

With Dr. Steven Fettke



***Spirit-Empowered
Discipleship:
Growing in Christ
Through Spiritual
Disciplines***

Spirit-Empowered Discipleship Workbook

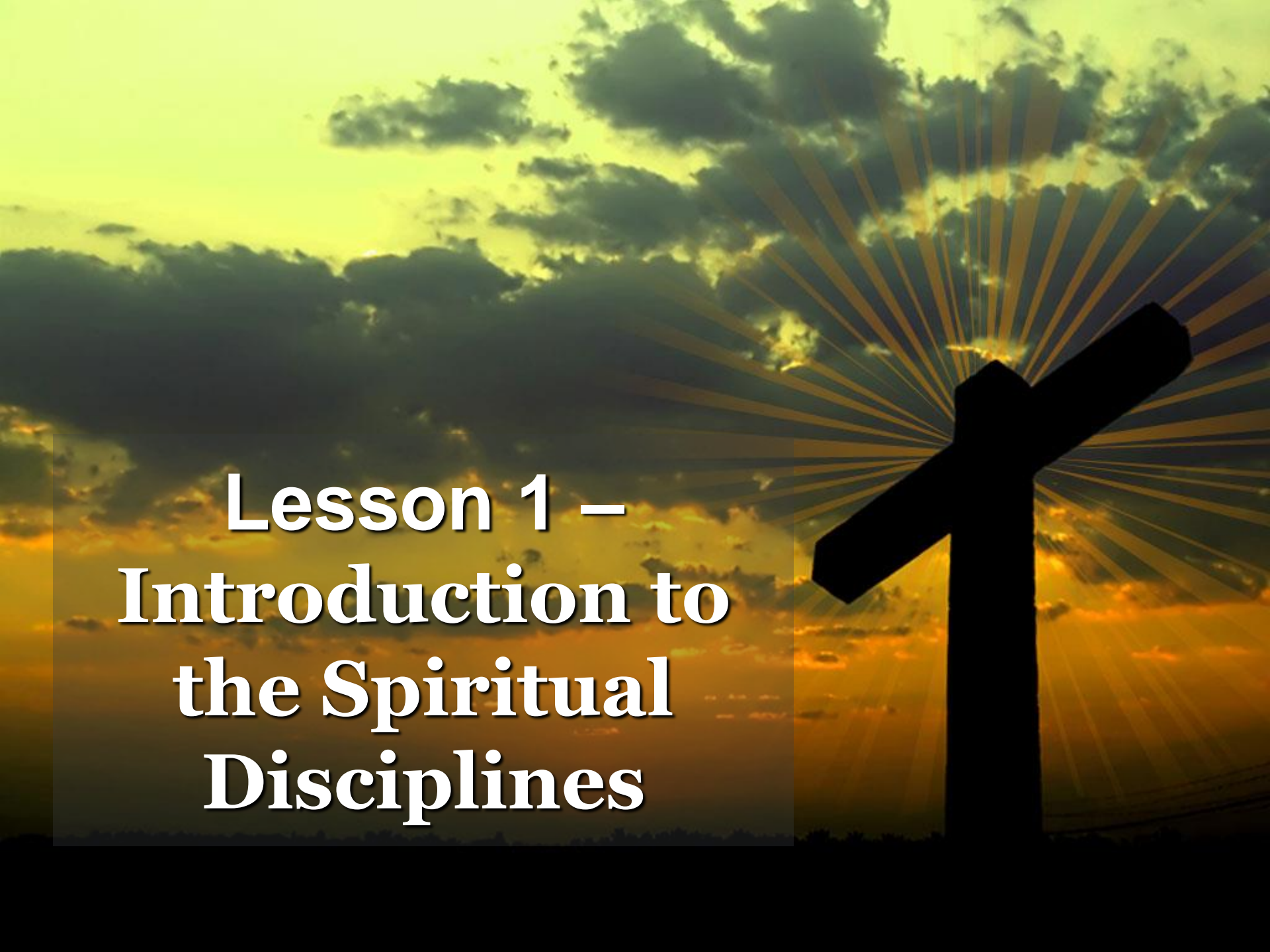
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**Spirit-Empowered
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Disciplines**



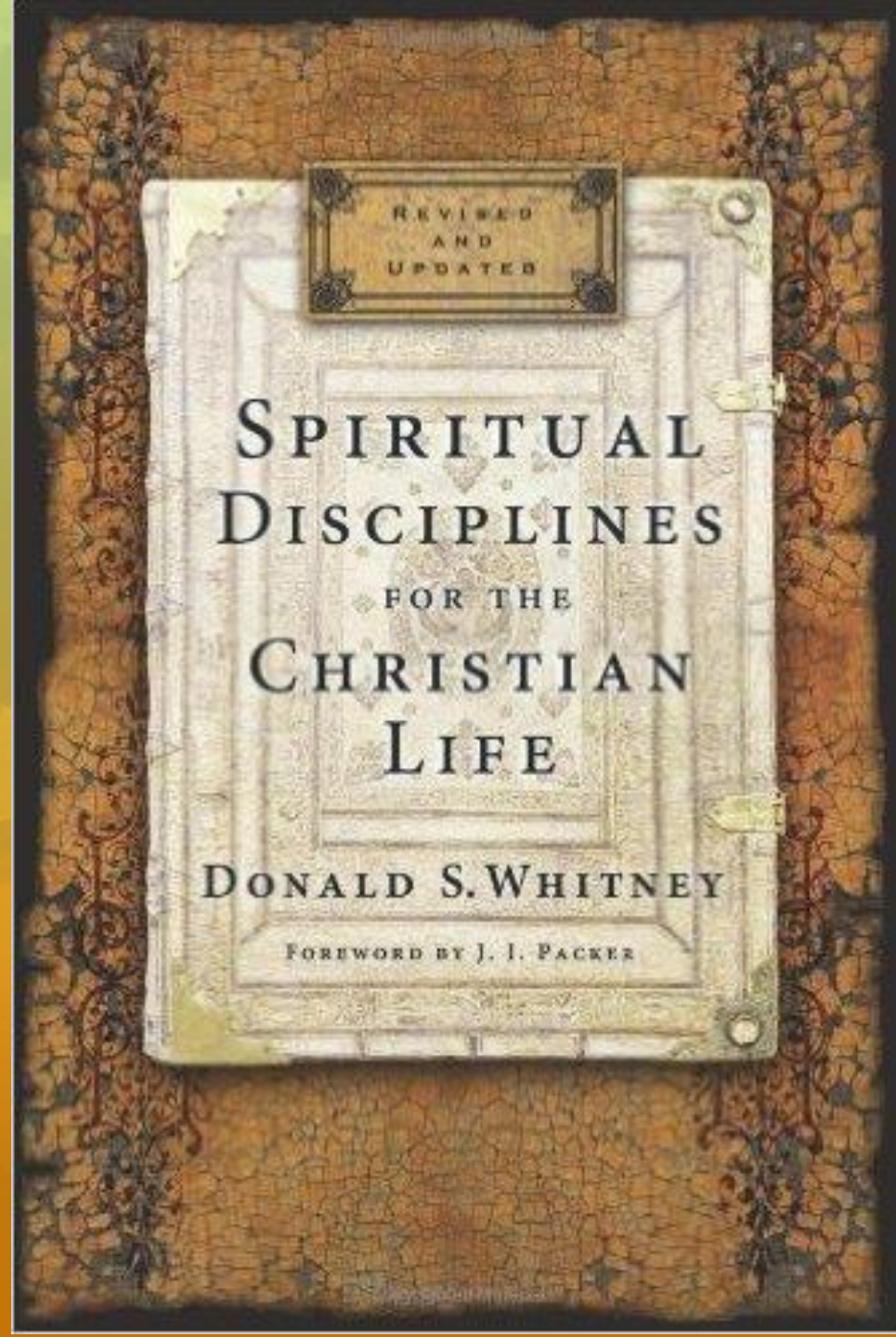


**Lesson 1 –
Introduction to
the Spiritual
Disciplines**

***Spiritual
Disciplines for
the Christian
Life***

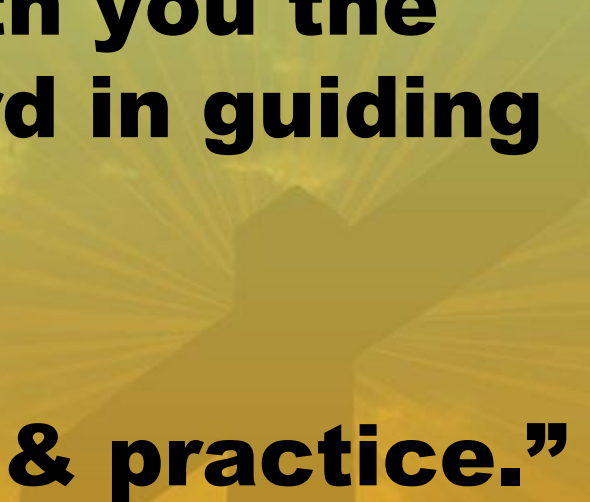
by

**Donald S.
Whitney**



Become A Disciple!

