

Doing Ministry

A New Life of Spirit Led Ministry to Others

There are two great adventures to this New Life: getting to know our God better and joining Him in the Rescue. We all get to play a part! Of course, only Jesus can save people (as we have found out by our own experience). But He delights in gifting us, training us and going out with us to seek and save those who are lost or hurting in any way.

His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), [that they should do] the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body (the church). Ephesians 4:12 AMP

Two Intertwined Adventures

The great thing is how these two adventures play off of and feed into each other. Because of our growing love for Jesus, we soon overflow. We can't keep it to ourselves. We will burst if we can't find a way to help others enter into the blessings we are receiving. We want the whole world to know Him! And we want everyone to grow in His direction. If only we could all come under His leadership. If only we could all receive His saving grace, healing and deliverance. What a difference would this would be! In fact, that Day is rapidly approaching--the Day [when He returns to reign](#). Until His Return, however, there is the Rescue.



In the meantime, the sight of so much human suffering cries out, making its love-demands upon our newly reborn hearts. Because we hear their cries, we cry out on their behalf. There must be

something we can do! Jesus, How can we join You in the Rescue! So, begins the wild and crazy adventure of seeking to find our own special purpose and gain the equipping to help a lost and hurting world that many times (bizarrely) doesn't want to be either found or helped! You will quickly find that it is impossible to pursue ministry to others without pursuing Jesus for help, wisdom, resources and recovery. And so one adventure leads back into the other.

May these articles help you gain your footing and learn the lay of the land. Ministry to others brings incredible blessings and unexpected battles. Prepare for both!



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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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CHAPTER ONE

Before You Even Start

Ministering to others is immensely rewarding and greatly needed, but it is our secondary calling. Unless this is clearly understood, the attempt to be of service will eventually lead to chaos, burn out, or hard feelings. Our [Primary Purpose](#) and our number one assignment is learning how to love the Lord with our whole heart in all our moments and in all our situations. The Lord packed a lot into the “first and greatest” command, but among other things it means that if we put loving and seeking Him first, the other things will fall into place.

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39
ESV

Keep the First Command in First Place

In practical terms the order of the two great commandments indicates that we have to stay under Jesus' leadership (the first command) while we are trying to be of service to others (the second command). In seeking to be under His leadership, our primary concern is to make sure that we are trusting Jesus with what He allows and following Him in what He asks. If this sounds difficult, then that should show just how much this on-the-job training is necessary!



There is almost a universal tendency to see the needs of the people we are serving as our primary concern, but the Lord always sees the condition of our heart as His primary concern for us: are we trusting Him (or stressing); are we enjoying the peace of His fellowship as we work; and are we letting the Spirit of love lead us? Few workplace “bosses” would care about the internal state of their workers, only the external results. Our Lord is radically different!

This difference has a lovely dimension to it for it means that results are not what we are being graded on as we seek to serve others. Love is. Our love for Him, and through Him, our love for others: is it growing? Saint Teresa of Avila wrote that “God doesn't care nearly so much about the work we do as the love with which we do it.” What this means is that the wide field of ministry to others is secretly God's great laboratory for cultivating in us listening ears, trusting hearts, willing spirits and loving ways. Knowing this up front gives us enhanced opportunities for cooperating with the lessons.



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Now, Where to Begin?

This is the easy part. Pray, then jump right in. Almost always you will find open doors for service and people in leadership who are willing to give you a try, if you are willing to “take the lowest place.” Starting at the bottom makes great sense. It gives you time to learn the ropes—how things are done in that particular field of ministry. It also leaves you free (of heavier responsibilities) to learn how to pray as you work. Christian work always needs lots of prayer: for practical help, for heart attitudes, for inspired ideas, for breakthroughs, and for the leadership. Be particularly watchful in prayer over your own heart attitudes. Remember the two “golden rules” of service:

1) Kindness

You can't always help someone the way they want you to, but you can always BE KIND to them. Being kind helps everyone! Few things speak the love of God better than when we show patience and kindness to someone whose attitude doesn't deserve anything but reproach.

2) Respect

You will not always agree with the leadership, but you can always GIVE RESPECT to them. David was respectful of the wicked king Saul who was trying to kill him. Christian leaders won't try to kill you, but they definitely aren't all saints either. Make sure you don't “stone” them for their clay feet.

The great advantage in getting started with anything available is that the Lord can steer you better if you have some forward movement going. Having a sense of peace about what you are doing is all that really matters in the beginning. As you go along God will begin to give you clues that will point you towards your future calling and assignment.

Clues to Watch For

Notice what emerges in your heart. Are there aspects to the work that particularly energize or inspire you? Are there certain kinds of people or situations of need that tug on your heart more? The former gives you insight into your “ministry gift” and the latter gives you vision for your field of ministry. In the beginning, while I was still folding tables and putting chairs away for others, I found myself thinking about what I would say if I had the opportunity to teach. I also noticed how much I wanted to help others with their emotional needs. Eventually, I entered into the reality I had been dreaming about.

Meditate on what people say to you, especially if it was unsolicited by you. Those you serve will often thank you in a way that emphasizes the kind of ministry they received from the Lord through you. That's a powerful indication of your ministry gift. Also, leaders may comment on the gifts that they see operating in you, especially when they are talking over what you might want to do next around the church.

As time goes on your sense of calling will deepen, or you will find questions stirring in you about what your purpose is and how to prepare for it. No one can fully teach you these things except the Lord, but fortunately He is with you! And He is the best Teacher on earth. So, carry all of



your questions to Him and watch as the answers begin to unfold. In the meantime, we have other articles posted to help you gain a general understanding of the key issues of calling and purpose, gifting and training. But first a final word of caution.

The Big Hurdle to Clear

Be on guard against offense. Never let it build up. Always go to work on your heart when offense comes and make no mistake about it, offense will come. What's more, it will most likely come in a way you least expect, causing you to feel *entirely justified* in holding on to it. You would still be wrong. You have an enemy who doesn't want you being of service to the Lord, but he especially doesn't want you to become a *loving* servant. We may have the best of hearts and the best of intentions, but watch out! The only way you and I can become truly loving is by learning how to forgive all manner of injury, mistreatment and wrong—*just as Jesus does*. That's why every would-be servant of Jesus has to be tried in the fire of offense.

What do you do? *Forgive!* [Forgive](#) until you are holding nothing but a desire for the other person's well-being. Forgive until you get your heart back for them. This will be relatively easy most of the time, but tough as nails sometimes, or you are not being seriously tested (yet). Call vigorously on the Lord so that you can learn from Him how to let things go and accept people as they are. Let Jesus be your model and your inspiration for how to respond to offense. This is the growth upwards into Christ that the Father desires to cultivate in you. We can be sure He practiced what He preached:

And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Mark 11:25 ESV

As you learn to keep your heart free and clear of offense, you will discover that the Lord will always have something worthwhile for you to do. He only puts us on the shelf if our hearts get hard. That's not going to happen to you now that you are on guard against it! So pray, look for an open door, and jump right in. The water's fine!



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CHAPTER TWO

Secrets of Doing Ministry

There's nothing like doing the thing, especially when what we are doing is something we can be sure that Jesus is doing right along with us! The real Minister, the true Servant, is there on the inside wanting to get out into that hurting, lost world through us His chosen vessels. The secret to kingdom success is letting Him do ministry through you. It is also the secret to never becoming burned out.

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Philippians 2:13 ESV

Our “Secret” of Success

Success in ministry is learning to let Jesus work *in you* and *through you*. We need to let Him work in us so that He can work through us. On good days this can be as easy as child's play. When our trust, love and inward surrender are high, we hardly need any coaching from an article like this. We're good to go! At other times, however, it is as tough as nails.

Why is that?

Because Jesus is in you, the Holy Spirit will lift and lead you into the many joys of working with Him, making you feel childlike and free. Likewise, *precisely because Jesus is in you*, the enemy's camp will work steadily to oppose anything He might want to do through you.

At those times you will feel hindered and besieged. Remember, too, that the Adversary doesn't just come at us from the outside; difficulties also arise from all that is still fallen within us. That's why we have to learn to let Jesus work *in us*, in order for Him to keep working *through us*.

There is no escaping this ongoing conflict. Just be ready for it. It is the inevitable cycle of our new life: struggle and victory, seed time and harvest, death to self and resurrection with Christ. Be encouraged: opposition from the enemy is never wasted. God will always overturn it and use it to advance His work. In addition, it often serves as the Lord's “wash and wear cycle”—something that He puts us through whenever we need to be cleansed of self and liberated once again as glad-hearted, unencumbered children.

Why We Need this Cycle of Conflict

We need this “friendly” work of the Lord in us because it is so easy to get caught up in trying to get “results.” Our desire to help people can easily be subverted by the enemy. We could focus



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on the problems and lose the peace of Christ, then press forward in our own strength until we've burned out the inner flame. Or, we might seize the reins, trying to manage everything according to our own understanding and our own sense of timing. This always leads to frustration. Without even realizing it, by these and other ways we can take control of the work away from the Lord into our own hands. *This never produces the desired results!*

Success in ministry is letting Jesus have His way with us. His top priority is growing loving relationships—that's the key "result" he's looking for. Are we making the progress there that He desires? (See [Preparing for Ministry](#) for more on this.) As for the work itself, it always goes better if He is in the lead. He alone knows what He desires to accomplish and how to do it. The great thing about this is that He can be immensely pleased even with what may seem to us like miniscule gains, such as stopping what you're doing to give "a drink of cool water" to someone in need.

Learning to follow Him is filled with unexpected moments of purpose and accomplishment when something vital (love, empathy, shared understanding) passes between us and the people we serve. Our service is also marked by times of quandary: Where did He go now? What was *that* about? What is He trying to teach me? Since so much depends upon Jesus doing His ministry through us, we need to understand and cooperate with this dynamic of the work.

The Source of Our Success

Jesus gathered the disciples on His last night with them for a final teaching on how to do ministry once He was gone. Just as they had always done ministry under His leadership while He was with them in the flesh, so now they were to make sure that He remained in charge once He was gone. But catch the wink: He wouldn't really "be gone." He would remain with them as an abiding presence and He fully expected them (and us) to learn how to return the favor by learning to abide in Him. This teaching is so important that we need to study it in detail.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full... You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

John 15:4-11, 16 ESV



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The Importance of Abiding

Our “abiding” is important to Jesus, as well as fruit we are intended to bear. Unless we learn the way of abiding in Him we will be unable to bear *any* fruit. On the other hand, if we abide in Him, we will bear “much fruit.” Bearing fruit glorifies the Father and proves that we are truly His disciples. The stakes are high! If we don’t learn to abide in Him, we not only won’t experience the overflow of His joy, we may actually risk being cast “into the fire.” Indeed, we have been chosen that we “should go and bear fruit.”

Fruit is what the branch (that’s us) produces by abiding in the vine (that’s Jesus). Fruit is not for the consumption of the branch, but for the nourishment of others. In the New Testament there are three basic kinds of fruit: the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of righteous living and the fruit of advancing the kingdom. We don’t get to pick and choose among the fruit. Every one of us is called to cultivate all three kinds.

Notice the essential role of the fruit of the Spirit—peace, love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If we don’t abide in Jesus, the fruit of the Spirit are the first to get spoiled! If we aren’t bearing the fruit of the Spirit, whatever “work” we are doing will have a rotten smell to it. According to Paul, even if we have righteous deeds and kingdom advances to boast of, but have not love, then we “gain nothing.” Clearly, the fruit of the Spirit are essential to both life and ministry.

The Key to Our Success

Since abiding in Christ is the only way we can bear fruit, especially the fruit of the Spirit, then *abiding is the key to doing ministry*. In Jesus own words it is impossible to think of doing things for Jesus without also doing everything we can to abide in Him at the same time. It is not a question of one or the other. We do not get to choose between being active servants or being those who abide in Jesus. We must learn to do both! We have been chosen to bear fruit and it is only by abiding that we have any hope of accomplishing our assignment.

If this sounds impossibly hard, it is. We will never learn the way of abiding or of bearing true fruit unless Jesus helps us, but that is exactly what He wants to do. He says that whatever we ask for will be given us. Look what that promise means in this context. Anything we need in order to abide or bear fruit, God will gladly supply! Call on His Name—He will always come to your aid. Return to Him as often as the peace of abiding departs—He will always welcome you back. No one abides in Jesus all of the time. We all lose the peace He gives us, especially in the midst of trials. The great thing is recognizing that you have lost the peace of abiding (once again) and *make a quick return!*

Pressure Can Work for Us

Seen in this light, seeking to be of service to Jesus, “forces” us to learn how to abide in Him, and that in turn ushers in all of the inimitable joys of living in His presence Truly, “His joy” enters us as we learn to abide in Him. Once again Jesus demonstrates that His number one concern

for us as servants is love: “abide in My love.” From that place of strength, service becomes a joy and the fruit naturally follows.

Jesus overturns our natural bent. We want success (results) at the work in order to feel confident we have pleased Him and don't mind striving and stressing to get those results. His approach is quite different. He is pleased if we take our confidence from trusting ourselves to His steadfast love. Then He gets to reap the results He wants through us *while we are trusting*.

Two Necessary Steps

How do we “allow” Jesus to do His ministry through us? Abiding is intimately connected with trusting Jesus with all He allows and all He asks of us. That is a subject all its own (see [Spiritual Health](#)). Nevertheless, there are two steps we need to take at the beginning of any work of ministry. The first step is to consecrate the work to Him; the second step is to consecrate ourselves.

1) Consecrating the Work

This is done by committing our field of service to Him in prayer. Christian work and prayer go hand in hand, because no amount of effort on our part can make up for any failure by us to bring the Lord in as the central player. Always keep in mind that it is His work in us and through us that will win the day. Naturally enough we pray for His blessing, but to ensure that, we commit the work to Him, asking Him to take charge over it and work with us to make sure that His will is done. The Holy Spirit will show what needs to be prayed for and help us with the prayers, but the central thing is truly committing or giving the work to God.

2) Consecrating Ourselves

This needs doing up front in prayer, but it is necessary to keep watch over ourselves all along the way. The key to this is to intentionally place ourselves under His leadership through prayer and the yielding of our wills, just as He showed us was necessary for Him in the Garden: “Not my will, but Thine be done.” Whenever we do this in life or in ministry, we have peace. Any loss of peace is a clear call from the Holy Spirit to repent, return to the Lord, be refreshed in His presence and re-consecrate ourselves to working under His leadership.



CHAPTER THREE

The Heart of a Servant

There are two sides to cultivating a servant's heart which we see fully revealed in Jesus. They also dove-tail beautifully into fulfilling the two commands He gave us. First, there is the passion to be about the Father's business which keeps us asking "What would You have me do?" This takes us upwards into God's heart and downwards into the humility that sets Self aside. Second, there is compassion which keeps us looking to the sea of humanity around us, listening for God's call that comes to us through their need.

"It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:26-28 ESV

The Lowest Place

Where would we be without those opportunistic sons of Zebedee, James and John? Their unabashed desire to one day sit enthroned beside Jesus, provoked the Lord to give us the penetrating look into His kingdom and His calling quoted above. It's not our way, is it? He didn't come to make a name for Himself, or to get anything for Himself, or to be served by us. He came simply and solely to serve us, even to the ultimate end of laying down His life for us. He says that's what He wants us to be like.



With these few words Jesus stands the world on its head. Headship among us is characterized by making sure that others look up to our elevated position, bowing before us in gratitude, respect and obedience. *We didn't climb all this way up the mountain for nothing! There's got to be something in it for us.* Tragically, the very desire to rise to the top which lies behind so much of our excellence and achieving, comes from the lowest thing about us—our pride. We don't have to rise very high to fall into this snare: Even the slightest elevation can have us looking to see if anyone else noticed our advance, or being miffed if they didn't.

Jesus says that in His kingdom the head takes the lowest place. Those who would follow Him, must become like Him in being a servant to everyone else. You don't have to be the Pope or the President for this to apply to you. Moral greatness rests upon anyone who learns to be a servant. Those who seek leadership positions—"being first"—must be willing to descend even lower, becoming "slaves." Naturally enough, our own heads aren't going to take this self-debasement lying down! Fortunately, Jesus has given us a new heart, one just like His—the heart of a servant. Look no further: It is already in you, waiting and desiring to emerge.



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And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26 ESV

Growing Your Heart

Our new hearts don't grow all by themselves. Like any tender young plant they require careful cultivation. The basic strategy is to plant your new heart in some field of service, keep watering it with the Word and with worship, and stand ready to pull weeds coming from your fallen nature when they show up. That won't take long. Inevitably, you will discover that there is a battle enjoined between the old ways of our fallen nature which seem so natural to us and the new ways of grace which are sometimes difficult to receive.

This heart of a servant within us doesn't seek recognition or reward. Its reward is to be of service. For that it is ever listening for the call, willing to set the demands of life or the desires of self aside in order to respond to the One who has our ear. Our new hearts live by the law of sacrifice just as Jesus did. By dying to Self we enter into the greater joy of living for God. This new heart works beautifully when everything is going well. Few things give us more pleasure than serving in Jesus name. However, it should be evident that this new heart will have a lot of battles to fight, if it is going to triumph over the self-centered ways of our old nature.

If there was a short cut to eliminating Self, so that the new heart could truly flourish, Jesus would have told us. Instead, He warned us that we should be prepared to battle our selfish, self-centered side *daily*. How can we go the distance with so demanding a task?

Going the Distance

The Old Testament gives us a vivid picture of a devoted servant whose love for his master inspired him to go the extra mile. Rather than take his leave when his indentured time was fulfilled, he chose to stay on as a permanent slave. Foreseeing that such a possibility could happen, the Lord made provision for it in His Word.

"Now these are the rules that you shall set before them. When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing... But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever." Exodus 21:1-2, 5-6 ESV

This may seem incredible to us, even unthinkable. That servant could have walked out a free man, owing nothing. Instead, He freely chose to become a "slave forever." Why? Masters in the ancient world provided food, clothing, bedding and personal security for their servants—the necessities of life. That could have been part of it, but we are simply told that he stayed *for love*. In a dramatic ceremony the "bond servant" was marked permanently as one whose ear would be forever attuned to his master's voice. He would be listening "at the door," whether he was to go outside on his master's business, or inside to attend to his master's personal requirements. His willingness to suffer and bleed sealed the covenant.



Amazingly, the first apostles referred to themselves in their letters as just such a bond servant. They even introduced themselves as “a bond servant of the Lord Jesus” before they mentioned (*oh by the way*) that they were also apostles chosen by God. They evidently wanted the world to know that they were sold out to the One who had bought them at the price of His own Blood. Once saved, they could have chosen to live within the wide boundaries of the moral law, but they chose instead to enslave themselves to His will. They only wanted to come and go at His beck and call.

There is a significant difference between mere servants and bond servants. Good servants may still cherish and prefer their free time apart from doing their master’s bidding. Bond servants seek only time at their master’s side. Since our Master lives inside of us, this is surely the most searching form of slavery imaginable, with every thought, word and action coming under the scrutiny of our Lord’s all-pervasive presence. And yet, wonder of wonder, in His service we find our perfect freedom! God and Jesus only desire for us that which we ourselves would gladly choose if we had Their wisdom and foresight. Those who go deepest into loving service He raises highest into spiritual friendship. The devoted servant and the kind-hearted Master are intimately intertwined—serving one another in love.

Two Mighty Motivations

We have not one, but two vast reservoirs of motivation.

1) Passion

Our first and most powerful source of motivation grows out of God’s love for us and ours for Him. This can be easily renewed whenever we return and rest our hearts in Him. This is the secret of the bond servant. By always seeking to be at His side listening for our next assignment, there is a built-in reminder for staying refreshed by His presence. Learning to walk step-by-step under the Lord’s leadership ensures that we will spend our days seeking Him, because like Moses, we won’t desire to go anywhere without His presence leading us. You don’t have to be especially good at this, just doggedly determined.

2) Compassion

Our second source of motivation mirrors the Second Commandment that the Lord gave us: to love one another as we love ourselves. Provided that we have learned to accept and [love ourselves](#), our hearts will naturally want to share with others the peace, joy and freedom that keep flooding into us. Because our passion for Jesus is filling our cup, we don’t need to use people or get anything from them. We are free to serve them under His leadership, expecting nothing in return. It is enough to know that He knows. This is our baseline, but we can go deeper. We can want to see what He sees and feel what He feels when He looks into the lives around us. In this way our passion for Him, leads us into greater compassion for others.

Not only do we have these [Two Passionate Purposes](#) to keep ourselves fired up for active service, we also have [Two Monumental Tasks](#): to take the liberating gospel out to the lost world and to carry loving compassion into the hurting world. That should keep us busy! But don’t let

busyness keep you from the most important part of it all: loving Jesus and loving the ones He loves. [Growing a heart of love](#) is our underlying purpose in ministry and our source of lasting joy. Gaining the heart of a servant will carry us a long way towards home.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Care of Souls

The people we pass every day on the streets will outlast the Grand Canyon and are of infinitely more worth than any governmental structure. How are we to handle them, especially when they come to us for ministry? Some are obviously stamped “Fragile, Handle with Care.” Others have their secret life hidden further from sight. We can easily be like bulls in a china shop, if we don’t take care with souls.

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 7:12 ESV

Let “the Rule” Rule

Try as we might we will never be able to improve on this saying of the Lord. His Golden Rule could easily guide all of our efforts to minister to others. Just put yourself in their place and imagine how you would like to be treated. Imagine what you would be feeling; how you might be acting out; how you would be hoping that someone out there could sympathize and understand. Imagine how much an undeserved gesture of kindness or gentleness would mean to you. Would you want tender comfort? Or the truth kindly, but honestly spoken? Would you be grateful for anyone who could sense your pain? Or lift your spirits?



Without a doubt the Golden Rule should rule! But being the kind of folks that we are, we need clarification points to pin to our conscience so that we will recognize the moment when it is upon us. We are so secretly good at flipping the rule: expecting others to treat us as we want them to! Jesus never gave us permission to go at life that way. I have to treat them as I would want to be treated, but they are free to treat me however they like—I still have to treat them by the Rule. So, let’s resolve right at the beginning that we are going to live by the Lord’s Rule even if others don’t! Now for some points of further clarification.

Caring for Souls

Caring for souls primarily means taking care of their hearts. You can feed a hungry homeless person a great meal, but if you treat them with disrespect, they will walk out emptier than when they came in. Similarly, you can minister to a hurting believer through prayers that have you both in tears, but if you tell others their secret, they will wish they never knew you. Here’s a truth you can take to the bank: If the person needing ministry knew how to take care of their own heart, they wouldn’t need you to minister to them. That’s why we have to take such care with



them. Their heart is what the Lord is after. Their heart is where He wants to dwell. Their heart is the key to all the other issues in their life.

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Proverbs 4:23 NKJV

To care for others at the level of taking care of their hearts, means that we will have to attend to the needs of our own heart in the process. Jesus said that we should love others as we love ourselves. This carries a subtle inference that the proper love of self is necessary for the proper love of others: We will love them as (to the extent that) we love ourselves. If accepting, forgiving and loving yourself as God loves you is hard for you, don't you imagine that hardness against yourself will get in the way of accepting, forgiving and loving others? Indeed it does! There is real help for this: please see [Love Thyself!](#) at our website for healing, [Healing Streams](#).

In the meantime, focus on this: the way that Jesus loves us is what we want to pass on to others. His love is what it's all about. This means that we will have to get very good (as we go along) at receiving His mercy and love, so that we will keep having a good supply of it to share with others. As you go over the following three areas, try to recall the ways that the Lord has gone before you, preparing you to care for others by showing you His comfort, confidence and courtesy.

A. Giving Comfort

One of the easiest things to do for others and certainly one of the most meaningful is to give comfort. As long as you keep in mind that giving comfort is not fixing them or fixing their situation, you will do well and you will be able to do it without getting stressed up. The problem comes when we just can't bear to see them suffering either so much or for so long. That's when we may succumb to the temptation to rescue them, putting the too-heavy burden of their life on our frail shoulders. Always remember that there is only One Person who is fully qualified to do that. Look to see the part you can do (with His grace helping you) and leave the really heavy lifting to Jesus.

Job's friends are a classic example of people who started out giving comfort, but later gave in to the temptation to fix the problem which they mistakenly took to be Job himself. As long as they sat with him in silence sharing his pain, they did well. Moreover, there was nothing back-breaking about the assignment. It comes naturally to us to "weep with those who weep." They blew it, however, when they lost patience both with Job (who was becoming a pill) and with the Lord (who wasn't acting fast enough to resolve things). If all you can think to do is commiserate with and befriend the hurting person, that is all you need to do. Beyond this, it often helps to remember how the Lord brought genuine comfort to you in a similar situation and see if that shows you some further part you can play.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 ESV



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B. Guarding Confidence

It is safe to say that no one will have any confidence in us if we cannot keep a confidence that they share with us. Don't think just in terms of secrets that may be shared in confessional moments. These certainly must be guarded with the utmost concern for their privacy. However, there are many things of an intimate nature that may come to our attention when ministering to others: the way they look or how they behave; the way their house looks; their family relationships or financial situation. Whatever comfort the Lord may give them through us will be stripped away if we don't guard these privileged glimpses into their lives.

People who are suffering pain or lack are already humbled and vulnerable if they have sought others out for help. In a very real sense they are standing before us with their "naked need" exposed. Nakedness in scripture represents that which would give us shame if openly displayed. Think of Adam and Eve instinctively reaching for those fig leaves. Paul wrote that just as we treat our "unpresentable parts" with greater modesty, so in the Body of Christ we are meant to clothe the weaker members with greater honor, taking care to guard their dignity. Furthermore, it seems that the Lord took a very dim view of Noah's son who exposed his father's "nakedness"—even though Noah had behaved in a disreputable way. When in doubt, keep quiet about it.

Never repeat what you are told and you will come to no harm; whether to friend or foe, do not talk about it, unless it would be sinful not to, do not reveal it; you would be heard out, then mistrusted, and in due course you would be hated. Have you heard something? Let it die with you. Courage! It will not burst you!

Ecclesiasticus 19:7-10 TJB (the Apocrypha)

C. Genuine Courtesy

The rules of etiquette and the traditional courtesies originated as ways for showing respect to others. They still work. Key among these is the willingness to take the time to look people in the eyes, to listen carefully to what they are saying and to share empathetically with their plight. This goes a long way towards helping them. Not only does it enable you to access their situation more accurately (so that you can give better care), but it immediately gives them the comfort of being treated with dignity, as someone who is worth your time. The care of souls and an assembly line approach to solving human problems are completely incompatible! If you put people on the clock they always know it, and feel diminished. It is a breach of common courtesy.

No one exhibited the divine grace that lies within genuine courtesy better than [St. Francis of Assisi](#). Be sure to read about him when you have time and if you don't have time, make time. He was called "the mirror of perfection" in his day—the medieval world marveled at the ways Jesus shined out through his every word or deed. He made it a point of personal honor never to meet anyone who was poorer than himself. This kept his brother monks busy finding better things for him to wear because he was forever exchanging his garments with every beggar he met. Let that image penetrate you: The heart of courtesy is to treat other souls as if they matter more to you than your own immediate comfort.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do



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nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:1-4 ESV



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CHAPTER FIVE

The Art of Listening

Hearing what people say is one thing. Really listening is something else entirely. What turns listening into an art form is learning how to juggle listening to others and listening for the Lord at the same time. Listen well enough to others and you will more easily hear from the Lord. These simple rules and visual images will help put you on track, but only practice makes perfect.

And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Mark 4:9 ESV

A Lost Art

Sometime in the last century we lost the art of letter writing. Once widespread and flourishing, writing long, thoughtful letters by hand kept people intimately in touch over great distances, but the telephone and air travel supplanted it. Something similar seems to be happening to story tellers and good listeners. Where are the raconteurs who could hold you spell bound with a simple tale lovingly told? Where are the caring souls who set their lives aside to really give a good listen to yours? It seems as if both are being crowded out by the pressured pace of modern life, for both of these art forms require a gracious supply of time in which to thrive.



This cultural deficit actually makes our task as Christian ministers much easier. So many people are weighted down or stressed up with the burdens they are carrying. Often their attempts to find a caring soul have been brushed off by people too busy to give them the time of day. Others they encountered were so filled with their own cares they didn't dare open themselves to feeling the weight of another's concern. And then there were false friends who heard them out, but failed to keep the confidence. In such a cultural climate finding a good listener is a rare treasure indeed! Yet, listening is the easiest point of access for those who desire to enter into [The Care of Souls](#) which is the essence of Christian ministry.

The beautiful thing about becoming a good listener is a) that you can start right away and b) you can easily do a lot of good and very little harm. The deeper you go into Christian ministry the more training you will need and the more danger there will be of inadvertently causing damage. If you want to counsel people, or exercise a gift of prophecy, or minister inner healing and deliverance, you'll have to strap yourself in for the long haul. Seeking to help people at the level of their deepest need requires training and teamwork. But if you want to relieve people by listening well, all you need is one good ear. If you have two, so much the better!



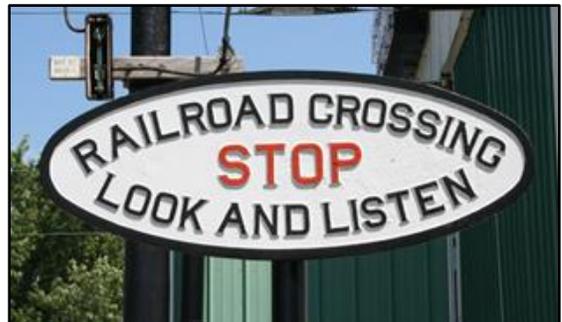
Ears to Hear Him

Listening is also important because our life with God is predicated upon listening carefully. In fact, our ability to listen to others will increase dramatically as we learn how to give ear to the Lord. He speaks His word to us in a variety of ways. We listen for what He may be saying to us through scripture, through the words of others, through books, through conscience and through the way the Spirit guides our circumstances. That's a lot of listening! But that is not all.

There is an art to listening to the Lord. If you stay busy, you hear very little. The more you slow down, the more you notice that He just might be trying to get your attention about something. Then, if you really settle down and get quiet, you just might (finally) be in the right position to hear what He is saying. Imagine a darkened, windswept, rain-splattered pond. If an acorn were to drop on the surface you'd hardly notice. However, let that same pond be utterly still on a sunny day and anything dropped on the surface will be immediately heard and its effects seen across the whole expanse of quiet water. Learn to be that quiet pond on the inside and you will hear so much better from the Lord. How will we ever understand our lives or our world, if we don't pause to really hear Him when He speaks?

And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand." Matthew 15:10 ESV

All of this training at listening to the Lord comes in handy when listening to people. With them also it is not just a simple matter of recognizing and understanding words. The way they speak, their choice of words, their inflections, pauses and points of emphasis all give insight into their inner conversation—the thoughts of their heart. Body language and facial expressions also send a message, sometimes more loudly than anything they may actually be saying. If a person looks really down and discouraged and you hear it in their voice, but they tell you "all's well," what are you going to listen to as truth?



Just as we need to be quiet to hear from the Lord, so too we need to be quiet to listen well to others. Being unquiet on the inside always gets in the way of good listening. Haven't we all seen people at parties who can't wait for the other person to finish speaking, so they can jump in? Many people, when introduced to someone new, are so anxious what to say that they don't hear and remember the person's name. Or, perhaps something you heard triggered a very distracting thought. By the time you came to the end of it, you looked up and realized the other person was still speaking to you! These are just a few examples to show the need for emptying out as soon as you turn your attention to someone who wants to open up to you.

Stop, Look and Listen

We have to be ready to give our complete attention at a moment's notice. Years ago we had railroad signs in this country which said, "Railroad Crossing: Stop, Look and Listen." If you don't want to wreck the other person's train of thought, let this bygone phrase remind you of the dangers of not coming to a full stop! Then, let the whole phrase provide a framework for excellent listening.



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1) STOP!

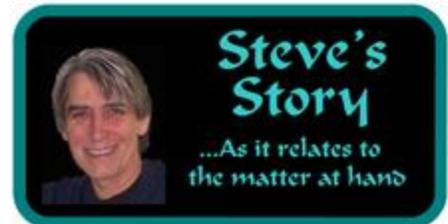
As soon as you see that someone wants to open up to you, or has a legitimate need to talk, stop what you're doing. This should be obvious, but the devil is in the details. If you look at your watch, or fidget, or show the slightest sign of irritation or impatience, you may lose your moment with them. Come to a full stop and *stay* stopped. Set the stuff in you aside. Don't start thinking of other things you could be doing, unless of course, you should be doing them. In that case it is better to listen well to the first few sentences, explain that you have to go, but would really like to hear more later. Honesty like this will save you from resentment and them from embarrassment.

Inconvenience, on the other hand, can conceal the call of the Lord. Moses famously turned aside upon seeing the burning bush—it wasn't his plan. Had he not noticed and stopped, he could easily have missed out on joining the Lord in a very heroic part of the Rescue. If you don't know it yet, you may as well brace yourself for finding it out soon: The Lord takes a rather cavalier attitude towards our agendas. He prefers His plans to ours! Imagine. This means that your burning bush moments with others may come at seemingly inopportune times. Take time to tune in to the Lord. Lift the interruption immediately up to Him. If you can't honorably set it aside, set your agenda aside instead. He'll help you with that later.

2) LOOK!

Above all, look them in the eyes. Look with your heart of love and acceptance that Jesus gives you. Look to see how important this moment is to them. Just don't overwhelm them by too intense a gaze—people in need often feel insecure and wilt if you look into them too deeply or too long. Then, as you have opportunity, take in the whole aspect of the person to see what that might tell you as you begin listening to them. Are they in a pain or a panic? Do they seem distressed and disheveled? Do they look like they need an immediate response from you to calm them down? How badly do they seem to be in need? Will someone else have to be called in, or does this seem like something you (with the Lord's help) can handle?

While you're looking, look around. Is this a good place for the person to open up? Will it afford them enough privacy? Do they seem on the brink of tears? In that case is there a quieter corner or more convenient place for the conversation? If you are feeling self-conscious or awkward about being approached, try not to let it show. Above all, never worry how the situation will look to others. Deal with those feelings immediately by looking up to the Lord and seeing or sensing if you have a green light from Him to go forward in this location. That's all that matters. Very likely you will get the go ahead, since the burning bush moment is already a sign of His Providence in choosing the time and place. If not, suggest a better location and move there.



3) LISTEN!

James tells us to be quick to listen, slow to speak. That's our guide. Affirm their feelings, not necessarily their opinions. Wait patiently for your time to speak—don't interrupt. Be willing to count your own words as small things compared to what the Lord will be speaking to them, simply by you listening well. The image here is of a full pitcher of water. They are



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filled to the brim with all kinds of thoughts and feelings. If they don't tell someone they will overflow!

Your job is to let them pour what's inside them out upon your listening ears. It hardly matters where they begin. Their heart will secretly direct their conversation to the points that really matter. That's where you want to focus your innermost attention: on whatever it is that their heart is seeking to express. Don't strain. Just listen to them and to the Lord. If some insight needs to come to you, it will. Once that comes out into the open, your own heart will help you give the right response when it's your turn to speak. If you can find nothing significant to share, don't reproach yourself. Keep listening! Turning on the lights for you and your friend is the Lord's job. We are wisest when we wait on Him to do just that.

Sometimes Less Is More

In the meantime, remember that we weep with those who weep and laugh with those who laugh. Both are healing. Just go with the flow at first, responding to them as Jesus does with you. Set aside any judgments that may arise against their situation or their behavior. Ask questions if need be to keep the flow going: "What hurts? How did that make you feel?" Be a spiritual sponge! Absorb what they are sharing, taking it to your own heart and holding it up to the Lord in prayer. Be directive or assertive only if they seem to be straying off focus or dodging something. Good listening creates a bond of trust. You have to earn the right to speak.

As they empty out, this give you the opportunity to pour in some encouragement or the wisdom gained from a similar experience. Just don't be in a hurry to do that. The quarry is dove like. If you don't quietly wait for your moment, you may startle them into taking flight. The primary comfort is not your words, but your love. That is shown incredibly well by listening well. It is rightly said that a burden shared is half lifted—and you don't even have to do any of the lifting. The Lord will lift their spirit through the principle of fellowship.

Heavenly Hospitality

Good listening is a way of showing hospitality to others. You are welcoming them into your presence and treating their conversation with the respect a guest of your house deserves. God will use your caring and listening to bring much comfort and restoration, even if you have no inspired insight to give. Just by talking out loud people are helped, even to the point of discovering the answer for themselves. Just know your limits. Avoid sharing about unhealed, wounded areas in your life and getting in too deep into theirs. Follow these simple guidelines and you will not only do others a great deal of good, you will be making friends for eternity as you go along!



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CHAPTER SIX

Giving Great Talks

There is one rule that governs all talks: Make sure you have something to say. We can't help you with that (unless you want to use our materials—please do!), but we can supply the coaching for how to know when you've got something to say and what to do with it when you do.

**So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
John 8:31-32 ESV**

The Goal of a Good Talk

The goal is not primarily to give a good talk. Don't focus on that. The goal is to get some truth, some message that is really important to you across to them. Just make sure that you believe it with all of your heart and that you see why it liberates you to believe it. Then you will want them to get it as much as you have. This actually frees you from being self-focused and sets your heart on fire to share a truth that is burning inside you to be expressed. So, get your passion and clarity up about what you want to share and let it become so important to you that it drowns out pestering concerns for how the message (and you) will be received.



Philips Brooks wrote that we should teach truth, not just so people will know it, but so that they will be saved by believing it. You will communicate effectively what you are passionate about them getting! Know and be convinced of what they need to get out of your teaching and they will naturally want to pay attention. Brooks also said that all good preaching or teaching is eternal truth brought through human personality. Never strain at this. The more natural, simple and genuine you are, the more you will truly be yourself as the Lord created you to be—and your teaching will be all the better for it. Don't compare yourself to others. Just fall in love with Jesus, then love the truth He has given you to share, then get yourself out of the way, and share it like there's no tomorrow. The real you will come through along with the His truth. Both will be a blessing.

Elements of a Good Talk

A. The Core Message

The core message is like bones in our body. It gives strength and unity to the whole talk. Everything relates back to the core message and the core message provides purpose and

context to all the secondary elements. The core message can be summed up in one sentence. It is the main thing that you want to get across, the main thing you want them to take away. Without clarity about the core message, very likely you will wander about and your listeners will become confused. But if all a good talk needed was a powerful core message, you could speak for 30 seconds and sit down!

B. Prayer

Pray to receive the message. Pray over all the elements in the message. Pray for the people you will be speaking to. Pray for the Lord to help you get your heart in just the right position: trusting Him and loving them. Pray for His anointing. Pray for Him to have His way. Then, release your cares to Him and step out in faith. When it comes to being prepared (in your head) for a talk or being pre-*prayer*-ed (in your heart), take prayer every time. Leave prayer out and the Lord may let you see just how well you can give a talk without Him! Depend too much on head knowledge and you will be “headed” for disaster.

C. Secondary Elements

Don't try to fit all of these secondary elements into your talk. That would be like trying to wear all of the clothes in your wardrobe in one day. Not every talk has to include all of these elements, but a good talk will include some of them. Pray and let the Lord lead you.

1) Scripture, Scripture, Scripture

Pick one or two key scriptures that illustrate your core message and seek to plant them deeply in their minds and hearts. This is what the Holy Spirit will most powerfully use to liberate them as they try to walk out the message they've heard. Scatter other scriptures generously about, but don't clutter the talk with them. Less is more when it comes to what people will remember in the take away.

2) Key Insights

Give credibility to what you are saying by adding insights from Christian leaders, or from facts you've gleaned from articles that are relevant.

3) Personal Testimony

There is no better way to illustrate or flesh out a teaching than with your own relevant experience. There are, however, some pernicious pitfalls to avoid. See below.

4) Humor

Bring in appropriate jokes or use your own. Remember that the joy of the Lord is our strength. A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, enabling us take in the serious things He wants us to digest.



5) Ministry Times

Strike while the iron is hot! At the right time—as the Spirit prompts you—lead the group in confessional times of repentance and ministry. If the teaching is anointed, the hearts of your listeners will be touched. This creates tremendously fruitful opportunities to harvest their prayers or prune away their burdens. See below.

6) Beware of Long Readings

Nowadays we seem to have little ability to stay focused on long readings or quotations. Unless it is very good and you can read it well, do some ruthless editing of your favorite material. Trim the fat; keep it lean and you will hold their attention.

7) Tone

To paraphrase Muhammad Ali the boxer, “float like a butterfly,” but let the Lord “sting like a bee.” Our job is not to try to convict people, but to simply put the truth before them and let the Holy Spirit do it.

Testimony Guidelines

Personal testimony is powerful, but it is also dangerous—just like 220 volts of electricity. With your story used the right way you can electrify an audience. Use it the wrong way and you will electrocute them instead. Just because scripture says that we defeat the enemy “with the word of our testimony” doesn’t mean that it works every time, regardless of how we use it. Wisdom is required for the proper use of all of God’s gifts, especially the most powerful ones. If you would rather leave your listeners exhilarated and alive, rather than bored to death, please follow these tips.

1) Never Overshadow the Truth

Don’t let your experiences eclipse the real message. Personal experiences illustrate truth, they don’t establish it. The truths you are teaching are what the Holy Spirit will use to help them in their time of trial, not your stories. Also, don’t let the telling of your own story secretly capture your heart. That would become an inroad for pride. Let the truth your story is intended to illustrate be what your heart desires to express. That will lead you (and them) closer to Jesus, who is the Truth we are all seeking to live for.

2) Follow the 80/20 Principle

80% teaching; 20% personal testimony. Think of truths as the meat and potatoes of the meal you are serving; personal testimonies are the gravy that makes truth taste great. Since no one can live on a diet of gravy, balance things out. As with any other art, once you become masterful at teaching you can safely bend and stretch the rules. No novice can. The 80/20 principle also applies to the operations of the two kingdoms. Keep a healthy balance between what the enemy did in your life to take you captive and what the Lord did to set you free—don’t give the work of the enemy too much air time!



3) Keep It Short and Sweet

Although we tend to be forever fascinated by our own stories, the funny thing is, others aren't. Some select few can tell a long, winding personal story and not lose the interest of anyone in the room, but that's a *rare* gift. Best to be brief—cut to the chase—and make sure everyone is with you. Don't be fooled. People will give you polite attention because it's your story and they don't want to hurt your feelings. That's not the same thing as an anointing.

4) Serve It Steaming H.O.T.

Being Honest, Open and Transparent really draws out the anointing of the Spirit and draws in your listeners. We all love to catch privileged glimpses into the secrets of other lives—the HOT-er the better. This satisfies that inward hunger to know others more intimately. Many times, the messenger becomes the message, showing us ways of living with God and people that we hardly dreamed possible. Just make sure that you aren't giving secrets away that will embarrass you later. There are things we don't need to know about each other and ways of sharing that can backfire, as the following three examples illustrate.

5) Beware of Glory Stories

For every two personal victory stories, be sure to tell at least one story of failure or of struggle to get something that was hard for you. People can relate better to you if they see your common humanity. It gives them hope when they see that you are just like them: goofed up and having a hard time getting it. Beware of the subtle pride that wants to appear glorious in victory, even if you imagine you are giving glory to God.

6) Avoid Gory Stories

On the other hand, don't share about areas of your life that are still raw and bleeding. Things that are too unhealed will cast a shadow over them, distracting them from truths you are teaching. Worse, you may speak from the darkness of your unhealed perspective instead of from His Light. Be careful not to use the class you are teaching as an occasion for personal therapy.

7) Resist Grouching Stories

Avoid stories that put another person in a bad light—and you in a good light. This may be an unconscious way of getting revenge on people who have hurt you and also of making you a victim or hero in the class's eyes. If you have to share something negative about someone, be sure you do it in a way that honors their dignity as a person. Don't encourage people to judge someone with you, or laugh at anyone in a way that diminishes them.



Ministry while Teaching

Sometimes the mood of the room will shift while you are teaching. Of course, you can change the mood intentionally by reaching for humor or by quoting from something deathly serious. You can disrupt the mood accidentally by saying something confusing, or not quite true, or by straying off the mark. But suppose you are right on track and sense an anointing that is gracing what you are doing. Any unintended shift may be the Lord's way of calling you to lead the class through prayers that will help them process what you have just been teaching.

One obvious example of this would be a talk on forgiveness. If you suddenly sense you are losing them, it just may be that the Holy Spirit has them thinking about someone they need to forgive. They feel the tug of this and start remembering what happened. All you will feel is a sense that they are distracted by something. Just pause the lesson and ask if that's the case. If it is, ask them if it would be alright for you to lead them in a prayer to release forgiveness. Then walk them through it leaving nothing to chance. Most people need to be taught how to do these things. Model it for them or lead them word for word, however seems best.

John Wimber, the founder of the Vineyard movement, would purposefully teach until the Holy Spirit began to fall on the people. Then he would immediately stop teaching and begin praying for healing. Only the Lord knows how to mend broken hearts, dig up root issues, or bring closure to old wounds. We have to learn to watch for His timing. He looks into every heart far better than we can and knows when people are ready to surrender, trust and pray. Always ask permission to open an issue for confession and prayer. Then, follow the leading and let the Lord bring the message home!



CHAPTER SEVEN

Inner Healing and Deliverance

Basic discipleship enables us to prune the bad fruit off of our spiritual tree by calling on Jesus in any moment of need. Inner healing and deliverance are needed to pull out our deeply buried root issues. We all have them. They are unresolved stuff still stuck in us that produce bumper crops of bad attitudes and actions. As the saying goes, "Where's there's fruit, there's a root." The great thing is that once you deal with the root, a lot a bad fruit goes away.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit." John 15:1-2 ESV

Issues Rooted in the Past

Inner healing and deliverance pick up where [Basic Discipleship](#) leaves off. In a sense we go below ground to get at the root issues causing spiritual problems (sins) or emotional pain (wounds). Where basic discipleship is about pruning away the bad fruit that shows up on your spiritual tree in present moments, Inner healing goes after the past issues where deeply buried roots feed the rotten fruit on the surface. See this truth illustrated as "[Fruit and Roots](#)."

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled. Hebrews 12:15 ESV

Before we start it needs to be said that this article is in no way intended to be a "training manual" for doing deep works of Inner Healing or deliverance as a lone wolf. It takes being a part of a team. It takes being mentored by others. It takes a good deal of time invested in training. The disciples spent three years with Jesus, watching how He did what He did, listening to all His messages and getting their questions answered by the Master. Then He left them to it as a Body of believers. Don't try this on your own! Remember the sad case of the seven sons of Sceva who fled "naked and bruised" when a deliverance session went south.

That being said there are entry levels to inner healing that any Christian can do which will help others find healing for some (not all) of the issues that trouble them. That's the work of The Keys (See [Prayer Ministry](#)).

For now, however, let's content ourselves with understanding the basics. Jesus said that if we would continue in His word, we would know the truth and the truth would make us free. Being "made free" by learning the truth is a process, but it is also a battle.



So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
John 8:31-32 ESV

As we fight the good fight of faith to believe that God's truth really is the truth, then healing goes forward. Emotional and spiritual healing is a truth encounter far more than it is a power encounter. Although demons can and must be driven out by the power of Jesus' Name, spiritual darkness is first and foremost a lie. Believing lies gives darkness its power. As Rolland Baker says, "It was untruth that broke the world. God is using truth to mend it."

Inner healing is essentially replacing the lies of the enemy with truths from Jesus. Whenever this is successfully accomplished, evil spirits lose their right to remain. Doing deliverance is almost always feather light whenever inner healing has gone before it. Sometimes, however, deliverance has to come first, because the person is so tormented that they cannot process truth sufficiently to work on their inner life. These can be knock-down, drag-out sessions and if you're not fully equipped and covered in prayer, you just might be the one knocked down! Know your limits. Once the spirits are cast out, inner healing should be ministered so that the person can be fully "on board" with whatever they will need to do to stay free in the future.

Glossary of Terms

1) Issues, Wounds and Scars

Issues are the bumps, bruises and scrapes of the emotional life which we shoved down and never really released at the time they happened. Everyone has them and they can usually be easily mended by The Keys. Issues are memories of people or events that come bobbing up to the surface like tissues in a box. Like tissues they can be dealt with one at a time—pull it all the way up and out and give it to God. **Just** know that other issues are sure to appear!

Wounds, on the other hand, are issues that carried us deeper into [Emotional Trauma](#) at the time the event occurred. The pain is still intensely active. Wounds are usually infected with lies that the enemy sowed into them and were further complicated by our own ungodly reactions. Nevertheless, they can be completely healed. It just takes more time, attention and determination to fully cleanse the wound and see it healed.

Scars are healed wounds. Simple issues don't leave scars, but wounds do. We can be so completely mended that there is no pain left in the memory, yet we have been marked by what we passed through. Wear your scars as a badge of honor. You not only survived an attack of the enemy, you have gained wisdom, an enlarged heart and a living testimony of the Lord's ability to heal deep wounds. That's a tremendous encouragement to others.

2) [Spiritual Strongholds](#)

These are un-surrendered, un-healed or un-crucified areas of the old nature embedded in our flesh. Whenever we are touched by people or events in a certain way the stronghold springs to life. The negative emotion it represents gets a strong hold on us, making it extremely difficult to break free before our inward thoughts or feelings become words and actions we will regret later.

Strongholds are habit patterns of thought and belief that have become ingrained in us by past repetitions. We've always reacted that way! Now, that the Lord is calling for a different response, the stronghold tries to jump in first and block the way, often without any conscious decision on our part. Strong, but wrong, emotional reactions have to be carried as captives to Christ. Then the inner lie that they are built upon can be held up to the light of His truth and renounced.

3) Ministering the Three Keys

Jesus promised that He would give us the "[Keys of the Kingdom](#)" to all who, like Peter, apprehend by faith who He really is. There are many keys that Jesus gives us which work to unlock our destiny, release the supernatural workings of the Spirit, or lead to fruitfulness in service. These three keys unlock the heart.

The first key is getting really, really good at receiving His forgiveness, so good that there is no shame or blame, regret, guilt, or condemnation left in any of our memories of past sin and sinfulness. That's true freedom!

The second key is turning right around and setting free everyone who has ever done anything against you or your loved ones by forgiving them fully from the heart. Once done, there is no pain left in the memory. What an incentive!

The third key is believing God's truth, especially the truth of His promises, so fully that there is no anxiety or despair left in you, only peace, freedom and joy. That really frees your heart to soar like an eagle! These keys are a vital part of Basic Discipleship. We need to use them on every present moment that triggers any negative emotional response in us. But they also work splendidly on issues rooted in the past. You can't do Inner Healing without them. They are at the core of what is needed to free us from pain and bondage coming from either the present or the past.

4) [Inner Vows](#)

These are the misguided attempts people make to deal with the pain or injustice they experienced, usually in childhood. The son of an alcoholic father may vow, "I will never be like my dad!" only to discover later on that the pattern is thoroughly entrenched. In trying to break generational sin patterns or correct our own behavior, we inadvertently put the weight of transformation on our own shoulders. Here, the problem is not so much getting free of inner vows and the bitter judgments that go with them, as in remembering them or recognizing them for what they are. Once identified, they can be fairly easily renounced and broken. Until then, they are a secret source of stronghold power working against true liberty of spirit.

5) Ungodly Beliefs

At the heart of our [Negative Emotions](#) are ungodly beliefs engendering them. Why does anyone want to curse out someone who hurt their feelings? Because sometime in the past they began deeply believing that it is the right way to handle that kind of situation. Why does anyone crave a substance? Because there is a tenaciously held belief that that the fix is going to do them some good. It may be that an evil spirit is pressing its own twisted emotions on us at times, forcing us feel what it feels, but if we cling to a right belief we can resist any wrong feeling until it leaves.

Ungodly beliefs compromise our ability to discern right from wrong. They feed negative emotions and weaken our ability to resist temptations from the enemy. Ungodly beliefs form the core of any stronghold. These must be carried as captives to Christ, repented of and renounced, breaking all agreements with the enemy. Then the truth can be confessed and believed to the liberation of the new emotional responses the Holy Spirit brings.

6) Healing of Memories

Nothing can change the past. Nothing needs to change our memories of it, if what we are remembering actually happened. What brings healing is to let our memories become infused with heaven's perspective, so that the painful way we had been remembering something is expanded by greater truths we were unaware of at the time. In this way "death is swallowed up in victory." For instance, a person may have been traumatized thinking that they were abandoned by their family or friends at a time when the enemy did his best to destroy them. Let the perspective radically shift. See by faith that the invisible God was doing His best to protect life, even when the enemy was doing his worst. They were never abandoned; otherwise they would be dead! This shift is by no means easy to accomplish, but when it happens the memory tells an entirely different story: We are survivors; we are loved; we are saved—even when we were most vulnerable—because our loving Father chose to rescue us.

Memories can be healed just as ungodly beliefs are healed by renouncing the lying message ("No one cared!") and choosing to believe the truth ("God was with me!"). This way of healing memories works like a champ, but only if the person has a muscular faith and well-exercised prayer life of their own. As a mercy to our weakness, the Lord provides a second way of healing memories—by entering into them Himself and bringing a perspective that shifts both mind and heart. This is not guided imagery, nor should it ever be taken in that direction. We are not telling the Lord what to do or trying to make the individual see what we think they should see. The truth is that Jesus really was there *then* and He is here *now*. What would He have liked to show you or do for you, if you had eyes to see Him back then? There is no guarantee that Jesus will show up in the person's memory, but if He does, the painful event is always transformed by something He reveals.

7) Curses and [Generational Sin](#)

Generational sins are the primary impact of the curse of the Law upon the average person, until they reach an age where their own wrong choices and consequences catch up with them. Every family has its flaws: Certainly no one is perfect at not sinning, or even perfect at repenting. So, family systems pass on a pattern of sins from one generation to another, until someone rises up who says, "It ends here!" It is easy to see the flaw, especially if it has deeply wounded you, but what's needed is the compassion to plead mercy, grace and forgiveness over the ones who brought the curse into your life. Then repentance for the whole family line, pleading the Blood of Jesus and declaring the curse to be broken—nailed to the cross—will bring deliverance, if they are combined with a steely determination to put that sin to death in your own life. Let us take our stand with mighty Joshua who declared, "As for me and my house, we will follow the Lord."

Breaking curses off a person that have been placed on them by another, follows a similar pattern and is relatively simple. However, breaking the deep curse of [occult Involvement](#) requires taking things to a greater level of intensity, especially if the bondage or emotional destruction was severe. In such cases every aspect of Inner Healing and deliverance will be required. As described in scripture the occult encompasses four main categories: the worship of

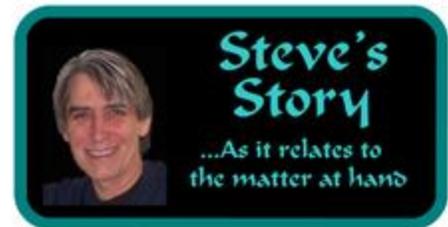
false gods (idol worship; false religions), forbidden ways of seeking knowledge of the future (astrology, fortune telling), forbidden contact with the dead (séances, mediums), and forbidden ways of seeking to access spiritual power (witchcraft, sorcery). Freedom is real, but so are the powers of darkness. Never enter into this lightly!

8) Deliverance from Oppression

Evil Spirits come in all shapes and sizes. They also have different assignments and personalities. Scripture speaks of spirits of fear, lying spirits, a spirit of jealousy, and a spirit of heaviness, among others. It just may be that every sin mentioned in scripture has an evil spirit assigned to inflict that sin upon us. However, our negative emotions are not the same thing as evil spirits, any more than symptoms of physical sickness are. Nevertheless, the dark kingdom stands somehow behind the flare ups of disease in our bodies and the dis-ease in our souls.

Whenever we give ground to the enemy, emotional strongholds can be formed by our agreements with ungodly beliefs that match his own demented perspective. Let those strongholds grow unchecked and a tipping point may be reached where an evil spirit begins oppressing us.

Whenever that happens, a spirit of fear (for instance) can throw us into a panic attack or hammer us with anxiety anytime it wants to—because we have lost the ability to discern the danger and resist its pressure. Inner Healing can undercut the power of any evil spirit, leaving it no ground to stand upon, if the person is able to cooperate. If not deliverance can bring freedom, but Inner Healing will still be needed to maintain it.



9) Deliverance from Possession

You're not ready for this, so don't even think about it. Probably no one is. It is only by the grace of God that some can minister freedom to those who are this deeply bound to darkness. Fortunately, it is extremely rare, compared to all the other problems that people have. Possession simply means that an evil spirit is in such complete control ("possession") of the person that they vanish from sight—all you see and hear is coming directly from the enemy. There is a debate going on about whether Christians can actually be possessed by the enemy, since we are the Lord's possession. The truth is that Christians can be so oppressed that the enemy can manifest directly through them. They may not be fully possessed in the same way that an unbeliever might be, but when manifestations are going on there is virtually no visible difference.

Let the caution be repeated: Having head knowledge of these terms and a zeal to be about it, does not qualify anyone for doing ministry at this level. You will certainly do more harm than good, if you do not submit to being trained by others who have gained practical experience and have the wisdom and patience to work with you. Pioneers are needed in every field to open up new territory when no one has gone before. Those pioneers have already come and opened this field in the preceding decades. The rest of us have been learning from them or from their books. Once you get trained, let's hope that on-the-job training will take you further than the pioneers went, but don't presume you can outdistance them without studying them first. Take time to enjoy the adventure of learning!

CHAPTER EIGHT

Leading Prayer Ministry

This is only one of many ways of doing prayer ministry, but it has been highly effective. The great thing in [The Care of Souls](#), as in medical practice, is to make sure you do more good than harm. This method—the ministry of The Keys—has led to many happy outcomes and it is frequently needed, for it deals with the common colds of the spiritual life. It has its limits, but it is a great, safe way of getting started.

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:19 ESV

The Keys to Freedom

This is a ministry of [the keys to freedom](#). It is primarily about helping people to get emotional and spiritual release and freedom from issues that they are already aware of struggling with. This is not about doing deliverance or going deeply into a person’s inner depths. You can do a lot of damage that way.

Stick to the three keys, especially in the beginning. They will bring a great deal of immediate relief and launch them into a healing journey that they will be able to maintain themselves.

Know your limits: There are always some people you simply aren’t equipped enough to minister to (yet). If you are serious about pursuing this, it would be a good idea to take our free online [eCourse for Healing](#) just to make sure that you understand the ways the Lord heals us emotionally, and can recognize emotional strongholds and help people overcome them.



CAUTION: If your church already has ministry teams, join them. These lessons may complement, confirm or enhance what you will be learning from them. The best way to learn ministry is always from people who are already doing it successfully. Do not, therefore, go off on your own, if the Lord has already set before you leaders who can teach you. These online articles are solely for the purpose of giving elementary instruction to those of you who have no one reasonably nearby to learn from—and you honestly believe the Lord is calling you to get involved. In that case the best you can do is learn what you can by written word, pray and proceed with caution, walking humbly with your God.



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The keys to freedom include but are not limited to these three: receiving forgiveness, releasing forgiveness, believing truth (the restoration promises of God).

1) Receiving Forgiveness

Just because a person has received faith in Jesus and has prayed for their sins to be forgiven, doesn't mean that they have fully benefited from the gift that they have received. Wherever there is guilt or shame, regret or self-blame, a fear of God's displeasure, or anxieties about their salvation, there is an obvious need for this key. It may have to be combined with the other keys, since any unforgiveness can easily block the grace needed to fully receive God's mercy. Likewise, any unbelief regarding the promises of God concerning His loving, gracious nature and His willingness and ability to bring restoration, also can block the effective use of this key.

2) Releasing Forgiveness

This key is vital to our growth in the spiritual life. There can be no freedom or healing if a person holds on to bitter judgments against God, self or others. People often need a lot of coaching and some word for word leading to cross this hurdle once they have become ready. That we have to "fully forgive" everyone for anything is clearly stated in scripture and well-known, if too-seldom obeyed. But we also must forgive ourselves just as fully and freely as God does. Ironically, once a person truly forgives and accepts themselves at a depth level (for the sinner that they are apart from Christ), then it becomes much easier for them to give the same mercy to others. Often missed is how we need to "forgive" God. The Lord never sins or makes a mistake, but in our heart of hearts we often blame Him for what He allows. This is technically, not forgiving God (He is innocent), but releasing Him from our own bitter judgments.

3) Believing Truth

All Christians are believers, but that doesn't mean that any of us are automatically and forever free of unbelief. