is the long-term storage of information and it is often compared to a set of blueprints, since DNA contains the instructions needed to construct other components of cells, such as proteins and RNA molecules. The DNA segments that carry this genetic information are called genes, but other DNA sequences have structural purposes, or are involved in regulating the use of this genetic information. Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DNA>

*With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.* James 3:9

**Definition:** Cursing is not only exclaiming foul words, it is also saying evil or hurtful things about another human being. Even hoping for evil to come to another is silent cursing and definitely wrong. Cursing is also lightly esteeming others or making someone loathsome<sup>7</sup>.

Teenagers are very adept at making others loathsome to their peers. Seeking popularity, the sin of caring more for what others think than God, can cause a rash of cursing. To make themselves seem cool, teenagers may dishonor others by bullying, ignoring, gossiping or making sport of frailties (weaknesses). Sadly, teenagers are not the only ones to curse and not to bless others.

Christians, no matter the age, are called to a higher standard. Even if we are cursed, we must still bless others. In blessing others, we are to find something good to say about them, and something good to do for them. We are to love and pray for them. They too, are made in God's likeness and must not be cursed.

**36.** Read Luke 6:27-28 and James 3:9. Practice "blessing" others this week, and not "cursing." Share the difficulties or joys in this assignment and what God revealed to you:

All men and women are made in the image of God, in God's likeness. Granted, it may be difficult to see God's appearance in some people, but Scripture tells us it is there. When we think about the beauty and magnificence of the LORD, and how all human beings have been made in His image, we have concrete reasons to love and honor others.

Perhaps you have done poorly in blessing others, or in another area of your life. Thinking badly about yourself, or having a guilty conscience over past sins can be very discouraging. You may be disheartened and lack motivation to move forward.

This actually is a faithless position, one that lacks truth and power. If this is where you are, you will not stay here. Discouragement is not of God. He wants you to be encouraged that you were made in His image and He loves you. He also sent His Son to take away all your sin, all your shame and all your guilt (Romans 3:21-23, 8:1; Hebrews 10:22).

According to the Oxford American Dictionary, self-esteem is a noun meaning a favorable opinion of one's self and having self-respect. We have a favorable opinion of ourselves because we are made in God's image. So instead of self-esteem, we really have God-esteem. We have respect for God and the humans that He created. See the

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<sup>7</sup> Butler, Trent C., Holman Bible Dictionary, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1991.

subtle difference. Our value rests in the God who made and loves us. We trust God for an evaluation of ourselves. By faith we offer our attitudes, talents, gifts and good works each day to magnify (enlarge) the LORD.

It is important for you to realize that many people do have insecurities and suffer from poor self-images. This is true for Christians and non-Christians alike. Pray and ask God to be a blessing in everyone's life, leading him or her to the image Maker.

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### **Personal Application:**

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20*

**Definition:** An ambassador is a diplomat sent by one country as a representative to another for a purpose or mission. A diplomat is someone who is tactful and sensitive in working or dealing with other people.

The apostle Paul called himself an ambassador even when he was in prison (Ephesians 6:20). Paul also tells believers that we are Christ's ambassadors. We are here by special appointment, sent by heaven on a special mission.

God has chosen you. You have exactly what God wants to use in leading and influencing others for the Kingdom. **Build your faith** in God by confessing (agree; declare) with Scripture who you are in Christ.

For example, confess 2 Corinthians 5:20: I am Christ's ambassador. God makes appeals through me. I implore others on Christ's behalf so they are reconciled to God.

**37. Look up, read, personalize and confess these Scriptures:** 1 Corinthians 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5, 2:6-8; Philippians 2:13-16 and Revelation 1:5-6. Write the Scripture that resonated (impact) with your spirit the most:

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### **Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader (Day Five) *Strengthening your Faith***

What happens when things do not turn out the way you thought? You prayed and really felt God was telling you to go in a certain direction. But your way became blocked and no matter how hard you prayed, nothing seemed to happen. Similarly, you felt God saying that a sick friend was going to be healed, but he died. There could be other kinds of circumstances where you perceive God telling you something and it does not come to pass.

This happens to individuals and to church bodies of all denominations. A charismatic church in Raleigh had fasted and prayed for a young boy who had become ill with a virus. The church had come together mightily in intercession for the healing of this lad. Many in the church prophesied that he would be healed and they rejoiced in God's answer. However, the child died.

