

Leading

Rooted in Christ



This leader's manual complements the Rooted in Christ course manual.
It is provided for course leaders as a resource and reminder of key issues involved in leading a Rooted in Christ small group.

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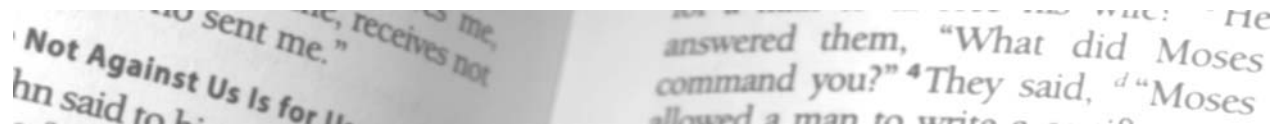
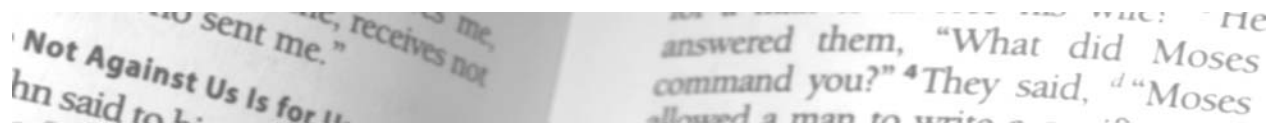


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PRINCIPLES IN SCRIPTURE

Galatians 6:7-8 (NASB) "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life."

"We cannot harvest without sowing - the seed determines the harvest."

On one level the principle is clear. The type of seed we sow determines the crop which will grow. Experience tells us that if we sow wheat seeds we will, in due course, harvest wheat.

On a second level we see the principle at work in everyday life . . .

If we sow time and effort in training to participate in a sport, we reap an increased competence in that sport.

If we spend our time, energy and money in business we expect to be rewarded with a more successful business.

On a third level the principle applies in our spiritual lives.

Time with Him results in a deeper knowledge of God Himself?

Time in His Word results in a deeper knowledge of His Word?

Sowing the Gospel results in a harvest of souls?

What Harvest do You Want to See in the Lives of Others?

Build into your life seed which is appropriate to the fruit you want to reap.

Jesus said . . .

Matthew 28:19-20 (The Message, Eugene H. Peterson) ". . . go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."

Do you want to train faithful men and women . . .

Who are in the Word, spending time with the Lord each day?

Whose lives are being transformed as they obey the Word?

Who are making a difference in the Church?

Who are reaching out to others on behalf of Christ?

Who care for others?

Then choose your seed carefully for what you sow will determine the fruit you harvest.

Leading Rooted in Christ

LEADING ROOTED IN CHRIST

Introduction

We trust and pray these notes will help you as you lead “*Rooted in Christ*” courses. The suggestions we make have been developed over a number of years of practical teaching and training.

General Planning

The primary focus of the course is on personal devotions - spending time daily in personal Bible study and prayer and on practical teaching relating to living the Christian life.

The course is intended for adults. With a younger age group, under 17 years old, the level of accountability needs to be eased and a different approach used.

Mixed groups work best, both in terms of age and gender. Normally husbands and wives should stay together. Adult children will probably want to be in a different group from their parents.

The normal maximum group size is 12, the minimum one to one. Ideally, a group of 8 - 10 is best. The upper limit to group size results from the time needed for sharing and the interactive nature of the course.

No one should join a group after the course starts. In special circumstances you can bring someone in at Session Two but in this case you will have to go over Session One material with them before Session Two. Nor should you move people from one group to another without very good reasons.

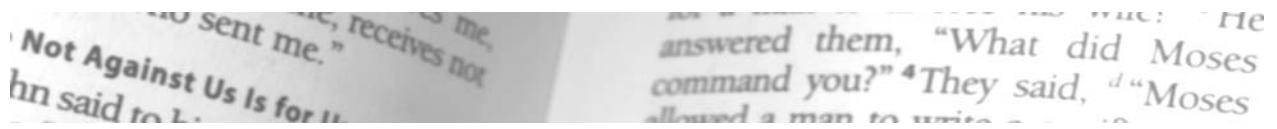
If you do nothing more than teach everyone to have high quality, consistent, personal devotions then you will have done something really useful.

The teaching material is at a level appropriate to most churches. You can use this course with new believers and also with believers of longer standing who want to get to know the Lord better.

Occasionally it will be helpful to teach the material at a deeper level due to the knowledge and background of those participating. Only you can judge as you get to know the group members.

Study Resources

Deeper Bible study is encouraged in later sessions. Background resource materials like Concordances, Bibles Handbooks, Bible Dictionaries and perhaps word books like Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words will be of great help. Why not suggest to your group that they put books like these ‘on request’ for Christmas or birthday presents.



Practical Planning

Group members need to be prepared to work on personal devotions and join in the group discussions each week.

It is vital that anyone joining a *Rooted in Christ* course understands this commitment and agrees to it. In one or two isolated instances where this has not happened there has been some drop out from the course. When men and women do understand what they are committing themselves to, there is virtually no drop out.

Proper promotion of the course will generally bring two reactions in individual lives . . .

A hunger to know God better.

Apprehension about the personal devotions and sharing.

The fears need to be counteracted by the testimony of someone who has done the course and who can allay these fears and speak of the personal blessing which they experienced.

*One very important implication of this is that you cannot just **impose** this course on an existing group or midweek meeting. If you want to run 'Rooted in Christ' in place of, for example, your midweek you will need to provide an alternative for those who, for whatever reason, are unwilling to join a group.*

If you force people to join, who are not ready, they will probably drop out and you may lose them completely.

Public promotion needs to be backed up with personal invitations to encourage some who may be hesitating.

Plan the venue carefully. It can be a suitable home or a small cosy room on the church premises. Informal and relaxed seating will work best, e.g. with everyone in a circle or round a table. A relaxed group will participate more freely in all aspects of the sessions.

Make sure everybody knows the time and place. Contact them personally and confirm all the arrangements.

Start and finish on time. If you do not, folk will learn to drift in for what they THINK will be the starting time and time will be wasted. It is not fair to those who come on time to be kept waiting.

What Night?

You may wish to nominate a particular night of the week for the course but don't close the door to other options, be flexible.

People can have many legitimate commitments so provide alternatives for them. There are normally several groups so you can allow them to meet on different nights or even during the day. Do the promotion about three weeks

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before the starting date to allow yourself time to assess the preferences and allocate groups and leaders.

Teaching the Course

These Leader's notes provide additional guidance for you. They highlight points which need emphasis, amplify where necessary and, in some cases, explain and develop the subjects in more depth.

You need to plan in detail how you will illustrate each element in every topic. These illustrations may be visual; a drawing or cartoon on an A3 sheet, or memory aids. They should be as personal to you as possible.

It is crucial to teach at a level which is appropriate to the group members. Only you can gauge where the group is in terms of spiritual maturity and knowledge.

One objective of the leader's course is to give you a deeper understanding so that, if you have a group which is exceptionally above average, you can lift the level at which you teach to keep interest high.

Encourage the group to share rather than use any form of pressure. If you embarrass someone they may not come back.

Do not ask anyone to pray audibly or share directly unless you are very sure that they will not mind.

The depth at which people will share will grow over the weeks, especially as you set an example. Share God's chastening as well as His blessing and let others see you as you really are. You should not be seen as some spiritual giant to whose standards the group can never attain, none of us are.

Be an Example

Since you are asking people to spend time each day in personal devotions, memorising, meditating, keeping written notes and changing their lives in the light of the Word, you need to be doing these things yourself.

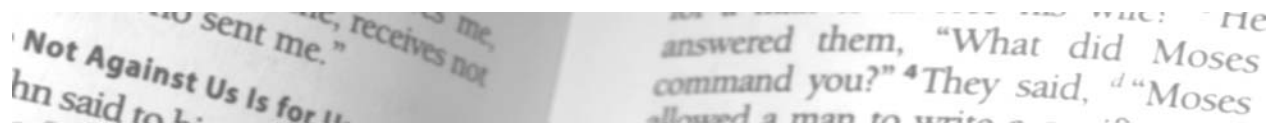
2 Thessalonians 3:9 "We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow."

In many ways you are the spiritual ceiling for your group and the limit to their growth. You can't teach them what you don't know and practice yourself.

Take your diary to the group meetings so that people can see that you are using one yourself. You should do the devotional studies with the group (in addition to your own readings, if necessary) and share your own insights from the passages. Don't allow yourself to be put on a spiritual pedestal. (See the notes for Session One.)

The Sessions

It is helpful to have two leaders sharing the leadership of each group. This is especially true the first few times you lead a course. In this event you can take



turns leading the sharing time and teaching the other material. It also means that you have someone with whom you can discuss the sessions and the group's reaction.

The nature of the course material changes throughout and you will need to adapt and vary your teaching methods to suit.

You really need to understand the material so well that you can concentrate on the people in the group without having to worry about the theology. Try to keep track of everybody in the group and how they are reacting to it all.

It is helpful to write key words down the side of the manual to remind you of the essence of each paragraph and use a highlighter to underline key phrases. The manual is basically a reminder for the group of what was taught so that they do not need to take extensive notes.

You may well need to spend a night in preparation before each session reviewing the material and deciding how you will illustrate and teach each element.

Be very careful when you start group prayer not to embarrass anyone.

Remember to remind everyone that confidences shared within the group are not to be passed on to others afterwards. If this trust is broken, no one else will share anything which really matters.

Don't allow group members to criticise third parties. You, as leader, may have to exercise wise control in this area as people often say too much, in a negative way, about others.

Throughout the twelve weeks emphasise the application of the Bible to individual lives. Applications need to be personal, specific and practical.

Memorisation

The best way of doing the memory review is to have someone volunteer to say the current verse and then allow them to choose the next person, and the verse they should quote. They in turn do the same until everyone in the group has taken part. The list of all the current memory verses is in the 'MEMORY VERSES' section of each session. If some older folk struggle with memorisation and read their verse don't make a big issue of it.

If you have a large group you could, alternatively, break up into twos or threes for memory review.