- [I Am A Disciple](#)
- **Bible readings**
- ***Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald S. Whitney**

- 
- **I hope to establish with you the authority of God's Word in guiding & shaping our lives.**
 - **“The only rule of faith & practice.”**

More items for study

Want to emphasize:

- **The way we make use of our time**
- **How we pray**
- **How we relate to/fellowship with other believers**
- **How we testify to our faith & serve others**
- **What our spiritual gifting might be**
- **How we can make the pursuit of the spiritual disciplines a life-long experience.**

Learn & Fellowship With Other Believers

Important to learn in community, not isolated from others.

Have regular times to interact with other Christians over faith:

- **Sunday school class**
- **Small study groups**
- **In association with a trusted Christian friend**

Let's get started by reading Acts
3:1-10; 4:1-14

**A common assumption - a story
about the healing of the lame man?**

**Really so much more than just a
healing story**

Acts 3:1-10; 4:1-14

Unfortunate assumption concerning spiritual disciplines

Primary work of the Spirit — witness of a risen Savior:

- ***“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; & you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, & in all Judea & Samaria, & to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NKJV).***

What Is Your “Center”?

Very center of life of faith is on God as revealed in Jesus Christ:

- ***Now when they saw the boldness of Peter & John, & perceived that they were uneducated & untrained men, they marveled. & they realized that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).***

What Is Your “Center”?

**To be called away daily from
controlling agendas**

**The first of all the spiritual
disciplines — meditation on &
contemplation of the Risen Christ**

A Neglected Spiritual Discipline

Meditation is often neglected

**Martha & Mary (Luke 10:38-42) —
Busyness was interfering with
spending time with the Savior**

**No alternatives to fully focused time
with the Risen Savior**

Let Us Pray

Closely related to meditation & contemplation is prayer

**Meditation & contemplation —
Moments of silence &
receptivity to the Risen Christ**

Let Us Pray

Work done within the soul:

- ***Now the Lord is the Spirit; & where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:17-18).***

Let Us Pray

Prayer — practiced:

- **with our exterior voices**
- **offering vocal praise & honor**
- **interceding for others**
- **expressing our laments**
- **requesting help in difficult circumstances**
- **calling for wisdom & insight, etc.**

For What Do We Pray?

Luke 11:1, “*‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’*”

Jesus taught his disciples how to pray (Mt. 6:5-15), & encouraged disciples to pray confidently (Mt. 7:7-11)

For What Do We Pray?

Jesus said *“seek first God’s kingdom & righteousness” (Mt. 6:33)*

Kingdom matters & connectedness to Christ have priority

Intercessory Prayer?

Intercessory prayer is painful & dangerous

Being fully present for another means risking danger, peril, & pain

Intercessory Prayer

Douglas John Hall, in his book, *When You Pray: Thinking your Way into God's World*, calls this “representation”:

- ***“We come (to intercessory prayer)...as persons whose lives have been sufficiently liberated from purely personal pursuits & cares to be enabled to identify ourselves in a profound way with others...(we are) actually present with (them) & (they are) in us, as if they had become part of us & we of them; so that their hurts & longings were ours”.***

Being fully “present” to others

Mark 10:42-45,

- ***“Jesus called them together & said, ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, & their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, & whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, & to give his life as a ransom for many.’”***

Being Fully “Present” To Others

If called to serve others, then, as Hall says, “Our prayer...when it is real, is always a sacramental reenactment of Gethsemane”

How can we become “fully present” to serve those to whom we have been called?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6LieFv5NXQ>

God's Answers to Prayer: Yes, No, Wait

The lame man was healed, but what of those not healed?

Sometimes God says "Yes" to believers' prayers

Sometimes God asks believers to wait for the divine answer

Sometimes God says "No" to believers' requests

God's Answers to Prayer: Yes, No, Wait

Paul's thorn in the flesh — prayed three times & God said “No”; Paul had to rest in God's all sufficient grace (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Paul's companion, Epaphroditus was “sick unto death” & lived only because of God's mercy (Phil. 2:25-27), not because of Paul

God's Answers to Prayer: Yes, No, Wait

Not to say that God does not answer prayer or He cannot be trusted for help or healing — rather only God can determine when & how someone is helped or healed (or not)

Lordship means to be submissive to Someone greater

Money & The Spiritual Disciplines

Not honest income but an over concern with money.

There is a spiritual discipline regarding godliness or holiness & contentment, & dire circumstances for those who remain discontented...

Money & The Spiritual Disciplines

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, & we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food & clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation & a trap & into many foolish & harmful desires that plunge people into ruin & destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith & pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Tim. 6:6-10).

Learning To Be Content

Still a temptation to find answers easily through planning & funds.

Might the first recourse be contemplation, meditation, & prayer?

Learning To Be Content

Who has the spiritual discipline to set aside ideas & programs while praying for God's will?

No longer have to say, "Silver & gold have we none," but also do not say, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up & walk."

Instead of thinking money cures all problems, we are invited to learn true contentment.

Learning To Be Content

As the Apostle described it,

- ***“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, & I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any & every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:11b-13).***

Power & Prestige Versus Humility & Humble Service

The perception of Peter & John by religious leadership — *uneducated & untrained* (Acts 4:13), presumably, unsophisticated.

Power & Prestige versus Humility & Humble Service

**In a life of faith & spiritual disciplines,
humility & humble service are
expected regardless of place in
society.**

**First & foremost called by God to live
a humble life.**

**Let any power or influence come from
humble life & service to others.**

It Can Be Exciting; It Can Be Boring

The exciting part is easy to take & easy to “sell.”

True spiritual life is often tough, boring, tedious.