Another church, conservative in affiliation and led by the elders, believed it was God's will to build a larger worship center. The church members voted in agreement and contracts were signed to purchase a parcel of land. Half way through the process however, there was a problem. Although it was a large piece of property, it would not accommodate adequate parking spaces.

**38.** Can you share a time when you really believed God for something and it did not happen?

**39.** If you had a story to share above, how did this affect your faith in God? What did you learn?

I was at the two churches mentioned above during their worship services; both after the boy died, and after the property was deemed unworkable. Both pastors spoke to their congregations as faithful leaders. I was blessed to hear God speak through these two men.

The congregation who had lost a young child was in a very tender and vulnerable place. The pastor spoke compassionately, addressing every possible question his congregation might have regarding this sad occasion. "I have never seen a group of people come together so faithfully." He said. "You have done absolutely everything the Scriptures call for in seeking God for healing. And you have done it passionately!"

The pastor ended his message on God's sovereignty. He reminded them that God is in control and ultimately it was His decision. He said, "God is faithful, loving, compassionate and merciful." Even though the child had died, it did not change God's character. He upheld God's honor.

The other pastor also addressed his congregation. He explained the facts of the situation and that they had an exit clause in the real estate contract. The church would exercise this option and not go forward with the purchase. He simply said that he and the elders had all been in agreement to purchase the land and now they were in agreement not to purchase the land. He ended his explanation by saying, "This is what I thought God's will was, but I was wrong."

Perhaps you will always be sure and right about what God is saying to you. But more than likely there will be times when you will simply be wrong. It is best to admit it. We are not infallible (never wrong). We can make mistakes. Men and women in the Bible were not always correct in assessing what God was telling them.

Barnabas and Paul would not have done anything that they thought was outside of God's will. They both believed so strongly in their views that they had a sharp disagreement over whether they should take Mark (Gospel writer) with them. On an earlier mission trip, Mark had left and returned home. Paul seems to have viewed this

as desertion. **But here's the point:** there would not have been a *sharp* disagreement if they had both heard from God correctly.

*They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus,<sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. Acts 15:39-40*

**40.** Read Acts 15:39-40. What happened because of the disagreement between Barnabas and Paul?

*Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. 2 Timothy 4:11 (Note: Paul was in prison and writing years after Acts 15:39)*

**41.** Read 2 Timothy 4:11. Since Mark turned out to be faithful, who do you think was more discerning of God's will in this instance, Barnabas or Paul (Acts 15:39-40)?

God is able to use anything, including our disagreements. Twice as much territory was covered with Barnabas and Mark going to Cyprus, and Paul and Silas heading for Syria and Cilicia. However, having such a sharp disagreement was not God's plan. He desires spiritual unity.

In this particular case, Paul was wrong about Mark. God was not finished with him and Barnabas rightly kept him in tow. This was God's will and one that Paul came to understand in later years.

*Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.<sup>7</sup> When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.*

Acts 16:6-7 (Note: The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus are one and the same)

**42.** Read Acts 16:6-7. What faith lesson do *you* learn from this passage?

The Scripture says that the Holy Spirit kept Paul and his companions from preaching in the province of Asia. The Word does not say that the Spirit told him to move on. The same is true when they tried to enter Bithynia. If, 10 miles outside of Bithynia, we had asked Paul if that was the direction God wanted him to go, most likely he would have answered yes. Nevertheless, his way was ultimately blocked.

Paul acted on what he knew and what he believed to be God's plan. He acted in faith. He was not always correct, but God was always faithful. God is still faithful. If you misunderstand God, His Spirit will get you back on the right path. He works in unique and wondrous ways to keep us moving in the right direction. But please be cautious. This does not mean that you can just go forward as you please and presume on the Spirit's intervention.

**Definition:** Presume is defined as accepting something to be correct although there is no proof. It also is defined as acting arrogantly or overconfidently. When we presume on God, we are not acting in faith, but taking things into our own hands. We are not sincerely seeking God in prayer or the Scriptures, but assuming that our plans are exactly what God wants.

Presumption is born of pride. *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall* (Proverbs 16:18). Inquire of God and listen carefully before you act.