As you review the next verse set the group a good example by studying it in its context.

Course Notes

The course notes vary in nature and content. Wherever possible, try to draw out the whole group and discuss the material. Whatever you do, don't just read the notes.

Leading Rooted in Christ

The notes are simple and we have deliberately not gone, in great depth, into any subject. They are pitched at a level which is appropriate to most believers who are starting to take the Christian faith seriously. If you have a more experienced group then teach the material in greater depth appropriate to them.

Not everyone teaches in the same way. Life would be very boring if they did. Make the material your own and help your group to do the same.

In General

Be available to the group after meetings and informally on other occasions. You can have a very significant role in guiding and encouraging. There may well be other personal issues which will be raised with you privately. In this case, if you don't know the answer and need help, ask the person involved for permission to go to someone else our trust.

Preparation

Before each session you should study the course notes and the leader's manual. Make sure you understand what you have to do, the topics to be taught, the illustrations or visual aids you will use and the time available.

You should not have to turn to the leader's notes during the session.

Be familiar with the topics covered in each day's reading in 'Growing in His Word.' We have found that no matter how often we have studied the Scriptures assigned for the course, with a group, that God can and does speak to us with something fresh. Use questions from the Scriptures studied that week (or your own studies) to help stimulate discussion . . .

"What did you think of this verse/ question?"

Was it relevant to any of you?"

"How should . . . affect the way we live?"

Prior to the first night, study thoroughly the introduction to 'Growing in His Word.'

Session Timing

Approximate timings for the average session are . . .

Part One - 45 minutes

Sharing time - discussion of personal devotions

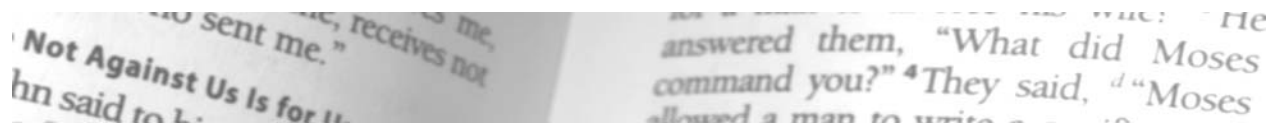
Review of memory verses

Prayer time (Session Four onwards)

Coffee break - 15 minutes

Part Two - 60 minutes

Teaching material and assignment



Problems

You may find that after a few weeks the times are tight as the sharing time develops. Forty-five minutes is not long for twelve people to say something, do the memory verses and have a prayer time. You will have to make judgements about your timings.

Issues may arise which cause changes. Someone in the group may have a major problem which results in serious disruption to the planned programme.

People are more important than the programme. In this case, do whatever is needed and try to catch up another night.

Prayer

It is important to take adequate time to prepare for each session but no matter how much time you put into preparation, it is the Holy Spirit who will make your times together come alive!

Prayer is a confession of dependence on Him to work in your life and that of the group.

Perhaps the best preparation for leading the course and coping with problems is your own consistent fellowship with the Lord and a genuine commitment to pray for your group.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 1

INTRODUCTION

This first night is obviously important - so help folk to relax. Try to be relaxed yourself, be friendly, smile and talk casually as folk join the group.

Start on time and welcome everybody to the course.

It is very helpful to bring pieces of card, say 2.5 inches by 8 inches. Pass the cards around and have everyone write their name and phone number on each card. Each person should end up with a card with all the names and phone numbers for their group, including you.

There are several reasons for this . . .

1. It forms a prayer list for you and the group members.
2. It allows easy contact if someone is missing or has had a problem.
3. It gives the group access to you in the event that they need to contact you.
4. It is a big help to learning all the names, if the group members are strangers to you.

Share a little background information about yourself, e.g. whether you are married, what your job is, how many children and their ages, where they live. Keep it general for this first session. Ask the others to do the same. They will copy what you have done.

All this will help folk to get used to the sound of their own voices. Observe individuals, what they say and their body language. Note who seems shy and who tends to take over. Start to build a picture of each person.

You will have to learn to keep the talkative ones under control which it is not easy to do. One way is to look for an opportunity to interrupt and say something like . . .

“OK, thanks for your input, Jim. Now Joan, would you tell us about yourself?”

Draw the quiet one out with non-threatening questions and encourage them to participate. Never put them down or belittle their contribution.

THE COURSE

Explain the nature of the course and how it fits into the church programme. Emphasise the benefits which will result from regular personal devotions, memorisation and learning more about how to live the Christian life.

Explain the financial arrangements for paying for the materials.

Leave an opportunity for any questions which there may be.

GROWING IN HIS WORD

Scripture does not command daily devotions as such. But verses such as Joshua 1:8 and Proverbs 3:5-6 highlight the significance of God’s Word; others like 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 highlight the imperative to pray. We see in the life of Christ a marked emphasis on prayer and an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures. His comments in John 15 imply a continuous abiding relationship with the Scriptures and Himself.

In the light of John 15 the very least we can do, not out of legalism but as a result of who we are and our love for the Lord, is to spend time every day in the Scriptures and in the fellowship of prayer.

Work through the introductory notes, in ‘*Growing in His Word*,’ before the session. Colour highlight the items in each paragraph that you need to explain to the group and write key words in the margin as an aid to your own memory.

This may all be new to the group so take things slowly, allow time for questions and make sure everybody knows exactly what they have to do. The group should start with the section entitled ‘*The First Four Weeks*,’ currently on page five, and work through the thirty readings over the next thirty days.

WHY DAILY DEVOTIONS

You need to illustrate the purpose and benefits of daily devotions.

One way is to draw 2 Timothy 3:16 on an A3 pad . . .

Teaching	We learn from the Word and are trained in righteousness
Reproof	As we sin, God’s Word shows us our failure
Correction	Turns us back to the right track
Training in righteousness	Complete and equipped for every good work

An alternative is to illustrate 2 Timothy 3:16 this way . . .

Doctrine	Tells us what is right
Reproof	Tells us what is not right
Correction	Tells us how to get right
Training	Tells us how to keep right

Having daily devotions is difficult for most of us. Usually, because no one has shown us how. This whole course focuses on learning how to and on developing discipline, not just telling.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 1

"The Christian is strong and weak depending on how closely he has cultivated the knowledge of God . . . in a growing personal experience."

A. W. Towzer

Your task, as the Navigators would say, is to . . .

Tell the group - WHY

Show them - HOW

Help them - START

Encourage them to keep - GOING

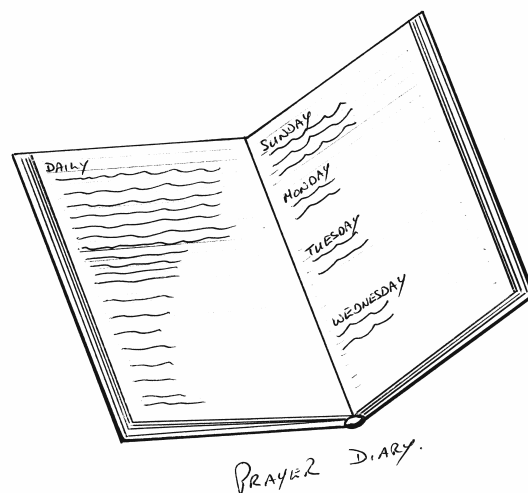
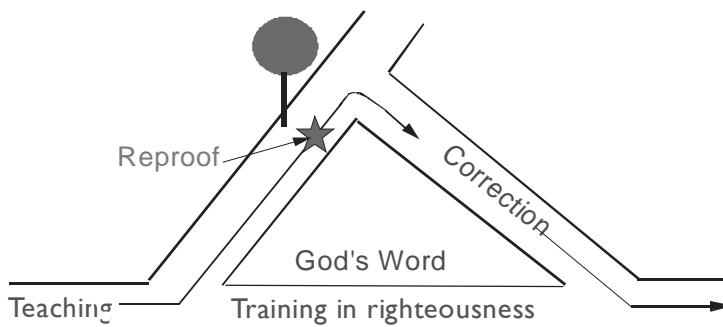
Discuss any practical problems which individuals may have in having personal devotions, e.g. lack of privacy or a young family.

Work out what you will say if people ask: "Why do we have to write it down. Can we not just read it?" or "What if we miss a day?"

It is very helpful for the leader to work through 'Growing in His Word' in sequence with the group - even if it means doing this in addition to your own planned readings.

2 Timothy 3:16

" . . . complete, equipped . . . "



WRITTEN NOTES

Keeping written notes helps to focus our thoughts on what we are reading and not just go through the motions. You need to be personally convinced to motivate others.

They are a record of God's work in our lives.

They remind us of precious things God shared with us.

They are a real incentive to consistency since blank pages stand out.

If you do this in line with the group you will be much more familiar with what everybody else has been reading during the past week and you will be able to share the lessons you have learned from the same Scriptures.

WEEKLY SHARING TIMES

Discuss the sharing times which will start with the next session. Ask everyone to agree to be accountable to each other week by week as an aid to regular personal devotions. No one should be compelled to take part but it will become a precious time each week.

Explain to the group that they can write whatever they want in their diaries. No one will look at the diary and there will be no pressure to share anything which is either very personal or relating to a third party.

Having said this, sharing can become very deep as the weeks go by and folk learn to relax and trust each other.

It may take several weeks for sharing within the group to develop. Don't be discouraged if this happens, it is quite normal for folk who are not used to sharing at this level.

It is worthwhile spending time praying for one or two members of your group by name every day.

Tips for Leaders

Underline key words in Growing in His Word as a reminder.

Underline key phrases you need to cover in each paragraph

You could use an A3 art pad to draw your illustrations

GOSPEL OUTLINE

Whether your group members are saved a few weeks or many years they will probably not be able to verbalise the Gospel. The objective of this exercise is to go through a simple outline of the Gospel in such a way that it is understood and sticks in their minds.

Leading **Rooted in Christ** Session 1

Scripture is deliberately kept to one Bible verse for each point.

If you expand the course notes significantly you run a very big risk of very little being retained permanently.

At the end of some items there is a discussion question to use if you think it would be helpful.

This whole section on the Gospel fits in with the memory verses for the first five weeks.