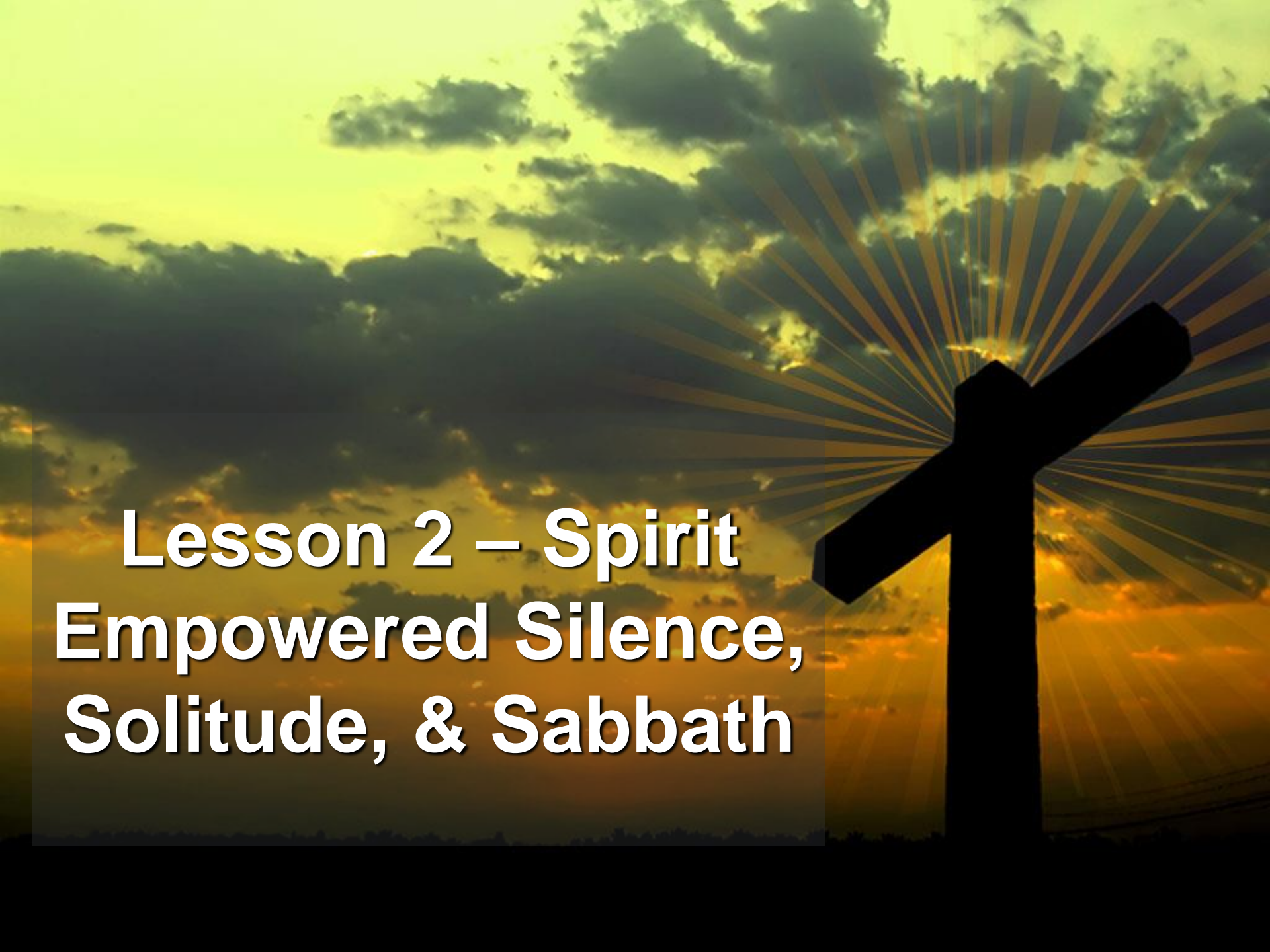
It Can Be Exciting; It Can Be Boring

Accustomed to entertaining & indulging, but seldom take time for others or God.

Take time daily to seek God, read God's Word, & find ways to serve others to establish the true spiritual disciplines & discover what God's plan is.

Discussion Time

- **Now discuss the issues raised by Whitney in chapter one:**
 - ✓ **What is the danger in neglecting the spiritual disciplines?**
 - ✓ **What is the freedom in embracing the spiritual disciplines?**
 - ✓ **How may I respond to the invitation to participate in & enjoy the spiritual disciplines, i.e. what immediate steps should I take?**

A silhouette of a cross is positioned on the right side of the image, set against a dramatic sunset sky. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, and a bright sun is visible behind the cross, creating a strong lens flare effect with numerous rays of light radiating outwards. The overall color palette is dominated by warm tones of orange, yellow, and dark blue.

**Lesson 2 – Spirit
Empowered Silence,
Solitude, & Sabbath**

Lesson Two: Silence, Solitude, Sabbath: What do you do with your time?

Vitally important in our hectic world

The question in today's lesson: What do you do with your time?

- **Chapter ten of Whitney's book, "Silence & Solitude"**
- **Sabbath-keeping**

Scriptures in Psalms

Psalm 37:7: “Be still before the LORD & wait patiently for him.”

Psalm 46:10: “Be still, & know that I am God.”

Psalm 62:1,5: “For God alone my soul waits in silence.”

Psalm 131:2: “I have stilled & quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.”

Scriptures in the life of Jesus

Matthew 14:23: “After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone.”

Mark 1:35: “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, & went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.”

Luke 4:42: “At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for Him & when they came to where He was, they tried to keep Him from leaving them...”

Do you feel the weight of a hectic
schedule?

**We are left exhausted & spent at
the end of every day**

**Who has time to rest in silence &
solitude when there are so many
things to do?**

Silence & Solitude

Only in silence & solitude can we give attention fully to our Lord

We are invited into God's presence daily

If our habit is to fill every moment with activity & noise, it is hard to find time to sit in silent adoration of our Lord

Sabbath Rest

Hebrews 4:9-11,

- ***There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.***

Sabbath Rest

Jesus dealt with unhealthy views of the Sabbath in his ministry & reminded people this in Mark 2:27, *Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath...”*

Sabbath was a gift from God to help hard working humankind & was not meant to be a heavy burden for people to bear

Resistance to Sabbath Rest

Colossians 2:16-17,

- ***Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.***

Resistance to Sabbath Rest

Romans 14:5-8,

- ***One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; & whoever abstains does so to the Lord & gives thanks to God. For none of us lives for ourselves alone, & none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; & if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.***

Resistance to Sabbath Rest

People hear such a command not as divine permission to rest, but as a threat to their world of frantic activities & worldly measures of “success.”

Resistance to Sabbath Rest

Our Creator is the one who made us & the one who gave us time

If we celebrate a rest day, we can view it as a break from our own world & announce our trust in a God who was, Himself, confident enough to rest

By observing a rest day, we are saying that our world is safely in God's hands

Sabbath Keeping

Reminder we can trust our lives to God's care


Resist tendency toward self-security

Pause, meditate on God's saving deeds and rest – enjoying the life God has given us

Discussion Issues for Lesson 2

Discuss from Whitney, pp. 176-190:

- **Goals for silence & solitude**
- **Getting away**
- **Special places for silence & solitude**
- **Trade-off responsibilities**
- **How you will seek times of silence & solitude daily**
- **Whether or not you will practice Sabbath rest weekly.**



**Lesson 3 – Spirit
Empowered Bible
Study**

Lesson Three: Studying the Bible

- Read chapters two and three in Whitney's book.
- Summary of the importance of Bible study
- Insights as you practice regular Bible reading and study.
- Check out this video that gives a good introduction to this lesson:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ay58lnQPOc>

The Bible: God's Instructions for Life

- **We find in the Bible the way to live, pray, and apply God's truth to life**
- **Bible is a reminder that God has provided clear instruction for us to live godly lives as we learn to obey God's Word**
- **Better understood as a series of stories that tell of God's saving deeds**
- **A living narrative of God's activity in the world including sinners!**
- **Our life's story as, somehow, a part of God's bigger story of redemption**

The Bible: The story of God's saving deeds

- **Bible is a collection of *stories* about God's saving deeds.**
- **God's intention that "God's name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (Exodus 9:16).**
- **God's name is best proclaimed in telling the stories of God's saving deeds in human history (Psalm 78:1-8ff.).**
- **Ultimate divine saving deed is that of Jesus Christ as expressed in the gospel story.**
- **It is in that story—THE story—that we find a reference point for our lives – OUR story.**

The Bible: The story of God's saving deeds

Do you prefer hearing the biblical story as a story or described in a list of points?

Explain why either is important to you.


Listening to stories

- **People hear a story easier than a laundry list of points**
- **People tense up when given commands**
- **But when someone says in a sermon, “Did you hear the story about... or “There was a certain man who...” everyone relaxes**
- **Jesus preached by telling stories**
- **Everyone would rather hear a good story than a laundry list of points or a stern lecture**

The “Intersection” of our story and the Gospel Story

- We understand life by our personal and cultural stories**
- Until our understanding of these stories intersects with another, very powerful story - then we see that our stories have meaning and purpose**
- This “intersection” occurred for most of us when we heard the gospel story**
- It was that story—THE story—that challenged the way we understood our culture’s and our personal stories**

The “Intersection” of our story and the Gospel Story

- When we heard THE story—the gospel—and submitted our life story to THE story, we had to go through a fundamental change in the way we perceived, devised, and proclaimed our stories 
- How did the gospel story change your life story?
- What biblical story helped convince you of the truth of the gospel?