Be flexible and adaptable to the Spirit's leading. There are times when you will be called upon to persevere, suffer and endure. On the other hand, there may be times when you will be wrong and if you stubbornly cling to false ideas or dreams, it will be detrimental to your faith in God.

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**Personal Application:**

**43.** Write any faith challenge that you are experiencing right now?

**44.** Please write how your *Bible Minister* may pray for you?

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**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader** (Day Six) Faith in Spite of Circumstances

We briefly discussed discouragement in Day 4 of this Lesson. If discouragement goes on for too long, a leader could become depressed, extremely disheartened and full of self-pity. This condition actually takes a person into faithless territory where he or she begins to question God's plan, love and sovereign control over his or her life.

If a leader finds himself in this dangerous condition, he must seek God for grace and mercy. He should not be too proud to ask other Christians for help and prayer. In addition, the leader may also be called upon to help others climb out of this dark, sad, pit of hell. Now realize that we are talking about healthy, normal individuals in this section and not those who may need medical attention. Prayer will help you discern the difference, and how God wants this individual healed or treated.

*Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there,<sup>4</sup> while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." 1 Kings 19:3-4*

**45.** Read 1 Kings 19:3-4. Was Elijah discouraged? Yes No (Circle one) Depressed? Yes No (Circle one) Was Elijah trusting God? Yes No (Circle one)

*The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind.*

*After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.<sup>12</sup> After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 1 Kings 19:11-12*

**46.** Read 1 Kings 19:11-12. What do you think is the significance of the LORD telling Elijah to go out and stand on the mountain in His presence?

God showed Elijah that he must get his focus off his circumstances. The right focus is God (Hebrews 12:2). Elijah was thinking about Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 19:1-18) and became afraid and discouraged. God is greater than any problem, no matter how severe it may seem.

Trust that God has a holy purpose for your life. Know that your difficult period may help you to comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:3). Recognize that God had Elijah's faithless period recorded to help succeeding generations. Submit to God and admit that you have no valid reason for being discouraged or depressed. You are serving Jesus, He is on the throne, and nothing can stop His purposes.

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**Personal Application:** Memorize Jeremiah 17:7-8

*"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.<sup>8</sup> He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."*

Jeremiah 17:7-8

**47.** Write Jeremiah 17:7-8 from memory without referring to your Bible or notes:

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- End Lesson 10 -

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS Lesson 10**

**CLI Christian Leadership Study: Faith of a Leader**

Name & Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Institution: \_\_\_\_\_ Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader** (Day One) *God's Faithfulness*

1. Read Psalm 33:4 and fill in the blanks: For the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_; He is \_\_\_\_\_ in all he \_\_\_\_\_

2. How has God been faithful in our world? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How has God been faithful in *your* life? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Think deeply (meditate) on God's faithfulness described in the above paragraphs.

How does this part of God's character help you to trust Him? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Read Psalm 145:13. The LORD is faithful to \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ toward \_\_\_\_\_ He has \_\_\_\_\_ (13b).

6. According to both translations of Joshua 21:45, why can you place your faith in God? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Explain in your own words why God's faithfulness and the reliability of the Bible are related? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. As a Christian leader, how will you improve in your own faithfulness to God and to others?\_\_\_\_\_

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**Personal Application:** Meditate on God's Faithfulness: Deuteronomy 7:9, 32:4, 1 Corinthians 1:7-9, 10:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; and 1 John 1:8-10.

9. Pray about this and then share with one person today or tomorrow how God has been faithful to you and how this helps you place your faith in Him. Please write the person's response(s):

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10. Ask God if there is anything else He would like you to do in regard to the person that you shared about His faithfulness (Question 9). Share what God said and how you followed up:\_\_\_\_\_

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11. What is another practical way that you can help others trust in the Faithful One?

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**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader (Day Two) *Trust the Promises of God***

12. Read Genesis 3:15. What is the one unifying (makes into one unit) promise of the Bible?

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13. What is the condition for being saved from God's wrath and eternal punishment?

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**14.** How are you meeting the qualifications of this promise of salvation?

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**15.** Read God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3. List the seven parts of this promise:

(1. \_\_\_\_\_

(2. \_\_\_\_\_

(3. \_\_\_\_\_

(4. \_\_\_\_\_

(5. \_\_\_\_\_

(6. \_\_\_\_\_

(7. \_\_\_\_\_

**16.** Fill in the appropriate blanks and think about the words carefully as you write them:

Consider Abraham: "He \_\_\_\_\_ God and it was \_\_\_\_\_ to

him as \_\_\_\_\_." Understand, then, that those who

\_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_ of Abraham. The \_\_\_\_\_

foresaw that God would \_\_\_\_\_ the Gentiles by \_\_\_\_\_, and

announced the \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ to Abraham: "All

\_\_\_\_\_ will be \_\_\_\_\_ through you." So those who have

\_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_ along with Abraham the man of \_\_\_\_\_

**17.** Are you a child (descendent) of Abraham (v. 7)? Yes No (Circle one)

**18.** If you answered yes, that you are a child of Abraham, how did you become his descendant?

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19. What do you think the value is of knowing that you are a child or an offspring of Abraham? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. If you answered no, that you are *not* a child of Abraham, explain your answer:

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**Personal Application:** Pray for guidance, read, and meditate on Romans 4:13-25.

21. What did the Holy Spirit impress upon your heart from this passage of Scripture?

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**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader** (Day Three) *Faith is Progressive*

22. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3. Paul writes to the church at Thessalonica and comments on their *faith*. What does he write about it?

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*Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. 2 Thessalonians 1:4*

23. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:4. Under what conditions was the believer's faith growing?

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24. Hebrews 11:6 states that without \_\_\_\_\_ it is \_\_\_\_\_ to please \_\_\_\_\_

25. Why did Jesus pray for Simon Peter?

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26. After Peter turned back, what was he supposed to do?

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27. Read and meditate on Hebrews 10:19-22. List three things that your faith in Jesus makes possible for you:

(1. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 19)

(2. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 22)

(3. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 22)

28. Write Hebrews 12:2 from memory: \_\_\_\_\_

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29. What assurance do you have that your faith will progress or go forward in the right way?

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**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader (Day Four) *Attitudes Affect Faith***

30. Read Ephesians 6:16. What do you take up when Satan, the evil one, begins his attack or character assassination on you?

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31. Who created your inmost (deepest) being? \_\_\_\_\_

32. Who knit you together in your mother's womb? \_\_\_\_\_

33. When you have a bad attitude about yourself or others, who are you ultimately putting down and why?

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34. Man, which includes male and female, is created to be like God, resembling Him in certain ways. How does this affect the way that you think about yourself?

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**35.** Read Genesis 1:28 and fill in the blanks: God told the man and the woman to “fill the earth and \_\_\_\_\_ it. \_\_\_\_\_ over the fish of the sea and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the air and \_\_\_\_\_ every \_\_\_\_\_ creature that moves on the ground.”

**36.** Read Luke 6:27-28 and James 3:9. Practice “blessing” others this week, and not “cursing.” Share the difficulties or joys in this assignment and what God revealed to you: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**37. Look up, read, personalize and confess these Scriptures:** 1 Corinthians 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5, 2:6-8; Philippians 2:13-16 and Revelation 1:5-6. Write out one of the verses that resonated (impact) with your spirit the most:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader (Day Five) *Strengthening your Faith***

**38.** Can you share a time when you really believed God for something and it did not happen?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**39.** If you had a story to share above, how did this affect your faith in God? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

40. Read Acts 15:39-40. What happened because of the disagreement between

Barnabas and Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

41. Read 2 Timothy 4:11. Since Mark turned out to be faithful, who do you think was more discerning of God's will in this instance, Barnabas or Paul (Acts 15:39-40)?

\_\_\_\_\_

42. Read Acts 16:6-7. What faith lesson do *you* learn from this passage?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Personal Application:**

43. Write any faith challenge that you are experiencing right now? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

44. Please write how your *Bible Minister* may pray for you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader (Day Six) Faith in Spite of Circumstances**

45. Read 1 Kings 19:3-4. Was Elijah discouraged? Yes No (Circle one)

Depressed? Yes No (Circle one) Was Elijah trusting God? Yes No (Circle one)

46. Read 1 Kings 19:11-12. What do you think is the significance of the LORD

telling Elijah to go out and stand on the mountain in His presence? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Personal Application:** Memorize Jeremiah 17:7-8

**46.** Write Jeremiah 17:7-8 from memory without referring to your Bible or notes:

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**Next: Lesson 11: Knowing God's Will**

Rev 10/15/2014