The Fact of Sin

Sin is falling short of the standard, missing the mark (as when the archer fails to hit the target).

It is important not to compare ourselves with others but with the standard set by Scripture.

To drive home the significance of sin you can use illustrations such as . . .

“How old are you? Let’s assume that you are, say 30? If you were a really good person and only sinned once a day that would be, 10,950 sins (30 multiplied by 365).”

“Sin is of such great significance to God that Christ had to die on the cross to pay the penalty for sin.”

The Consequences of Sin

Discuss the teaching of Romans 6:23.

What are wages? Explain that the word ‘death’ means separation not extinction?

Physical death is the separation of the soul/ spirit from the body

Spiritual death is the separation of the soul/ spirit from God.

Read the Scripture references for yourself: Luke 16:19-31, Matthew 25:41, 46 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10.

God is loving but He is also just. God is not willing that any should perish and those who do so only do so because they have rejected what Christ has done for them on the cross.

What God has Done to Make Salvation Possible

You need to try to illustrate the truth of what Christ did on the cross.

He took the penalty for our sin.

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The cross was the legal end to the dominion of the Law. See Romans 5:8, Romans 6:14, Romans 8:3-4.

Salvation is not automatic - conditions are attached. John 5:24, Acts 3:19, Acts 16:31

What We Have to Do to be Saved

It is important to emphasise that repenting and believing involve action on the part of the person seeking salvation. Repentance is a change of direction, a change of ownership and allegiance. Christ becomes Lord of that person's life.

Repent

Repentance is a process . . .

1. God challenges you with the truth of your situation; that you are cut off from Him and unable to do anything about it.
2. You process the truth about your situation and the news that Christ has died in your place to take responsibility for your sin. As you understand you adjust your thinking to agree with what God is saying to you. That change of mind is repentance.
3. You choose whether you will place your trust in what Christ had done and not in what you can do. Your life reflects the choice you have made.

You can use the analogy of soldiers or a Boys' Brigade company doing an about turn. Alternatively what about the idea of a driver heading north on the motorway, a change of direction means him coming off at a junction, going round the roundabout, and heading south on the other lane. Repenting means to stop being your own boss and making Christ the boss.

Believe

Believing also involves action. I may believe with my mind that a chair is strong enough to hold my weight. Biblical belief is acting on my convictions and sitting on the chair.

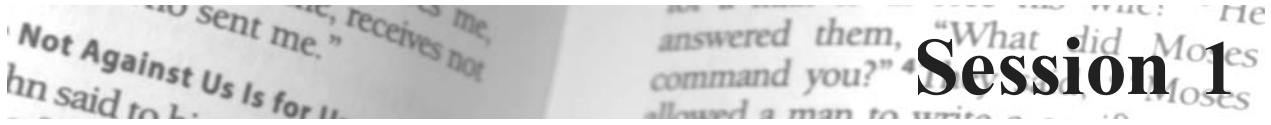
ASSIGNMENT

Go over the assignment for the week carefully and make sure everybody understands what they have to do for their Personal Devotions. Remind the group of the memory verse they have to learn. Explain that there will be one verse each week as part of the course and that you will be discussing why and how to do it in a few weeks' time. Emphasise the need to begin learning the verse at once and not to leave it until the night before the next meeting. Discuss which version of the Bible you will use. Encourage the group to memorise in a translation and not a paraphrase. The initial memory plan includes those verses used in the Gospel outline.

Romans 3:22b-23; Romans 6:23; I Peter 2:24; Acts 3:19; Acts 16:3

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 1

Illustrations



Illustrations

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 2

INTRODUCTION

This is the first sharing time and only the second night of the course. Naturally, the group and probably you, will still be nervous. It is particularly important to try and make everyone feel at ease.

Chat generally as the group gathers to help people relax. For example, about people's work or hobbies or news of interest to the group.

Don't let it go on for too long and bring it to a close by leading in a brief opening prayer.

Go through the notes on page 6 of the course manual. Cover what should and can be shared. Lead by example. The group will tend to copy what you do.

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

Bring your own diary with you and share some simple thought or blessing from your own devotions. Be willing to share failings as well as victories, even if this makes you vulnerable because the group will tend to follow your example. Use questions from the previous week's studies in *'Growing in His Word,'* to encourage participation. You could ask . . .

"What did you think about . . . last Tuesday?"

Don't be too concerned if some are hesitant initially. After a few weeks, folk will feel relaxed and at ease. It is likely that very few in the group have been used to talking about themselves in this way.

As the weeks go by, important issues will arise in these discussions, giving you the opportunity to help people at the point of their need. It may be that some night you may have to discard your prepared material because the issues raised are so vital.

The normal time limit for the sharing time is thirty minutes. If really serious issues come up you may have to change the schedule for the rest of the session. Use your own judgement, the teaching material is also important and the discussions could absorb the whole time available if you allow it to happen.

MEMORISATION

Review Romans 3:22b-23. It is normally best to review memory verses in one group.

Memorisation is hard work and some in the group may not have completed the assignment. In a few weeks, there will be time to discuss memorisation more fully. In the meanwhile, encourage everybody as much as you can.

Each week you need to explain the meaning of the memory verse set for the next session. It is important to understand and to use Scripture in its context.

Read enough of each passage to do this and then discuss together the meaning and application of the verse.

Memorisation as a subject comes up in Session Four. In the meantime Romans 6:23 is the next memory verse.

Death in the New Testament literally means separation.

Tips for Leaders

Sharing Time

'*Growing in His Word*' days 1 - 7, were the scheduled readings for last week.

Watch your time. The sharing time and coffee break can easily overrun their allotted time and leave you short of time for the teaching sections.

Don't discuss group members in a critical way with others, either in the group or outside it.

Don't just share problems, try to focus on the Scriptures. **It is easy to share problems without talking at all about our personal devotions.**

Encourage random sharing round the group. Use your eyes to keep the invitation to share a general one. Glance round the group rather than looking at one individual.

Beware of giving solutions to all the problems raised in the sharing time.

Counsel privately when you need to talk to someone.

Don't rush people, and don't be afraid of silence - people may be thinking over what has just been said. Sometimes silence is more effective than words.

Do emphasise **application** - the Bible is primarily given to change our lives rather than to increase our knowledge.

Course Book Notes

Explain how the group should use their notes:

1. They are for long-term reference and as a summary of what is taught.
2. It would be helpful to read each session's notes before that session.
3. The margins are deliberately left wide so that the group can write any extra notes they may wish.

ASSURANCE

Work through the notes informally, allowing opportunity for questions and discussion as you do so.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 2

Assurance is based on God's promises to those who repent and believe. The Holy Spirit witnesses to a new relationship independent of circumstances.

FEELINGS

The most important aspect to get across is that the believer's salvation does not depend on how he feels but on the things we have discussed above.

Most of us however tend to live by our feelings, not by faith in God and in His Word.

Feeling good results from our circumstances. When things are going well, we feel good. When things are going badly, we feel bad.

We must not allow these changes in circumstances, and therefore feelings, to cause us to doubt our salvation which depends on the cross and what Christ has done.

Tips for Leaders

Assurance of Salvation

Conditional and unconditional promises . . .

Illustrate the difference between conditional and unconditional promises.

Acts 16:31 is a conditional promise, if someone **believes**, God promises **salvation**.

Hebrews 9:27-28 is an unconditional promise, Christ will come again.

Highlight the two main means of assurance . . .

God's promises in His Word.

The Witness of the Holy Spirit to a new relationship.

God is the One who is promising and He doesn't break His word.

Use of the Word Relationship

Salvation is a covenant relationship like marriage but be very careful about using the word relationship in other contexts where it may be misunderstood, e.g., when a believer sins fellowship is broken but not the relationship.

Feelings

The new Christian is a different person and real changes have taken place but feelings normally reflect circumstances and will vary. Different feelings may or may not be evident immediately after conversion. Changes will be apparent in time.

What God promises He fulfils

DOUBTS

Doubts usually arise as a result of dependence on feelings rather than God's Word. They can be aggravated by lack of personal devotions, through trying to be a secret Christian, by unconfessed sin and by the attack from the enemy.

Satan is the arch deceiver and one of his ploys is to try and deceive believers as he did with Adam and Eve.

To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said . . .

John 8:31-32 (NASB) "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

In the discussion about trials try to get across the idea that our trials are not unique to us and that others have suffered before us in the same way as we do.

TAKING YOUR STAND AS A CHRISTIAN

Many believers, especially young people, lack assurance because they have not admitted to others that they are Christians.

In Romans 10:9-10 (NASB) Paul links open confession with salvation . . .

“. . . for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

Clearly justification comes from believing, so eternal life is not at issue in lack of confession. So then what does Paul mean when he says . . .

“. . . he confesses, resulting in salvation?"

The 'secret' Christian is in a very difficult position. Because his faith is secret he has to behave in front of friends, work mates and family as if he is NOT a Christian resulting in unnecessary pressure. Furthermore, he is, in essence, ashamed of Christ and grieves the Holy Spirit.

When a believer takes his stand in public, he has peace and freedom of action; he has all the benefits and blessings encapsulated in the word 'salvation' and the Holy Spirit will witness to him of the new relationship he has with God.

Urge any who have not told others to do so in the incoming week and to tell the group next week. Make matters like this a prayer priority for the group.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind the group to keep revising the verses they have already learned.

Encourage them in whatever way is appropriate. Praise does wonders.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 3

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

Open briefly in prayer. Spend about thirty minutes, depending on how it goes, sharing about personal devotions and matters arising from them. Use questions or issues from the previous week's study to start with.

In the next two weeks there will be more emphasis on application. Help the group to understand that God expects our behaviour to change in obedience to His Word.

If important issues are raised you must judge how much discussion time can be devoted to these. You may have to extend the evening or compress some of the other material.

Remember people are more important than programmes! If people have unresolved problems they will get less benefit from other material until these are dealt with.

At some time your group will experience days when their devotions seem dry and God seems far away. The sieve illustration helps us to understand that God's Word always has an influence on us for the good. Share how you deal with this problem in your own personal devotions.

Tips for Leaders

Days 8 – 14 were scheduled for the past week in Growing in His Word.