A “dynamic” reading?

- We need a “dynamic reading” of the biblical stories, free from the restraints of others’ decisions about how the story must be heard
- Within the story one is free to find one’s own place within it
- Don’t ignore great teaching - but their interpretation need not be the final, authoritative word
- Not to encourage rebellion against human authority


A “dynamic” reading?

- All believers—preachers, scholars, and lay people alike-- are to humble themselves before God and the biblical story so that the Holy Spirit might guide them into the correct application of the biblical story



- It is the Holy Spirit’s work to illumine believers to better understand and live out the story of God’s saving deeds
- It is the Spirit who gives us a “dynamic” understanding of the biblical story

Knowing the background material

- A dynamic understanding of the biblical story does not rule out knowing the background material in relation to the biblical text
- The biblical stories powerfully communicate what God has done and how humans are to respond 
- Reading the gospel without some knowledge of the Old Testament is like trying to get to know a new friend without hearing a bit about his/her background
- It is like coming into a play in the middle and thus not fully grasping what is going on


Knowing the background material

- **Discovering important background material helps us know better what the biblical story is communicating.**
- **Amazing how much better we are able to hear the Spirit speak to us in the biblical story when we understand the culture and history involved in the story.**
- **Why do you think it is important to know the background material when trying to understand a biblical story?**
- **How has this knowledge helped you understand a passage better? Cite an example and explain.**

Hearing the biblical story

- Hearing the biblical story is a kind of “intersection” of our story with THE story
- By making the biblical story the reference point for my little story we:
 - Discover where I fit in God’s story
 - Our behavior, character, and destiny are altered
 - We remain accountable and responsible
 - Are kept truly “grounded” and safe when the winds of the world, the flesh, and the devil blow our way

Hearing the biblical story

- The tighter we remain connected to the biblical story, our foundation, the greater will be our confidence and security
- Explain why knowing the biblical story is important to you 
- Tell how you incorporate the biblical story into your daily devotions

Telling the story

- Having discovered great truths within the biblical story, we can then tell the story, and, by telling the story, communicate those truths.
- Jesus spoke of the risky, scandalous, and longsuffering love of God for God's people, through a story about two sons
- We have called this story the story of the Prodigal (Luke 15:11ff.), and it communicates great theological truths in story form.

What “transactions” can occur when telling the biblical story?

- Biblical stories contain transactions that occur that draw people into the story-world**
- Invites the hearer/reader to live in a world where the same sort of transactions are possible**
- God is both actor and agent**
- Though times, places, traditions, and even events may change, the story-world is not finally bound by these changes**

What “transactions” can occur when telling the biblical story?


- The story contains inexplicable elements that make possible future transactions for people willing to enter this world and hear and see with the ears and eyes of faith.**
- Makes it possible for people of faith to live obediently according to the transactions of the narrative.**
- Jeremiah spoke of a Potter-God willing to reshape sinful people many centuries ago.**

What “transactions” can occur when telling the biblical story?

- **Is the Potter-God still willing to reshape sinful people and make them obedient children of God?**
- **Our task is to discover how we can re-tell those stories in a form that is understandable to those in our cultures**

Lesson Three Discussion

- **Note the discussion prompts in Whitney, pp. 33, 57-58:**
- **What is the one thing you could do to improve the intake of God's word?**
- **How do you think it best to meditate regularly on God's Word? What process do you use?**
- **How will you go about being an "applier" of God's Word, i.e., how is the application of God's word to your life best accomplished?**
- **Does the faith community (fellowship with other believers) have an impact on this?**



Lesson 4 – Spirit Empowered Prayer

Lesson Four: Spirit-Empowered Prayer

- **Please pause this lesson and take time to pray about this lesson and its impact on your life**
- **This lesson builds on Chapter 4 in Whitney's book**
- **We'll look at the discussion questions there at the end of this lesson**

Why should we worry about praying?

- **The Lord Jesus Christ told the first disciples to pray in a certain way and even told them how to pray (Mt. 6:5-15)**
- **Praying too casually as if God were a “good buddy” would not be appropriate in approaching a holy God (sound theology)**
- **Praying in a way that commands, demands, or declares something in God’s place is idolatry**
- **Teaching that any kind of prayer counts as long as it is done sincerely is a tacit admission of universalism**

Why should we worry about praying?

- While sincerity is important, people can also be sincerely wrong
- In commenting on Isaiah's critique of Judah's worship in Isaiah 1:10-20, E. J. Young said this about verses 10-15, "The purpose of the people in coming to the Temple (i.e. 'my courts') was supposedly to worship the Lord their God. It is even possible that in so coming some of the worshipers were sincere. *Sincerity, however, is not sufficient; it is no substitute for obedience to God's commands*"

What is prayer?

- **Is Christian prayer solely understood as an address to God? Should not that be the whole focus?**
- **There should never be any “conversation” with or address to Satan or “conversation” with others as some try to “preach” as they pray.**

What is prayer?

- **The classical and traditional definition of prayer as;**
 - **an expression of devotion first (love for God)**
 - **then as an expression of praise (glorifying God)**
 - **then as an expression of petition (humbly asking God)**
 - **then as an expression of lament (expressing disappointments and confusion)**
 - **then as an expression of submission (Saying “Thy will be done...”, thus acknowledging only one Lord, and it isn’t the petitioner!)**

What is prayer?

- **No room for what sounds like arrogance (“I demand” or “I command” or “I declare” or “I release”) - such apparent arrogance would be a contradiction of the whole notion of the Lordship of Christ**
- **God knows better about what needs to be done in any given situation and only God dispenses blessings or curses (judgment)**
- **A true, biblical understanding of prayer begins with humility**
- **A total dependence upon God and no dependence upon human abilities.**

Coming boldly to God's throne through prayer

- **Believers are encouraged to “come boldly” to God's throne of grace (Heb. 4:16)**
- **But this boldness or confidence should not be expressed proudly**
- **If believers have confidence at all, it should be because they have learned to pray by humbly asking God and asking according to God's will (I Jn.5:14).**
- **Believers' prayers begin with an expression of love and devotion and praise and move to humble petition, always being careful to couch requests in terms of God's greater knowledge and will.**

Coming boldly to God's throne through prayer

- **Believers ask God to do for them and for others what cannot be done for themselves or for others.**
- **If believers wish others to be blessed, they ask God to send blessings upon them and do not presume to “release” anything.**
- **If there is evil to combat, believers petition God by saying, “God, please rebuke the evil one,” or, “God, please thwart any efforts by evil spirits to steal, kill, or destroy.”**
- **If there are special needs for anything, believers humbly ask (petition) God according to God's will for those requests.**

The “authority” of the believer

- **The “authority of the believer” is provided to believers only in the sense of carrying out God’s will as carefully discerned by the Spirit and by biblical studies.**
- **Example of knowing what the Bible says in regard to prayers answered or not answered: The apostle who said God’s promises were “yea and amen” (2 Cor. 1:20), also discovered God’s “No” when he prayed three times for the messenger of Satan to be removed, his thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-10)**

The “authority” of the believer

- **Believers work out their salvation “in fear and trembling” (not arrogance) as they submit to God and trust that God will do the right work within them (Phil. 2:12-13)**
- **Jesus Christ gave His disciples a prayer that includes these lines, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done...” (Mt. 6:10)**

God's *Yes*, God's *No*, God's *Wait*

- **Sometimes God says “Yes” to believers’ prayers and provides what is asked.**
- **Sometimes God asks believers to wait for the divine answer and be faithful and obedient to God while waiting.**
- **Sometimes God says “No” to believers’ requests because God knows better than they what is needed and even when it is needed.**

God's *Yes*, God's *No*, God's *Wait*

- **Remember the story of Paul's thorn in the flesh**
- **This is not to say God does not answer prayer or that believers cannot trust God for help or healing; it is to say that only God can determine when and how someone is helped or healed or not, depending on God's greater purposes**
- **Those who call Christ Lord understand that that Lordship means they are submissive to Someone greater than themselves**

Intercessory Prayer

- **Intercessory prayer is the most painful and dangerous kind of praying possible**
- **Being fully present for another means that we are risking the dangers and perils and pains that others are feeling.**

Intercessory Prayer

- **Hall calls this kind of praying “representation” (77):**
“We come (to intercessory prayer)...as persons whose lives have been sufficiently liberated from purely personal pursuits and cares to be enabled to identify ourselves in a profound way with others...(we are) actually present with (them) and (they are) in us, as if they had become part of us and we of them; so that their hurts and longings were ours” (81).