Briefly discuss the issues raised in the introduction to Session 4

Are there any problem areas?

Are the personal devotions profitable?

Applications are God seeking changes in our lives.

One common problem is having days when God seems to say nothing. There can be many reasons.

A. C. T. S is not discussed

Mention the prayer time in Session 4 but at the same time allay any fears. Praying out loud is not compulsory but should be encouraged.

MEMORY VERSES

Review the verses learned to date and give 'how to' help and guidance to anybody who is having problems.

NEXT SESSION

In the next session you will be doing the exercise on meditation in Isaiah 40:31. It might be a good idea to review and meditate on this verse yourself during this incoming week in preparation for this.

What characteristics of the eagle are relevant here. Where does the eagle soar to? Where does it soar from? How does this affect its perspective on the world? What is the difference between an eagle and a small bird? Why is weariness associated with running? Why fainting with walking?

As you emphasise and think about each word, the Holy Spirit will reveal insights to you that you have never seen before. This is the exciting thing about meditation.

SIN IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER

God's forgiveness of our sin extends to freedom from the penalty for our sin but not the consequences. Thus an alcoholic may be saved and forgiven but the physical damage to his liver will remain. This section looks at the consequences of sinning for a believer.

The sinful nature and sinful acts of the unbeliever separate him from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

But for the believer, a person who is spiritually alive and is 'In Christ,' his salvation is secure for it is based on God not man. We cannot earn salvation and we cannot keep it in our own strength.

Ephesians 1:13-14 "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."

God guarantees salvation, to those who repent and believe, through His Holy Spirit. When a believer sins it results in a loss of fellowship with Him.

Ephesians 4:30 "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

We find an illustration of this within the family. When one of our children misbehaves it causes a rift between us and them but it does not alter the blood relationship.

In the same way, sin breaks our fellowship with God but not the covenant relationship. This broken fellowship is restored when we confess our sin and seek His forgiveness.

Confession

Sin causes loss of fellowship but confession restores it.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 3

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

What if we Commit the Same Sin Again?

First of all, God does not regard sin lightly. We are not free to sin just because we can be forgiven. Such forgiveness may be free to us but it cost Christ the cross. God's attitude to sin is seen in the fact that He put Christ to death because of it.

We need to remember, too, that God is not only willing to forgive us but wanting to change us.

Many Scriptures warn about the serious consequences of sinning casually.

1 John 2:4-5 "The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him."

We are never to treat sin lightly. Every sinful action, word or thought of ours was heaped upon our Saviour at Calvary and added to His agony. He was judged as if He had done the things we have done. He took the shame of our sin. So great is His love that today there is no limit to His forgiveness.

In Matthew 18:21-22, Peter asked Jesus a question which bears on this topic. He asked how often he was expected to forgive his brother, as many as seven times? Jesus replied not just 7 times but 490 times.

No one could argue that there was much repentance in the heart of a man who had sinned, in the same way, 490 times. Clearly Jesus did not expect that forgiveness would be withheld on the 491st occasion.

He was teaching a principle . . .

"However often our brethren sin against us we are to forgive them."

If God expects unlimited forgiveness of us, will He Himself do less?

But such forgiveness is not in any way a licence to sin.

Christ does not expect that we can live sinless lives. He does expect that we continually judge ourselves in the light of His Word and seek His cleansing and forgiveness when we fail.

FORGIVENESS

It is important to understand the meaning and significance of forgiveness in the Bible. In relation to God and our own sin, such understanding brings a very precious realisation of just how much God has done for us. In relation to the forgiving of others it answers the oft-quoted remark, *"How can I forgive? I'll never forget what they did to me."*

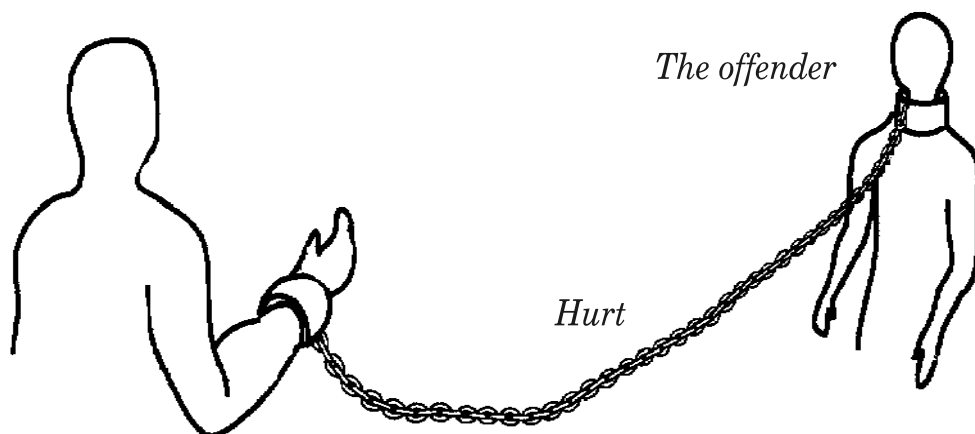
Study the course notes and make sure you understand them. Work through them with the group and discuss the material as you go. Help them to realise that when sin is forgiven by God it is buried for ever, never to be raised again.

They CAN forgive others, even when they neither like the offender nor forget the offence, if they understand what forgiveness actually is.

Forgiveness

"Forgiveness is giving up my desire to hurt you for hurting me."

"Forgiveness is breaking the chains with which we are bound to another person by their offence against us."



The offended person is emotionally and spiritually chained to the offender by lack of forgiveness.

The chain is, in essence the original offence nurtured and sustained by the hurt the offender feels.

*This bondage cannot be broken by distance or time.
The offender should ask for forgiveness but may never do so.*

Only forgiveness on the part of the offended person can break the bonds and set them free.

Tips for Leaders

Believer's Sin

We cannot keep our own salvation by our good living. See also Ephesians 2:8-9 and Galatians 3:10, 5:6.

Confession

What does it mean to confess our sin? Often, when we sin, we try to justify what we have done. We make excuses, condone what we have done or just plain ignore it.

To confess our sin is to bring it out into the open before God and to admit that what we have done was sin. It is to agree with His judgement of our actions.

The Term "Flesh"

The term 'flesh' in the New Testament is used in several different ways and it is not always synonymous with sinfulness. It is also used to refer to the human body both in a morally neutral sense as well as the place in which the principle of sin is resident. Where the Greek 'sarx,' literally flesh, is translated in other ways, 'old nature,' 'body' the translators have decided that a different English word better reflects the Greek original. Usually the literal meaning will be found in the margin somewhere. We need to be aware that, in doing this, there are often theological implications. It is usually better to stick to the terms used in Scripture (In the original language).

In Philippians 1:24 (NASB) and 2 John 1:7 (NASB) the reference is to the physical body with no implication of the flesh being either good or bad . . .

“. . . yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.”

“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”

In Romans 7:25 (NASB) there is an implication, for Paul speaks of serving the Law of Sin with the flesh . . .

*“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with **my flesh the law of sin**”*

ASSIGNMENT

Remind the group of the week's assignments.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 4

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

Start with the weekly sharing time and discuss any issues raised by the group. The course notes have a few leading questions to stimulate discussion. Alternatively ask questions based on last week's studies.

A time of group prayer is scheduled tonight. It is not intended to be very long but to act as an introduction to public prayer.

Some of the group may feel shy about praying so have the prayer time after the discussion when everybody has had a chance to relax.

Brief the group clearly and leave participation optional. Prayers should be brief so that no one is put off. If the group is willing to discuss their reaction to the prayer time so much the better. You may be able to talk privately later to anyone who finds public prayer a real problem.

Tips for Leaders Timing

Time will be tight tonight. You need to leave enough time to do both the memory verses and have the prayer time as well as the normal sharing time.

Personal Devotions

'Growing in His Word,' days 15 - 21.

Suggestion for the prayer time:

Limit prayers to one or two sentences.

Allow anyone who wants to do so to write down a brief prayer for the next session.

Prayer Time

Write prayer requests down so that you do not forget them.

Be sure to remember to follow them up next week and subsequently.

Memorisation

Constant revision is the key to memorisation.

Are **you** adding to your own store of memorised verses?

MEMORY VERSES

Review all your verses. Make sure you keep in touch with how everybody is doing. Memory verse for next week is Acts 3:19. Read through Acts 3:17-21 with the group and discuss the meaning of verse 19. The reference to Christ in verse

Session 4

20 is to His Second Coming and to the promises associated with the 'New Creation.'

See 2 Peter 3:9-13, especially verse 13.

MEMORISATION

Why memorise? Are you convinced yourself?

Work through the course notes. You will be most convincing if you have habitually memorised the Word yourself.

By now the group will know something of the discipline needed to memorise Scripture so discuss questions which may arise.

Read through Psalm 119, in preparation, and underline verses which strike you as significant in your own Bible.

Tips for Leaders

Memorisation

God's Word is revealed, absolute truth; His communication to us containing all we need to know to live the Christian life.

Other Scriptures regarding knowing God's Word . . .

2 Timothy 2:15

2 Timothy 3:16

Hebrews 4:12

2 Peter 1:20-21

MEDITATION

You really need to be able to speak from experience about the benefits of meditation.

You have three things to do in this section . . .

Lead the group to an understanding of the Biblical imperative to meditate.

Teach them some of the principles relating to meditation.

Do the workshop to show them how to meditate.

Go through Psalm 1:1-2 and Joshua 1:1-8 with the group and help them to discern the truths for themselves. Use questions to guide them.

Work through the notes on how to meditate. Discuss and illustrate as necessary.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 4

Work through Isaiah 40:31 phrase by phrase with the group as an exercise.

Tips for Leaders Meditation

As Joshua set out to lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land God promised success to him **in his task if . . .**

He meditated on God's Word day and night.

He obeyed the teaching of Scripture.

There were other things associated with Joshua's success, list them all sometime.

The success and prosperity promised to Joshua are in the context of the task given to him. The immediate context of Joshua 1:8 is Joshua 1:1-9 . . .

Moses was dead and Joshua was to lead the people into the Promised Land in fulfilment of God's promises to His people.