Jesus and His Mission

Jesus said about his own mission and that of his followers in Mark 10:42-45, “Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’”

Jesus and His Mission

If we are called out to serve others, as our Lord demonstrated for us, then, as Hall also says, “Our prayer...when it is real, is always a sacramental reenactment of Gethsemane” (83) (“...not my will, but Thine be done”)

How can we become “fully present” to serve those to whom we have been called?

Intercessory Concern

- **Hall describes such service and prayer:**
“God will not hear prayer that is painless, that causes no inconvenience to its authors, that involves no bodily contact. We are responsible for those for whom we pray. We respond to God for them and we become God’s response to them. It is not a matter of turning the whole thing back to God...to pray is to announce to God and to one another our readiness to accept God’s invitation to participate in the vicarious life of the Christ, to become in deed as well as in thought and word his Body, and to extend his priesthood in and for the world. It is an awesome thing, and not to be entered lightly” (85).

Biblical examples of intercession

- **Moses: Deuteronomy 4:21**
- **Ezekiel: Ezekiel 4; 22:30**
- **Jeremiah: Jeremiah 8:21**

Biblical examples of intercession

- **As the text of Jeremiah 8:21-9:1 describes, God's concern and Jeremiah's concern are mysteriously linked in some way, "Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people? Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people."**

Biblical examples of intercession

- **Because he wept night and day for his people this intercessory concern had become the habit of his life and thus Jeremiah is described as the “Weeping Prophet.”**

Contemporary examples of intercession

- **Dr. and Mrs. Robertson McQuilkin**



Contemporary examples of intercession

- **Henri Nouwen**



Contemporary examples of intercession

- **Intercessory prayer and concern may draw you into the very lives of those for whom you have been praying**
- **You may be required to make sacrifices, endure pain, feel the hurts and anguish of those people whose names you have called in prayer**
- **Praying is only the beginning of our intercessory service**
- **We “put feet to our prayers” or we “incarnate” God’s loving Presence when we step out of the prayer closet**

Stepping into others' "shoes"

- **We are being called to step into others' shoes**



Stepping into others' "shoes"

- We are being called to step into others' shoes**
- Which pair of these shoes would you choose and wear in identification and representation?**

- Are we ready to pray with Jesus as he did in Gethsemane, “Not my will, but Thine be done”?**
- Incarnating the presence of God to others through intercessory prayer and sacrificial service can be difficult and painful**
- God is calling the church out of its selfishness and self-absorption to a new place of witness.**
- May we find our way into a new pair of shoes as we seek to serve our Lord as we walk in His steps-Amen!**

**Words to an old hymn “Take My Life and Let it Be,”
by Frances Ridley Havergal:**

*Take my life and let it be, Consecrated, Lord to Thee;
Take my hands and let them move, At the impulse of
Thy love, At the impulse of Thy love.*

*Take my feet and let them be, Swift and beautiful for
Thee; Take my voice and let me sing, always, only, for
my King, Always, only, for my King.*

*Take my silver and my gold; Not a mite would I
withhold; Take my moments and my days; Let them flow
in ceaseless praise; Let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

*Take my will and make it Thine; It shall be no longer
mine; Take my heart, it is Thine own; It shall be Thy
royal throne; It shall be Thy royal throne.*

Take time to view Whitney's discussion prompts at the end of Chapter 4:

- **How will we learn to pray?**
- **How do we learn to pray persistently?**
- **What roadblocks are there for our daily prayers? How are they overcome?**

- For you who are younger, perhaps this hip-hop song about Intercessory Prayer will be meaningful:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6LieFv5NXQ>

Lesson 5 – Forming a Community of the Spirit



Lesson Five: Forming a Community of the Spirit: Hospitality, Fellowship, and Nurture

- **Please pause for prayer as you begin this lesson**
- **Have your Bible ready as we read together some key passages**

Lesson Five: Forming a Community of the Spirit: Hospitality, Fellowship, and Nurture

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:7-8).

An Invitation to Loving Hospitality

- Many believers organize their lives in such a way that the busy activities of modern life have prevented them from fully engaging their faith**
- Often, a “fast food” approach to the faith means that believers complete as many “vital” activities as**
- Many important things—family meals, times for reflection and prayer, meaningful time for building a strong faith community—get short-changed**
- A loving, nurturing community does not spring up to full possibility, maturity, and genuine welcome without people engaging in some hard, sometimes tedious, but always essential work**

How can a church provide an atmosphere of loving hospitality?

- **Definitions of loving hospitality can be as broad and general as there are people**
- **Some assume their fellowship is great but may fail to understand what really constitutes genuine community or fellowship**

Fellowship of the Spirit (*koinonia*) was a key characteristic of the Early Church after the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:42).

- **Believers shared their worldly goods with each other, met regularly, and had meals together (Acts 2:44-46).**
- ***koinonia* might be better translated “to share in” or “to be involved in partnership with one another” through various kinds of community activities.**

Fellowship of the Spirit (*koinonia*)

- **These fellowship activities also resulted in others joining their community as new believers (Acts 2:47)**
- **Spirit-enabled fellowship resulted in a kind of successful community evangelism**
- **See Bill J. Leonard. “The Church and the Laity.” *Review & Expositor* 85 (1988): 625.**

Forming a Nurturing Community

- Some people can get so caught up in their own agendas and schedules that they forget that there are others around who might be hurting**
- Other people simply find themselves stressed and in need of loving nurture to sustain their faith – leaving them unable to extend the same to others**
- They do not mean to be selfish and self-absorbed; they are just needy and weary**

To speak of love and nurture without recognizing real human stresses and strains is to ignore a common ailment of a hectic modern society

- **People are not surprised to be treated shabbily**
- **People become defensive because of the meanness encountered**
- **Believers try not to be apathetic or mean in return, but often the atmosphere gets the better of them.**
- **Notions of love and nurture have been cheapened by casual sex in television programs and in most movies**

To speak of love properly—is a difficult task

- **Reading about love and declaring that love is the foundation of the two most important commandments (indeed, it is!) is one thing**
- **Actually practicing that love is quite**
- **This is why the word “nurture” has been chosen instead of love.**

To speak of love properly—is a difficult task

- **Nurture must have love as its foundation and focus**
- **But only speaking of love is inadequate — love requires sacrificial action**
- **The apostle put it this way, “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18)**

Surprisingly, love—the true kind of love, God’s love—is not an easy or casual subject

- **The power of the gospel to bring genuine empathy and relief often seems remote**
- **The local church is supposed to be a repository of such nurture**
- **But for people harried and wounded by a hostile world there is great hesitancy and doubt of the possibility of love and nurture**

Surprisingly, love—the true kind of love, God’s love—is not an easy or casual subject

- Truly loving someone with the kind of nurture intended might mean believers become vulnerable, open, and even willing to help bear the pain of others**
- People are practiced in guarding their hearts because life often breaks open hearts**
- We don’t want to open our hearts and listen so that we do not run the risk of the hurts that can come in**
- Listening with our hearts can actually be risky because it means that we also might suffer with the sufferers**

We are reminded of what the apostle said: “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:1-2).

- **Love's particularity described implied by Martin Luther:**

If there is anything in us, it is not our own; it is a gift of God. But if it is a gift of God, then it is entirely a debt one owes to love, that is, to the Law of Christ. And if it is a debt owed to love, then I must serve others with it, not myself. Thus my learning is not my own; it belongs to the unlearned and is the debt I owe them. My chastity is not my own; it belongs to those who commit sins of the flesh, and I am obligated to serve them through it by offering it to God for them by sustaining and [forgiving] them, and thus with my respectability, veiling their shame before God and [people]...

- **Love's particularity described implied by Martin Luther (cont.):**

...Thus my wisdom belongs to the foolish, my power to the oppressed. Thus my wealth belongs to the poor, my righteousness to the sinners...It is with all these qualities that we must stand before God and intervene on behalf of those who do not have them, as though clothed with someone else's garment...But even before [people] we must, with the same love, render them service against their detractors and those who are violent toward them; for this is what Christ did for us.

Found in Martin Luther. "Lectures on Galatians" *Luther's Works* vol. 27 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957): 393.

No secret or mystical formulas by which a nurturing community might be formed

- **Requires humble people who value what a nurturing community can provide, and value it above all else**
- **Such a loving, nurturing community should be the natural product of Spirit-enabled fellowship**
- **If God's love is really true, believers cannot help but convey that love in authentic, tangible ways**

No secret or mystical formulas by which a nurturing community might be formed

“There is no wavering in God’s intent to love us, no matter what... (and) when we love and live in a community where love counts, we are at once ourselves and like God.”

See Burton Cooper “The Disabled God” *Theology Today* 49 (July 1992): 173-174.

Questions for Discussion

- **Do you think there are social and personal roadblocks that can prevent true fellowship? If so, name two, then discuss how they might be overcome.**
- **Why do you think Christian fellowship is important? Cite two reasons it is important and explain them.**
- **How can we convince others of the importance of fellowship as a spiritual discipline?**

**Lesson –6:
Discovering Spiritual
Gifts & Putting Them
Into Practice**



Lesson Six: Discovering our Spiritual Gift(s) & Putting Them Into Practice

- **Please pause and have prayer for God's wisdom to discern the work of God through today's lesson.**
- **Read in your Bibles these passages: 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-12.**

Lesson Six: Discovering our Spiritual Gift(s) & Putting Them Into Practice

- Some churches do not help people discover their spiritual and practical gifts**
- Often (but not always), the implicit message is only professional ministry staff are gifted to do ministry**
- Lay people are expected to attend and volunteer but not considered equal to the pulpit-type or platform-type ministry gifts**

Lesson Six: Discovering our Spiritual Gift(s) & Putting Them Into Practice

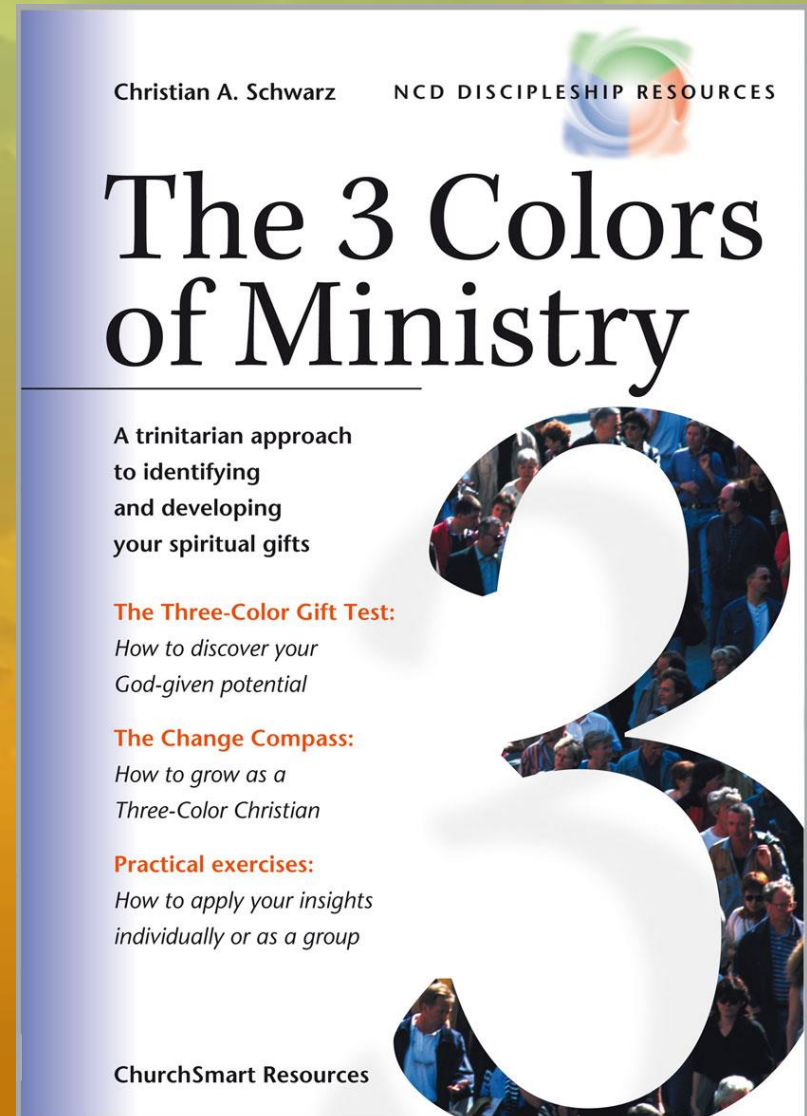
- **Bible studies, prayer sessions, preaching series, and personal studies in regard to personal gifting(s) should be provided & encouraged**
- **Too many lay people spend their whole lives as spectators**

A web site? Really?

- **Complete a Spiritual Gift inventory**
- **A web site cannot substitute for the work of the Holy Spirit.**
- **Point of the exercise is to start a conversation about an often neglected**
- **May encourage us to seek God for our gifts and seek appropriate confirmation of them**
- **Discuss the kinds of confirmation that are biblical and appropriate when seeking one's gifts**

Three Colors of Ministry

- The most comprehensive available:
- Go to:
<http://www.ncd-international.org/public/Books/3Colors-of-Ministry.html>



The 3 Colors of Ministry

- **The most comprehensive available, lists & explains 31 gifts in the NT:**
- **<http://www.ncd-international.org/public/Books/3Colors-of-Ministry.html>**

The Confirmation of the Spirit

- **In discovering spiritual gifts consider their validation by various means of confirmation**
- **Confirmation of gift(s) and calling can be as varied as there are people**

The Confirmation of the Spirit

- **Some common means by which gifts and calling are confirmed:**
 - **Confirmation of Scripture**
 - **Personal experience in the practice of the gift**
 - **Prayer**
 - **Witness of others, especially those considered elders**
 - **Opportunities for the practice of the gift(s)**
 - **Inner witness of the Spirit**
 - **Affirmation of the faith community in response to the practice of one's gift**

The Confirmation of the Spirit

- Web sites listed below can provide some direction at least in a prayerful discussion & assist with confirmation
- Web Resources for the Study of the Gifts of the Spirit:

<http://buildingchurch.net/g2s-d.htm>

<http://www.kodachrome.org/spiritgift/>

The Gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

- **Pentecostals and Charismatics often use a topical arrangement to get at the significance of these gifts listed by Paul (also sometimes called, the mind of God, power of God, and voice of God):**
- **The Discerning Gifts—gifts of revelation (the power to know)**
 - Word of wisdom**
 - Word of knowledge**
 - Discerning of spirits**

The Gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

- **The Dynamic Gifts—gifts of power (the power to do)**

Gift of faith

Gifts of healings

Working of miracles

- **The Declarative Gifts—gifts of inspired utterance (the power to speak)**

Prophecy

Tongues

Interpretation of tongues

Meanings (Discerning Gifts)

- **Message (word) of Wisdom (*logos sophias*; lit. “word of wisdom”) 1 Cor. 12:8.**

— **Traditionally understood to be a Spirit-given message of wise counsel to provide guidance for God’s people in times of need.**

Meanings (Discerning Gifts)

- **Message (word) of Knowledge (*logos gnōseōs*; lit. “word of knowledge”) 1 Cor. 12:8.**

— Traditionally understood to be a Spirit-quickened communication of information to inform God’s people in times of need.

Meanings (Discerning Gifts)

- **Distinguishing between Spirits**
(diakriseis pneumatōn) 1 Cor. 12:10.

— Almost certainly supernaturally given insight into the nature of spirit presences or activity. Probably related to “testing the spirits” (1 John 4:1).

Meanings (cont., Dynamic Gifts)

- **The Gift of Faith (*pistis*) 1 Cor 12:9; 13:2:**

3 levels, or expressions, of faith from Scripture:

- **Saving faith by which we believe in Christ & are saved.**
- **Daily faith by which we live out the Christian life trusting in the Lord & his Word in faithful Christian living, sometimes called “functional faith.”**
- **The “gift of faith” — a miraculous act of the Spirit and is not to be confused with a human act or initiative.**

Meanings (cont., Dynamic Gifts)

- **The Gifts of Healing[s] (*charismata iamatōn*)**

1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30:

— plurals in “gifts” and “healings” seem to imply there is a plurality of healing gifts for physical sicknesses.

— Bible places tremendous emphasis on healing and prayer for healing

— Jesus healed all kinds of diseases: blindness, deafness, paralysis, lameness, etc.,

Meanings (cont., Dynamic Gifts)

- **The Gifts of Healing[s] (*charismata iamatōn*)**

1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30

— **Matt. 8:16-17: “When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.’”**

Meanings (cont., Dynamic Gifts)

- **The Gifts of Healing[s] (*charismata iamatōn*)**

1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30:

— **The disciples in the Gospels and Acts heal many different types of diseases.**

— **Among those with recognized “gifts of healings” it seems they often have more success with certain types of diseases.**

Meanings (cont., Dynamic Gifts)

- **The Gifts of Healing[s] (*charismata iamatōn*)**

1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30:

— **Apostles, though used mightily in healing at times, apparently could not heal every single illness they encountered.**

— **Remember Paul's various ailments (Gal 4:15; 2 Cor 12:7) and those of his colleagues who were not always instantly healed (Phil 2:27 [Epaphroditus]; 2 Tim 4:20 [Trophimus]).**

Meanings (cont., Dynamic Gifts)

- **Miraculous Powers (*energēmata dunameōn*) 1 Cor 12:10, 28, 29:**

— Since this gift is separate from healings that are obviously miraculous, must indicate, “all other kinds of supernatural activities beyond the healing of the sick” (Fee, *GEP*, 169).

— Might well include such events as casting out demons, special empowerment as when Paul pronounced blindness on Elymas (Acts 13:6-12), and the raising of the dead (Peter [Acts 9:40-42]; Paul [20:10]).

Meanings (cont'd., Declarative Gifts)

- **Prophecy: Proclaiming God's truth for the current circumstances, as supernaturally "received" from the Spirit. This gift deals mostly with "forth-telling" (speaking to contemporary situations), although it can entail "fore-telling) (predicting accurately the future).**

Meanings (cont'd., Declarative Gifts)

- **Tongues: by the Spirit speaking in the (previously unknown) “tongues of men or of angels” (1 Cor. 13:1).**

Meanings (cont'd., Declarative Gifts)

- **Interpretation of tongues: by the Spirit accurately interpreting a message given in public worship of an unknown tongue.**

The Gifts of the Spirit in Romans 12:6-8:

- **Ministry (*diakonia*)** Rom 12:7; 1 Pet 4:10. Possibly the gift of service in preaching the Word (Acts 6:4), but more probably the physical operations and administration of the church.
- **Teaching (*didaskalia*)** Rom 12:7. The gift or ability to instruct the members of the church in what God has revealed, i.e., the Bible and its application to life.

The Gifts of the Spirit in Romans 12:6-8

- **Encouraging (*paraklēsis*) Rom 12:7.**
The gift of urging or entreating someone to act on God's truth as known and taught. Comforting through such truth is likely also involved.
- **Giving (verb--*metadidōmi*) Rom 12:8.**
The gift of both the means and the will to give to meet the needs of God's people.

The Gifts of the Spirit in Romans 12:6-8

- **Ruling (verb--*proistēmi*) Rom 12:8. The gift of governance.**
- **Mercy (*eleos*) Rom 12:9. The gift of personal ministry to those in need with probable emphasis upon physical needs as hunger, sickness, etc.**

Professional Ministry Gifts

Ephesians 4:11-12

- **The so called “five-fold” ministry gifts include: Apostle (perhaps missionary), Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, and Teacher.**
- **Churches and God’s kingdom need God-called, Spirit-empowered professional ministers who function according to these gifts. But churches also need God-called, Spirit-empowered lay people.**

Professional Ministry Gifts

Ephesians 4:11-12

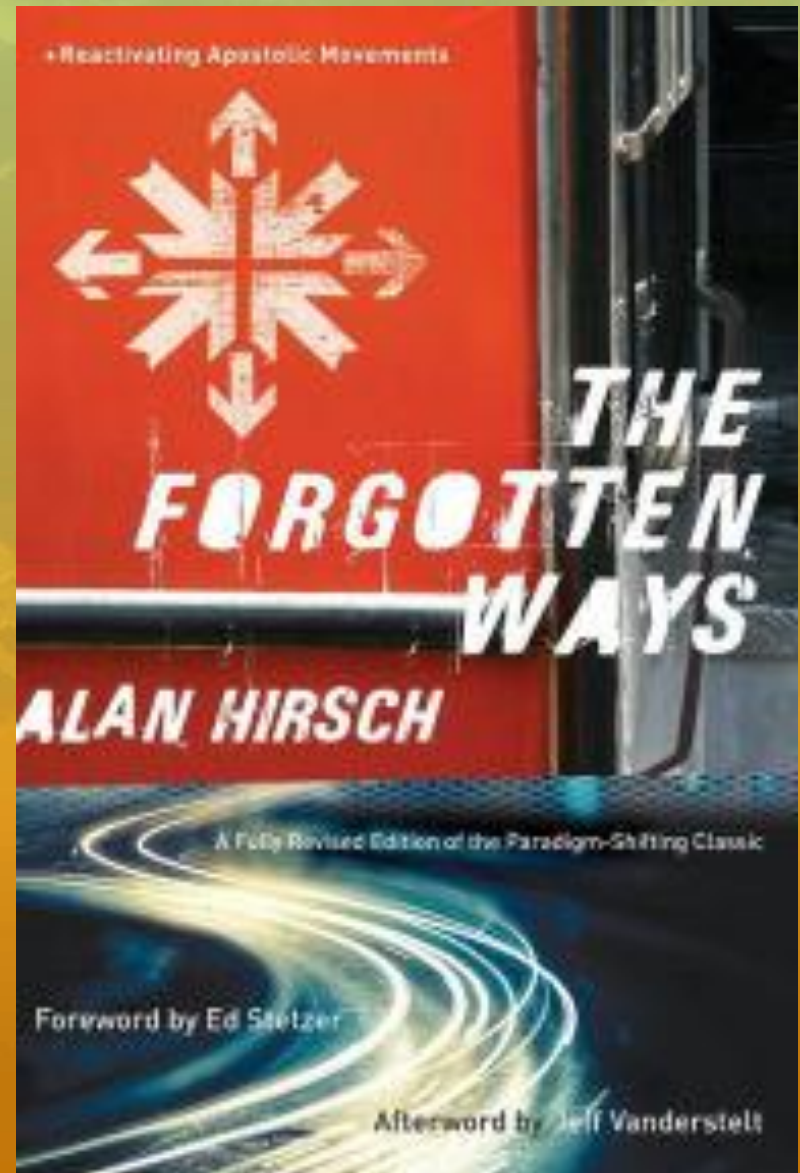
- **Remember, that all are called and gifted by the Spirit: “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).**
- **Christians don’t leave all the ministry to the professional ministers; they seek God’s direction in discerning their gifted place in God’s kingdom.**

**Alan Hirsch's View:
Three books for further study**



Alan Hirsch's View:

The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements



Alan Hirsch's View:

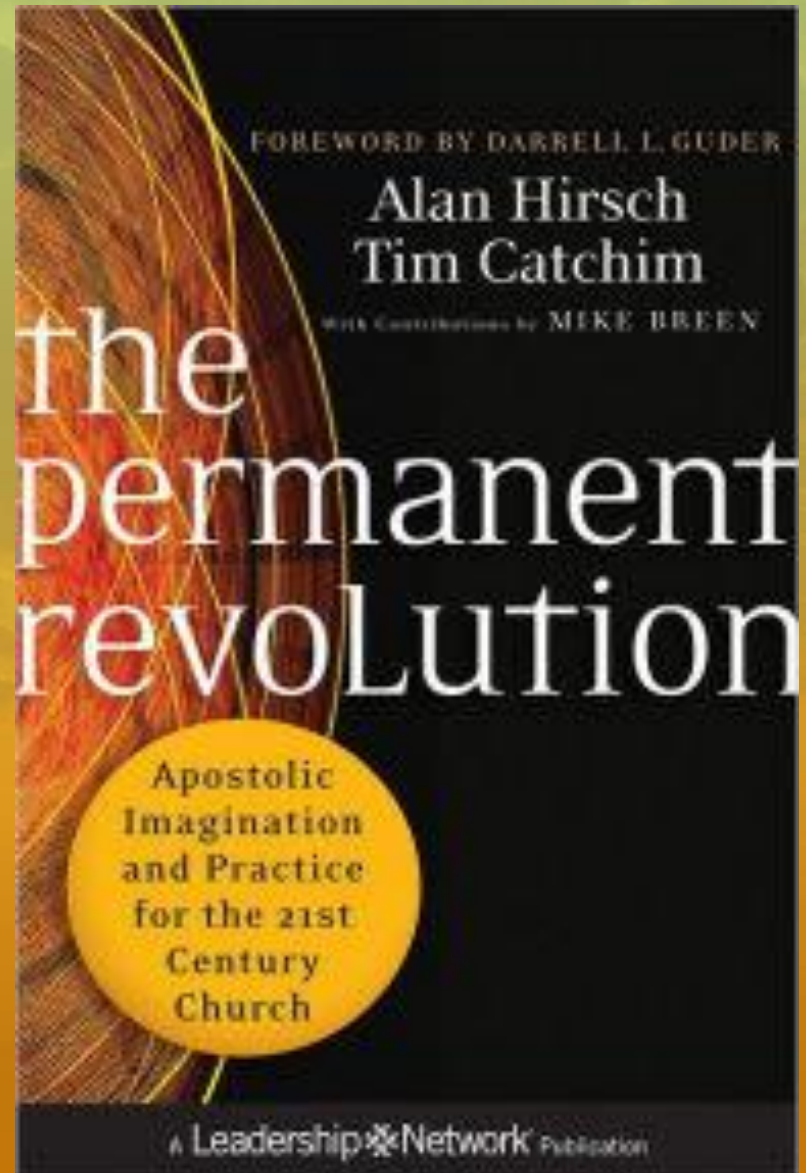
**5Q:
Reactivating the
Original
Intelligence and
Capacity of the
Body of Christ**



REACTIVATING THE ORIGINAL INTELLIGENCE
AND CAPACITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

Alan Hirsch's View:

***The Permanent Revolution:
Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church***



The Spirit's Gifts and God's Love

- **Gifts must be recognized as coming from God as the giver of gifts as he chooses.**
- **Yet some initiative believers should exercise! “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy” (1 Cor. 14:1).
“Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church” (14:12).**

The Spirit's Gifts and God's Love

- **As seen in 1 Corinthians 13, gifts must always be recognized and practiced as an act and experience of Christian love (*agape*). “And now I will show you the most excellent way...If I have the gift[s]...but have not love (*agape*), I gain nothing” (12:31—13:3).**

The Purpose of the Gifts of the Spirit

- The purpose of God's gifts can be seen in 1 Cor. 12:7, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good (*sympherō*)"
- *Sympherō* ("common good") has the sense of bringing people together to confer a benefit or advantage

The Purpose of the Gifts of the Spirit

- **The gifts are not a reward for, or a proof of, exceptional spirituality—they are given through fallible people to build up the Christian community**
- **We must exercise the gifts with a spirit of humility and service**

The Purpose of the Gifts of the Spirit

- **Take the spiritual gifts online inventory found earlier in video & discuss**
- **Important to pray privately & with other seekers about spiritual gifts**
- **Get God's confirmation**
- **Answers to prayer, indication, and confirmation of giftings might not come right away, but the faithful are rewarded who “eagerly desire spiritual gifts” (1 Cor. 14:1).**

**Lesson – 7:
Serving God
Faithfully**



Lesson Seven: Serving God Faithfully

- **Read Chapter 7 in Whitney's book**
- **Please pause to pray, asking God for wisdom, insight, and courage to do what God has called you to do**
- **Have your Bible open for this lesson from Ephesians, 2:8-10; 4:1-16.**

Lesson Seven: Serving God Faithfully

- **This lesson flows naturally from the previous lesson on spiritual gifts**
- **We want to discover:**
 - **God’s amazing gifts given to us**
 - **Where best to serve God and use our gifts**
 - **The “motivations” for our service (Whitney)**

God's Gifts to Us Are Our Gifts to the World

Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:1-16

- When our lives intersect with the life of God our lives are changed forever**
- As children of God we find peace and joy in our faith**
- A whole new world of God's love opens up before us and we know that we know that God's hand is on our lives**

God's Gifts to Us Are Our Gifts to the World

Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:1-16

- **Ephesians 2:8-10 reminds us we have been saved by faith as God's gift and not our works**
- **We are also God's workmanship created to do good works of service**

God's Gifts to Us Are Our Gifts to the World

Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:1-16

- **Ephesians 4:1-16 reminds us that God has gifted all believers to do the work of ministry so that the whole church body can mature and be built up in love**
- **But only “as each (person) does his/her work” (Eph. 4:16)**

Serving God Faithfully

- **We want to serve God faithfully, but soon into our new life of faith, we are confronted with the realities of our busy lives**

Serving God Faithfully

- **Where is the excitement or joy in life?**
- **We are sometimes tempted by excitement offered in places good and not-so-good**

What makes a difference? God's Plan!

- **It was just that notion—that God had something important and unique for me to do—that drew me to the life of faith**

What makes a difference? God's Plan!

- **Someone told me that God had something significant for me, had gifted me with God's gifts, and wanted me to accomplish God's will**
- **Four decades later I am still serving God faithfully**

“Idle hands are the devil’s workshop!”

- **Boredom & inactivity are more than just opportunities for mischief; they are also the enemies of well being & satisfaction**
- **Humans were created to be creative and productive**
- **Take away a chance to work, be useful, or productive - we shrivel up and die**

Serving God? Not so simple

- **Sometimes we face personal issues that become roadblocks to the expression of those gifts God has given us - usually, it comes down to selfishness and pride**
- **We just naturally want to be served instead of serving and often we are too proud to admit it**

Can we build an oasis?

**It is possible for full life to spring from a
desert land - if only people care!**

Making a Difference

God has gifted each of us to make a difference in our community:

- In the local church**
- In our work sites**
- In retirement communities or nursing homes**
- Building an oasis for young people**
- Transforming their own families into people full of life and integrity and faith**

Making a Difference

Can we set aside our pride and selfishness and seek God to show us our gifts and our place to express those gifts?

Discussion Questions

- **Which of Whitney's "motivations" for service is most important to you? Explain your answer.**

Motivated by:

- Obedience
- Gratitude
- Gladness
- Forgiveness, Not Guilt
- Humility

Discussion Questions

**“Worship empowers serving; serving expresses worship. Godliness requires a disciplined balanced between the two”
(Whitney)**

Help Wanted:

Gifted volunteers for difficult service in the local expression of the kingdom of God.

Motivation to serve should be obedience to God, gratitude, gladness, forgiveness, humility, and love. Service will rarely be glorious.

Temptation to quit place of service will sometimes be strong. Volunteers must be faithful in spite of long hours, little or no visible results, and possibly no recognition-expect from God for all eternity.

(Whitney, p. 158)

Discussion Questions

- **Discuss the “balance” between worship and serving Whitney describes above.**
- **Why do you think they are both important?**
- **How do we maintain the balance between the two?**

Discussion Questions

- **Where do you believe you are best gifted to serve or what do you think your gift from God is? Explain.**
- **Tell how you are using that gift now or plan to use it for God's glory.**