Biblical Principle

The principle, the timeless truth in verse 8, is that meditation and obedience, amongst other things, are essential to success in our God-given mission.

The same principle also applies to us . . .

We should all be meditating on God's Word as a matter of personal discipline.

God will bless the ministry of those who meditate on His Word and obey it.

See also Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 1:1-3.

ASSIGNMENT

Don't overdo the workload as the group now has daily Bible study, prayer, memorisation and meditation to cope with.

Encourage them to keep at it, even if it is proving hard to keep up.

Make sure they know what to do in relation to meditating on Isaiah 40:31 for next week.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 5

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

Think about every member of the group. Is there someone who does not share? Do you know why not? Are there any other problems? As you pray about these, what do you believe God would have you do?

Is there enough emphasis on application in the sharing times? Are the applications practical?

Are there other needs within the group, perhaps, for practical help in some situation?

Be careful in sharing that nothing negative is said about an absent third party.

For the prayer time tonight have each one share one personal prayer request. Ask the group to pray for the person on, say, their left. Don't force anyone to do so. Fill in yourself for any blanks. If you keep the atmosphere relaxed people will get used to praying audibly in a few weeks.

Actively discourage anyone who prays 'sermons.' Long prayers will totally put off those who are shy.

MEMORY VERSES

Review all the memory verses to date. Take a few minutes to ask the group to explain what the verses mean. Memory verse for next week is Acts 16:31. Read Acts 16:27-34 and discuss the meaning of verse 31. There are often questions about the meaning of the phrase in this verse, ". . . *and your household.*"

Tips for Leaders

Remember . . .

The context is vital.

The meaning of the verse should be consistent with the whole of Scripture.

Read verses 31-34 again . . .

If you look at verse 32 you will see that the word of the Lord was spoken to all who were in the house.

It is clear from verse 34 that all the jailer's household believed with him. Each individual was saved by their personal response to the message and their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

One might paraphrase verse 31 . . .

“If you, or anyone else in your home, believes in the Lord Jesus Christ you will be saved.” (Paraphrase)

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS – WHAT NEXT?

This session discusses the new tools for personal devotional study as the group come to the end of the thirty-day study in Mark’s Gospel.

The study methods suggested are designed to encourage the group members to consider the culture, history, background, grammar, context, structure, language and the writer’s purpose, before coming to conclusions about meaning and application.

Be enthusiastic yourself and it will be catching. These ‘tools,’ or variations on them, taught over the next weeks could be used, by the group, for the rest of their lives.

The principles outlined in the new tools should be applied at a simple level for daily devotional studies but can be used for more intensive study in the wider context of personal Bible study.

Initially, at a devotional level encourage the group to consider . . .

To whom the passage was written originally and in what circumstances.

What the passage says and how this related to those to whom it was addressed.

What lessons we can learn today.

How we can live out these truths in our own lives.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL STUDY

Before you continue reading this manual please read the introductory notes to, FOLLOW ON - New Study Tools, in *‘Growing in His Word.’*

These notes follow the last study in Mark’s Gospel, pages 24 to 31 in the first edition. You need to become thoroughly familiar with the whole study process.

There are three elements to the new study process . . .

1. Observation, called LOOKING, which is designed to get people exploring the Bible, digging to find out as much as they are able. There are three levels with increasing degrees of difficulty. (and study time).

For devotional studies use Level One only. Levels 2 and 3 are intended for in depth Bible study and involve too much time for most people’s daily devotional studies.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 5

2. Interpretation, called THINKING, which involves coming to an understanding of what the text meant in its original situation and culture to those to whom it was addressed.

3. APPLICATION, in which the truths we have studied are related to our own lives today.

For some groups these new tools will involve a significant step so plan to introduce the group gently to the process. **Plan to grade what you do to the needs and abilities of the group.**

You as the leader need to have worked through and be familiar with these new tools.

Tips for Leaders - Personal Devotions

The New Devotional Tools

From now on the group should use the Reading Plan at the back of '*Growing in His Word.*'

There are **exercises in the main manual** to work through with the group.

You may need to study these before the Session.

Try to teach people to read and observe accurately.

Some Helpful Books on Bible Study

'Living by the Book,' Howard G. & William Hendricks

'A Layman's Guide to Interpreting the Bible,' Walter A. Henrichsen

'Understanding and Applying the Bible,' J. Robertson McQuilkin

'The Bible Study Handbook,' The Navigators

'Concise Guide to the Bible,' Ryrie

Suggest to the group that they build up their study resources through Christmas and birthday presents.

Review the use of A. C. T. S.

Prayer list

A prayer list can be organised any way which suits the user but primarily the purpose is to have prayer items listed so that they are not forgotten.

The list should be structured. It can include items which are remembered on a daily basis and items which are remembered less often, perhaps once a week.

STUDY OBJECTIVES AT THE BASIC LEVEL

Looking is graded at **three levels**. For personal devotions with a normal church group don't expect to go beyond Level One. Levels Two and Three can be used by more experienced students or for more intensive Bible study.

Looking What Do I See - Level One

The objectives at this first level are twofold. The first is to try and discover the contemporary setting of the writer and the reader and understand the passage in this context. Obviously a passage in the ceremonial Law in the Old Testament will have different implications for us today than a passage like Romans 6.

The second objective involves the text itself. Consider the context of the verse or passage, within the greater sphere, the chapter or even the whole Book.

Then consider the actual content of the passage and what it says. As you introduce the new tools work through the various elements of Level One.

Context

At this level of study only consider context in relation to the written words. Context, in this sense, is what the writer has said before and after the passage you are studying. Explain this, simply, to the group and make sure everybody understands.

Background

Background considers the time, people, places, events, culture and circumstances.

Message

Teach and encourage the group to read accurately and note, in a simple way, what they learn. It is not always the most mature who are good at reading and understanding Scripture accurately. Sometimes believers of only months standing can show deep insight and understanding.

A good Bible Dictionary or Handbook is an invaluable source of information.

Thinking What Did This Mean?

Thinking is interpretation. This is the process through which we consider how the message in the passage was understood by those to whom it was originally written. What did it mean to them? We have to overcome the barriers of time, distance, language, culture, history all of which block our understanding. Only when we really understand the meaning of Scripture, in its original context, can we properly and accurately discern and apply the lessons it holds for us today.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 5

Looking was a process of excavation and laying down the foundation, *Thinking* begins the process of building on the foundation created by accurate observation.

Application – What Does it Mean to Me Today?

Now that the passage is understood in context, and what it meant to the original reader lessons can be learned for today. Application is acting on the truths we have discerned.

WORKED EXAMPLE

In this example which follows the study has been kept short intentionally. It is a devotional study to be completed in, say 20 minutes. When someone starts to study Scripture in this structured way it is very easy to get deeply involved.

In looking, for example, it would be very easy to dig back into Paul's history. Who he was, why he was in prison, who was with him. The history of Ephesus is also fascinating and adds much to our understanding of what Paul wrote. This is where a good Bible Dictionary comes to its own and will give you a summary of many topics like that. There are several suggested studies in the Rooted in Christ group manual which you can work through with a group. You are free of course to choose another passage if it is more appropriate for your group.

Ephesians 4:25-29 "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. 26 In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold. 28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Looking - What Do You See?

Level One

Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus, possibly from prison in Rome. We read of his initial missionary work there in Acts 19:18 - 20:38. He spent two years in Ephesus teaching the believers.

Message . . . List of contrasts

Put off falsehood

Speak truthfully

In your anger do not sin

Do not let the sun go down on your anger

Don't steal

Work to help others

No unwholesome talk

Say only things which build others up

Thinking - What Did it Mean?

Ephesus was a pagan city and Paul had preached a radical change of lifestyle to the Ephesians. Presumably the things he mentions reflect habits in that pagan culture which needed to be broken.

Because they were now members of one body they were not to lie to one another. They were not to sleep on their anger. The thief was to become a working man helping those in need - a complete change of character. Their language was to change and what they said was to build others up.

Applying - What Does it Mean to Me Today?

The personal temptations in Ephesus were not much different in many ways to the temptations of today. The call to a radical change of lifestyle is the same for me.

Of the things Paul mentions the tongue is the one which I most need to work on.

"I am going to work hard on what I say to others and will try to say only things which build others up, especially at home."

LOOKING LEVELS TWO AND THREE

Tips for Leaders - Study Objectives at Levels Two and Three

These tools were included for consistency and to allow people to develop better study practices for themselves. As such they are intended of more intensive Bible Study. There is a difference between a devotional study in which we expect God to speak into our lives and character and study done for the purpose of understanding or teaching.

LOOKING - Level Two

The objective here is to dig deeper into the main teaching of what is being read. With ordinary books the reader relates phrases and sentences to each other and comes quite naturally to an understanding about the subject matter.

This is more difficult with Scripture and hard work is needed to properly understand the underlying message. Key words are one of the clues and they help to do this. Repeated reading and prayerful consideration of what the text says will also help to clarify understanding.

LOOKING - Level Three

The objective now is to try and determine the logic of the writer's argument by looking for the words linking different sections; words like, *therefore, but, and, then, because*. This nature of this logic will vary from book to book and historical material in the Old Testament will be totally different to doctrinal material in books like Romans or Galatians. God is the ultimate author of Scripture so every detail matters, whatever the style of the Book.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 5

WORKED EXAMPLE LEVEL TWO

Ephesians 4:25-29

Looking - What Do You See?

Level Two

Structure

The first three chapters of Ephesians are about doctrine, the last three about the application of the doctrine to Christian living.

There is a progression through the chapter . . .

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| <i>“Live a life worthy of your calling . . .”</i> | <i>verse one</i> |
| <i>“Leaders given to the Church to train believers . . .”</i> | <i>verses 11-14</i> |
| <i>“We are no longer to be children . . .”</i> | <i>verses 14-16</i> |
| <i>“No longer live as the Gentiles do . . .”</i> | <i>verses 17</i> |
| <i>“Surely you were taught in Him . . .”</i> | <i>verse 21</i> |

Key words - “Live” is used only twice but the whole context of the chapter is living the Christian life. There are frequent references to “Christ” and the “Father.”

The main thrust is living the Christian life in a way which is worthy of our calling.

WORKED EXAMPLE LEVEL THREE

Ephesians 4:25-29

Looking - What Do You See?

Level Three

“Therefore” . . .

Because of all which had been said, who they were, what they were called to, what they had been taught, their lives were to be different.

“Do not”, occurs four times, with commands to godly behaviour.

The commands are imperative, “Do not . . .” The Ephesian Christian was to be different.

ASSIGNMENT

The group should have a couple of nights of the study in Mark’s Gospel to finish before they start to use the new tools. Make sure they know where the reading plan is in *‘Growing in His Word.’* (Page 32) You may if you wish change the reading order. If you do make sure everybody knows where to start.

Tips for Leaders

Biblical Application

Is not just an accumulation of knowledge

Knowledge obtained through observation helps us to understand facts and concepts but it STOPS THERE.

We often think that knowledge is the end of Bible study, in fact it is just the beginning.

Is not just understanding the meaning of Scripture to its recipient

To understand the meaning of Scripture and not act on it is like the man who looked in the mirror and did nothing about what he saw.

The Bible is relevant to us today and lessons which were true in Bible times are also true today.

Biblical Application

Begins by accurately observing God's Word and its timeless truths - but it does not stop there.

It seeks to really understand the meaning of Scripture to those to whom it was addressed - but it does not stop there.

When we apply the Scriptures to our lives we focus the truth of God's Word on our lives and choose how we intend to adjust our lives to align ourselves with His revelation to us.

Repentance is a Process

The application of Scripture to our lives involves repentance. Repentance is a process, not just for unbelievers but for all of us.

It starts with God's revelation of a particular truth to our minds.

We process that truth in our minds and adjust our thinking to line up with what God is saying

We adjust our lifestyle to line up with the truth God has revealed to us and the new understanding to which we have come.

“The biggest step in this process is that between Interpretation and Application. Many people are quite ready to study Scripture in depth, to look, think and debate the finer points of doctrine. Many apply Scripture to their lives in a spiritual sense, believe in Christ and are trusting in Him, by faith, for salvation.”

But few consistently apply what the Bible teaches to everyday

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 6

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

The emphasis this week is on prayer. During the sharing time discuss personal prayer times and how the group are getting on with A.C.T.S.

Discuss how we can praise and worship the Lord using psalms, hymns and other Scriptures.

MEMORY VERSES

Review the memory verses and encourage any who need it.

Assignment for next week is John 6:37. Read John 6:35-40 and discuss verse 37 and its application. The verse is a conditional promise.

Tips for Leaders

Memory Verses

Point out to the group that they now know all the verses associated with the Gospel outline and can share the Gospel with family and friends. Maybe someone would like to borrow your A3 pad and draw either 'the bridge' or the 'bad news, good news' illustrations.

Who We Have Become

The concepts under study tonight are quite deep. The group may be able to repeat back 'the words' you say but try very hard for a clear understanding of the underlying principles. This understanding provides the foundation for learning the principles of Biblical change in later studies.

Born as sinners - no one can keep the Law but believers receive spiritual life . . .

They are born again.

They are a new creation, 2 Corinthians. 5:17

The Holy Spirit indwells them from the moment of salvation.

The veil has been removed, 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

We are spiritual beings living in an unredeemed body (mind, will and emotions).

Greek Terms

The Greek 'anthropos,' meaning 'man,' is translated 'nature' in several important passages in Romans and Ephesians in some translations. The Greek, 'phusis' which does mean 'nature' **does not** occur in Romans chapters three through to chapter ten, nor in the Book of Ephesians (except Ephesians 2:3). Where the term 'old nature' is used, in your translation, it is worth checking if this is consistent with the Greek (look for a reference in the margin). The Greek, 'sarx,' literally meaning 'flesh,' is also translated in other ways; for example as 'sinful nature' or 'old nature' in several translations. To try and more accurately reflect the truth of Scripture we have tried to use the literal equivalents in each case to avoid confusion.

Session in Summary

Unbelievers all have a sinful nature (Greek ‘phusis’), are under its domination and consequently sin (Ephesians 2:3).

Believers in contrast have become a new creation, having spiritual life from their conversion but living, for the moment, in a physical body. They continue to experience a struggle against the sin principle within the flesh.

The believer has new life and consequently a deep longing to please God. This desire to please God contrasted with his awareness of the pull of the flesh is further evidence of the reality of his experience.

This struggle is not a struggle between two equally matched protagonists. To think is this way is to fail to understand the reality and the glory of what Christ has done for us. The flesh is strong and appealing **but Christ** has freed us from the dominion of the sin principle, we do not have to sin, we stand on victory ground

TEACHING THE SESSION

A. All Men are Born Slaves to Sin and Cut Off from God

The Law cannot save anyone . . .

Romans 8:3 “For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man.”

It is clear from Romans 3:20 that the Law was given to us to make us realise how great our sin is. In Galatians 3:19-29 Paul expands this whole idea and he tells us that before Christ came men were shut up under Scripture, kept under the custody of the Law; the Law was our ‘paidagogos,’ that which was designed to point the immature to Christ.

B. Believers Receive Spiritual Life

2 Corinthians 3:15-18 “Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

The veil has been removed from the spiritual eyes of the believer; light has dawned through the Holy Spirit, and something incredible has happened to them. They are different, their whole outlook on life, on God, on the Word is radically changed. They are no longer under the dominion of the Law. They are in Christ, mature, having the life within them which enables them to please the Father without the need for external controls (the Law). The people we once were, unbelieving, sinning, anti-God, rebellious, don’t exist anymore; they are

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dead and cannot be found. We are a spiritual being, partaking in the life of God, but for the moment living in the same body we had before. We, the spiritual being, are ready to leave the shell and go to be with the Lord.

Meditate on the passages of Scripture in the course book and try to gain not just head knowledge but a real heart understanding of the truth of what God has done in your life.

C. The Struggle Within

Romans 6:6 "For we know that our old self (the old man - person we once were) was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

If the old is dead why are we still tempted? Paul explains in Romans 7:22-23. First of all the Greek word 'nomos,' translated law, means just that, the rules, the standards of God's Word but can also mean a 'principle' and does so in this case.

Paul is saying that we have become a new person, this new person is living in a physical body, the flesh, in which the principle of sin is evident. This, of course, will be left behind when we die and go to the Lord or when Christ returns.

D. The Struggle Reveals who we Are

The struggle within reveals who we are. If we did not have life in Christ there would be no struggle.

Romans 7:15 "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."

A few verses further on he said . . .

Romans 7:24 "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me . . . ?"

God has broken the power of sin. He has given us new life and His Holy Spirit to empower us. He teaches us in His Word the way of victory . . .

Romans 8:2 "The law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death."

This way of victory will be the subject of later studies.

The unbeliever is conscious of sin, for the Holy Spirit will bring conviction of this, and may make attempts to change and to live a 'good life.' But radical change is only possible through the new birth. This radical change through the new birth results in a new awareness of the desires of the flesh in opposition to the work of the Spirit.

Now that we are saved, sinning is no longer comfortable; it doesn't suit the new person God has created.

Our deepest longing now is to please God and the struggle against sin confirms the new life within.

Tips for Leaders

Spiritual Powers

If we ask: “To what extent can a demon influence a Christian, the answer is complex?”

No believer can be possessed by a demon. We have been purchased by the blood of Christ and cannot be ‘owned’ or ‘possessed’ by someone else. The Greek word, ‘daimonizomai,’ which is sometimes translated ‘demon possessed’ would be better translated ‘demonised’ meaning to come under the influence of a demon. Satan (demons) may tempt us (1 Thess 3:5), accuse us (Revelation 12:10) or deceive us (Revelation 20:10). For further information on this topic we recommend ‘*Victory over the Darkness*’ by Neil T. Anderson

So in the strictest sense, a believer, who is participating in the life of God, cannot be possessed by a demon. But the real issue is not one of possession but of control. A believer may allow himself to be influenced/ deceived by demonic spirits who may bring this influence through any of the ways outlined above.

Satan is the deceiver and to the degree that we believe his lies we allow ourselves to be controlled by him. Ephesians 6 makes it abundantly clear that we are at war with evil spiritual powers and his attack may come in any area of our lives and ministry.

Temptation

It is very important element to emphasise our personal responsibility for our own sin. See Matthew 12:36.

Temptation is not sin but giving in to temptation is.

Sources of temptation include the Flesh. The flesh is the seat of the principle of sin (Romans 7:25). The flesh is life independent from God. It is the way we grew up, cut off from God, finding ways to cope with life and its pain. Looking for ‘significance,’ ‘acceptance,’ ‘security’ but unable to find them apart from God.

As we grow up we learn to cope, find mechanisms to ease the pressures of life, some of these coping mechanisms become strongholds (habitual ways of coping independent of God).

Even believers, who have been restored to a living relationship with God, may at times turn to these old independent ways of living.

TEMPTATION

Work through the section on temptation with the group, answering questions as necessary. See the summary of key issues overleaf.

Often believers blame Satan for all their temptation. Satan is not omnipresent - present everywhere at the same time - as God is. I doubt if many of us are significant enough to warrant his personal attention but he does have many demonic spirits at his command who can be involved on a more personal basis warring against us.

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Satan is involved in spiritual warfare against God, His angels and the Church. See Ephesians 6:10-17 and Daniel 10:2-14.

In the world today sin is often excused. Homosexuality is becoming accepted as an alternative lifestyle. Worry and bitterness are regarded as normal. We must not move with the pendulum of public opinion but keep to Scriptural standards. The Bible is our authority on what is right and what is wrong, on what is true and what is false. It is the truth that will set us free.

Tips for Leaders

The World

We are also tempted through the world, i.e.; things we come across in everyday life, things people do or say, things we hear or see - inadvertently or otherwise, T.V., books, films, the humanistic standards which surround us every day in the world we live in.

The Enemy

The enemy may plant thoughts in our minds. The enemy is unable to read our minds (Acts 5:3) but is able to plant thoughts there. Through observation demons are well aware of our weaknesses.

But whatever the source of the temptation it must be filtered through our minds and, at that point, we are responsible for what we do with the temptation.

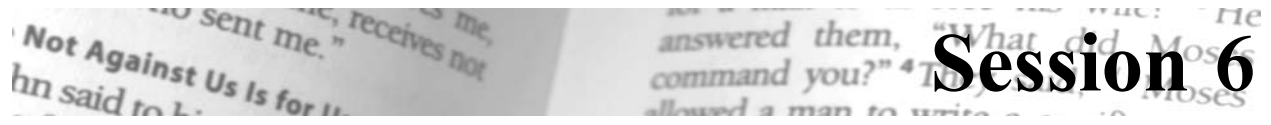
Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, His good, pleasing and perfect will."

Many temptations strengthen as we think about them or anticipate the pleasures involved. Others are the result of an immediate sinful response to a trigger of some sort; an angry response to someone, for example.

The Biblical solution to temptation will come in the next session when you teach the principles of Put On/Put Off, replacing temptation with Biblical alternatives.

ASSIGNMENT

There is a high workload at this point in the course and some may be finding things difficult. Encourage the group; see individuals alone if need be. Don't be discouraged yourself. God is working in each life.



ILLUSTRATIONS

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 7

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

Review the week's devotions and any matters arising from them. Remember the emphasis on application as you and the group share God's Word.

Make sure everybody is comfortable with the new study tools.

Spend time in group prayer together. Perhaps everybody could share a personal need. Remember to write down and follow up any such requests.

MEMORY VERSES

Review all the verses to date.

Assignment for next week is Romans 8:16. Read verses 15-17. This verse assures us that we have a right relationship with God. A Christian may 'feel' sick or unhappy and yet have an inner assurance that their relationship with God is all right.

Discuss the meaning of this verse and its application to assurance.

PUT OFF – PUT ON

It is not possible here to fully develop these Biblical principles for change. They are dealt with in considerable depth in the writings of Dr. J. Adams in his books, *'Competent to Counsel'* and *'The Christian Counsellor's Manual.'* It will be worth studying this material as it provides a solid foundation on which to build.

God has done His part to enable us to have victory over sin. Our part includes our daily walk with God and living the Christian life as the Scriptures teach. Our daily times of fellowship with Him are vital in this respect and hence are fundamental to this whole course. All of us need to cherish and safeguard these times.

Most believers will be familiar with the struggle to stop sinful habits. Many will have made New Year resolutions to stop this or that. We all know it does not work.

Scripture gives us clear direction on dealing with sinful habits and problems in our lives.

These principles only apply to believers, for only they have become a new creation, have the Holy Spirit within and have the resources to make permanent radical change.

These principles depend on God's work within our lives. Only He can save us, sanctify us, empower us for service.

Yet Scripture makes it clear that the power of sin has been broken and we do not have to give in to temptation any longer. We are children of God. Sinning is no longer natural for us.

Romans 6:6 “. . . knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”

Tips for Leaders

Put Off - Put On

The key to this principle is learning to displace temptations, sins and habits by replacing them with godly alternatives . . .

Sinful thoughts by immediately replacing them with good ones.

Sinful actions by concentrating on living the sort of lifestyle which God wants.

Sinful habits will not develop if we consistently practice the two above.

Paul says in *2 Corinthians 10:5* “*We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, **and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ . . .***”

We should deal with this sort of temptation by refusing to allow those thoughts to settle in our minds. Rather we are to learn to think about something profitable and good.

If we deal with tempting thoughts in this way, sins and habits will also be brought under control. We have a choice for we are no longer under the dominion of sin.

This principle is not a legalistic response to temptation but is commanded by Scripture and only made possible through the life within us and the work of the Holy Spirit.

In *Ephesians 4:28*, the thief who stops stealing is still a thief. The situation only changes when he **becomes someone else**, i.e., a person who is working to meet the needs of others. There are many examples in Scripture of sinful behaviour and appropriate responses.

The ultimate “Put On” is to abide in Christ and continually focus our eyes on Him.

TEACHING THE SESSION

A key passage for this study is *Ephesians 4:17-24*. Read it through carefully again. The subject is living the Christian life . . .

The Christian is not to live as the Gentiles (unbelievers) do. The Ephesian believers had not been taught to live like that.

The Ephesian believers had been taught that becoming a Christian involved a radical change in lifestyle.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 7

Radical Change

The radical change involved . . .

Putting Off sinful habits associated with their former lifestyle.

Learning how God wanted them to live.

Putting On a habitual lifestyle consistent with their Christian life.

The principle is taught in Ephesians 4:22-24 and illustrated in Ephesians 4 and many passages elsewhere.

Ephesians 4:29 Put Off lying/ Put On the truth.

Ephesians 4:31-32 Put Off bitterness etc/ Put On kindness etc.

Ephesians 5:18 Put Off drunkenness/ Put On the filling of the Holy Spirit.

It is helpful to mark your Bible with a diagonal slash between the Put Off and the Put On.

Ephesians 4:28 "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, / but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need."

Dealing with Sin

We are to . . .

Walk in the light of the Word of God in daily fellowship with Him.

Concentrate on living a lifestyle consistent with our faith.

Deal with sin by Putting On good, Biblical, godly alternatives.

Restructure our lives, as necessary, to avoid temptation, wherever possible.

Tips for Leaders

Workshop

Give the group an exercise to do on these principles. Choose whatever you think is most appropriate. You could use gossip, worry, bitterness or drink.

Make up a situation for the group to deal with. For example . . .

“Jane is single, lives alone and works on a checkout in the local supermarket. She is a Christian but has had a problem with alcohol since before she was saved.

She is 36, somewhat depressed at still being single and has no really close friends other than those she knew before her conversion two years ago.”

Ask the group how they would advise her to deal with her temptation to drink.

This is not a counselling class - just an exercise to develop understanding of the principles involved. There are wider issues and Jane needs to understand who she is ‘In Christ’ and why she seeks to find her identity, significance and acceptance in alcohol.

For tonight, focus on using this exercise to teach the principles of this session.

The group should ensure that her personal devotions are regular and high quality. If necessary teach her ‘how to.’

They shouldn’t focus on telling her not to drink but on what she could do to deal with the temptation. In other words what she should or could Put On.

They should also encourage her to restructure her life to help alleviate the temptation.

Put On - for Jane

Spend time in the Word and in prayer every day.

When first tempted find something else to do.

She should not just try to stop thinking about drink but **replace the temptation with specific things.**

Memorise Scripture or meditate.

Go and visit someone.

Get involved in a good book.

Do something physical like go for a walk.

Telephone a Christian friend or pastor.

Can you illustrate these principles from your own life?

ASSIGNMENT

Review what each person has to do.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 8

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

Hopefully the sharing time has settled down and all in the group feel free to take part both in sharing and in prayer.

Remember, as leader, to keep yourself on the same level as the group as you share. It needs to be said over and over again that you are not some spiritual giant but have to face trials and temptations just as they do.

Are the group sharing about their personal devotions and applying the Word to their own lives?

Are all learning to pray audibly?

Do you need to make any changes?

Do you need to encourage someone in any way?

What about the new devotional tools?

It takes time for folk to learn these techniques and practice makes perfect.

MEMORY VERSES

Review all to date. Make sure that the early verses are still being reviewed and revised.

The memory verse for next week is Joshua 1:8. Read verses 5-9 and discuss with the group the meaning of this verse and its application.

The promises given in verse 8 are conditional and were given specifically to Joshua in relation to the task God had given him to do. Success, in Joshua's God-given task, depended on his observance of the conditions.

The same principle applies to us today. Success in our God-given task depends on our observance of these conditions.

We find the same emphasis on meditation of the Word in Psalm 1:1-3.

GOD'S WILL FOR OUR LIVES

The traditional view of God's will is that God has a detailed plan for each believer and that only in following this exact plan are we in God's will. Thus we hear Christians speaking about being, 'in the centre of God's will.'

This view causes problems in making decisions as believers seek to find this 'centre point' of God's will. Often the methods suggested are very subjective.

As one studies the book of Acts, we find that God did speak directly about some matters to the apostles but often they made decisions based on Scriptural teaching, the particular circumstances of the moment and a considered

judgement of what was the wisest course of action, i.e., what was spiritually expedient.

A very helpful study on this whole area is found in 'Experiencing God' by Henry Blackaby. This is a study course well worth taking time to complete properly.

If we consider the meeting of God with Moses at the burning bush a number of principles become evident. Henry Blackaby lists these as follows . . .

- 1. God is always at work around you.*
- 2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.*
- 3. God speaks to you by the Holy Spirit in order to reveal Himself, His purposes and His ways . . .*

Through the Bible,

Through prayer (the Holy Spirit),

Through circumstances,

Through the church (others)

- 4. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.*
- 5. God's invitation to you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action. (We think that 'always' is perhaps too strong. Sometimes God's call is consistent with our heart's desire to serve Him)*
- 6. You must make major adjustments to your life to join God in what He is doing.*
- 7. You will come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.*

The challenging thing about these principles is that they are evident throughout the Scriptures in God's relationship with His people. God is at work in the world fulfilling His purposes and God has chosen to work through His people.

They also bring the focus back on God; on His purposes and will, rather than ours. It is not our responsibility to dream up things we can do for the Kingdom but rather adjust our lives to line up with His activity.

All of us can spend each day looking for God's activity around us and responding to that activity. It is something which is at the heart of God's relationship with us.

GUIDELINES FOR DECISION MAKING

If the questions used in this section are answered truthfully, it can be most helpful in coming to a decision.

You could also teach the group to re-word other relevant Scriptures into questions for themselves for the same purpose.

Tips for Leaders

God's Communication Today

Unlike Old Testament times every individual believer has direct access to God Himself and God communicates with each believer on an individual basis. Is that not incredible? We become aware of God's communication to us through His Word and through His Spirit, in our mind where we think, evaluate, meditate, feel emotions, understand and make decisions.

Our minds are the subject of constant bombardment from a number of sources. Paul tells us in Romans 12:2 . . .

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

The Word - God's Primary Means of Communication Today

God's primary means of communicating with us today is the Bible. Its teaching and principles, correctly interpreted in the light of context, history, language and grammar is our supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. God may also use Scripture to speak personally through the Holy Spirit to an individual.

Through the Holy Spirit

God may also communicate with us directly through His Spirit . . .

1 Corinthians 2:10-13 “For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”

Continued overleaf

Tips for Leaders

Through Circumstances

The Spirit may communicate with us through the Word and also by putting thoughts directly into our minds as we listen to Him and discern His voice.

God speaks to us through the Word and through prayer (the Holy Spirit). He has the right to take the initiative and He is at work in the world around us. We can never understand our circumstances until we understand God's perspective on them.

Circumstances may reveal His activity with an invitation to join Him.

Circumstances may reveal doors He has closed.

Circumstances may reveal doors He opening.

In John 5:19 it is clear that Jesus discerned what the Father was doing and joined Him in His activity.

Through Others

God speaks to us through other people. Through Pastors and teachers, through other believers, through those to whom we are responsible. We are to . . .

"Exhort, encourage, instruct, teach, admonish and provoke one another."

God speaks to His people through the preaching and teaching of the shepherds He has placed over them.

ASSIGNMENT

Review the assignments as usual

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 9

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

Your group should have really settled down now and be profiting from their personal devotions and sharing time but watch for any problems. Difficulties can arise in any of the areas you are working on.

Normally groups look back on this sharing time as one of the highlights of the course.

MEMORY VERSES

Review all memory verses as usual.

John 5:24 is next week's verse. Read John 5:19-24, work through this verse and discuss its meaning with the group.

Eternal life is ours from the moment when we believe. Note the tense in the verse.

INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Scripture Passages Used.

Much modern secular teaching lays the blame for our present behaviour or character on events in our past.

While it is true that events in our past may have long-lasting consequences, they cannot justify sinful actions or thoughts in later life. We are personally responsible for how we behave.

There is a natural progression in the notes . . .

1. Establish the principle that our relationship with others affects our relationship with God. (Matthew 6:14-15)
2. Consider what to do when others sin against us . . .
We must consider our own lives first. (Matthew 7:1-5)
Only then can we implement the Matthew 18 teaching.
3. Consider what to do when we realise that we have sinned against someone else. (Matthew 5:23)
4. Challenge the group to seek restoration of any damaged relationships in a Biblical way.
5. Discuss the circle of forgiveness. When someone repents of sin and seeks forgiveness that sin is not to be discussed with anyone who was not involved. (Matthew 18:15)

Urge the group to consider whether there is anyone they need to see in order to give or seek forgiveness to restore relationships.

Attitudes of bitterness, resentment and jealousy can all result from broken relationships but, perhaps, the most common cause, even in church circles, is the tongue. How often we sin in gossip and judgement of others.

Tips for Leaders

Inter-personal Relationships

Teaching the Topic

For this session have the group look up each Scripture passage as you come to it and list what it says. The key items are in the course book notes.

Discuss the questions and issues raised in the notes.

Friction highlights areas of our lives and those of others which need worked on.

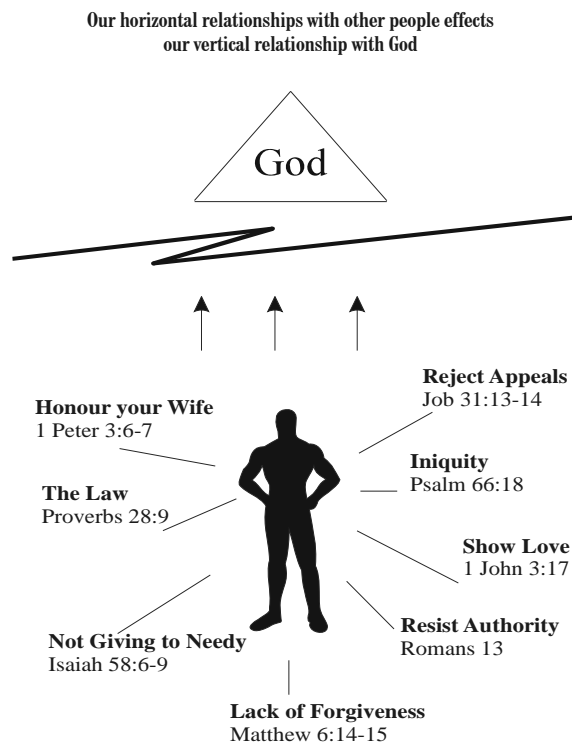
God wants harmony among His people.

We are responsible for every thought, word and action.

Relationships are doubly important because they affect our relationship with God.

Emphasise that we must deal with our own sin before we seek to correct others.

The purpose of these principles is always restoration of fellowship, not judgement.



ASSIGNMENT

Brief as usual. Remember the challenge to restore relationships.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 10

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

Normal time of sharing, application, group prayer.

Offer the opportunity to any who have restored relationships with someone else as a result of last week's study to share what they have done as far as they can.

MEMORY VERSES

Review verses to date.

For next week 1 Corinthians 10:13. Read verses 7-13 and work through this verse and its meaning. The key element in this verse is 'hope.' In every trial, in every temptation, in every circumstance in life, our God is in control and He is the limit of that situation.

The word translated 'tempted' can also mean 'to put to the test' and, in this respect, all of us are tested. Young believers often think that their particular trial is unique and they need to understand that others before them have gone through and survived the same situation. If necessary, study the meaning of this word for yourself.

PREPARING PERSONAL TESTIMONIES

Next week is testimony night, often a very special night, so pray much about it.

On a practical level, if each group member takes 5 minutes you can easily run out of time, depending on the size of the group.

The group have been together all the way through so it is better not to split up into smaller groups. Let everyone hear and enjoy what is said.

Everybody will have worked on this assignment and will be disappointed if they do not get to share so make sure everyone does, even if for once you overrun time a little.

Work through the material in the course notes and make sure that everybody understands the general format. The objective is to have the group prepare a 5-minute testimony about God's work in their lives.

AUTHORITY – A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Work through the course notes and Biblical passages, discussing the points raised with the group.

Consider how God worked out His purpose for His people in Egypt through Pharaoh. And again, how His purposes for Christ were fulfilled through, not only the Jewish leadership, but Pilate also.

Session 10

As with the topic of relationships, apply the material to life and discuss any problems which are raised. Plan how you will deal with issues which may be raised, e.g., evil governments.

Have you personal illustrations from your own life which help to make these principles real?

Tips for Leaders

Authority

The key principle involved is that God Himself institutes authority and works through it.

We are to see beyond those to whom we are responsible, to the God to whom they answer. We are to serve them as serving the Lord Himself, even if they are not believers.

The character of the authority does not affect our responsibility to that authority.

In all conflict we must make sure that our own conscience is clear and deal with wrong actions, words, attitudes in our own lives.

God has also ordained boundaries within which authorities can operate. They may not operate outside that authority. The Jewish leadership in the days of the early church could not forbid the apostles to preach the Gospel.

Acts 5:29 (NASB) "But Peter and the apostles answered and said, 'We must obey God rather than men.'"

We can only Biblically disobey authority when that authority persists in demanding something from us which violates Scriptural teaching and would cause us to sin.

In that case we obey God rather than men.

ASSIGNMENT

Memory verses, personal devotions. Encourage the group.

Leading Rooted in Christ Session 11

PROGRAMME FOR TONIGHT

Think about this session prayerfully. How many are there in your group? Would it be better to start the session with the testimonies first? Five minutes for each testimony is only an estimate. Some may take much longer.

You could do that and come back to the sharing time at the end. Our experience is that this is a very significant night and the testimonies should take precedence. There are important things to say about ongoing personal devotions but perhaps you could do that as a challenge on the last night.

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

This is the last sharing night, so you need to discuss what people will do when the course is finished. Many, if not all, will not want to stop.

One thing you need to do is challenge them to continue their personal devotions, memorisation and meditation.

The course notes include the illustration of the oil lamp. Like the lamp we can only give light when we are filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Up to now there has been group accountability to help maintain personal discipline. Talk to the group about this. Highlight the fact that they need to be self-motivated now. They need to continue these things because they believe that God loves them and wants to meet with them daily.

The ultimate Put On is to abide in Christ, day-by-day, moment-by-moment and to meditate on the Word in the same way.

MEMORY VERSES

Review all verses to date. Read Matthew 28:16-20 and discuss verses 18-20 together.

You will need to emphasise that this Commission is not just for Pastors, Ministers and Missionaries but for all of us. The central command in these verses is to 'make disciples.'

Since there is no sharing time in Session 12 you should give the group the last verse in the course, 2 Corinthians 5:17.

TESTIMONY TIME

It will be very helpful to appoint a time-keeper. Allocate the time based on numbers and time.

The time-keeper helps to control anyone who may talk too much but use your discretion. A bell or buzzer is better than a verbal interruption.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Leading **Rooted in Christ** Session 12

SOCIAL EVENING

Usually there are several groups, in any one church, doing the '*Rooted in Christ*' course at the same time. The social evening is an opportunity for them all to get together and share what has been happening in their lives.

It is also an opportunity for the church leadership to discuss with them any ongoing programme.

There have been many variations on the theme for social evenings. The common thread is a meal at a private venue at a price which is appropriate to the group. In some cases the meal has been laid on by folk in the groups and held on the church premises.

Following the meal you can have a programme. This can take any form you want and include music, drama, humour and more serious testimonies from each group.

Often groups put on a 'piece,' make up songs about the course or the leaders, do sketches etc.

Probably the most important guideline is to organise the programme to move from humour to more serious things progressively. After you have changed to serious material do not go back to humour again.

The Pastor or Minister can bring a short word to end the night.

In some cases, when you have groups meeting on different nights or you are finishing close to Christmas or Easter, it may be difficult to get everyone together on the same night for the social evening.

You can delay this session by a week or so in order to accommodate everyone but don't leave it too long.

It is also an opportunity for a final challenge to the group(s). Was this just a course or a life changing experience which will result in a different lifestyle in the future?

How will folk find the motivation to spend time daily with God.

Session 12

ILLUSTRATIONS

Leading Rooted in Christ

ILLUSTRATIONS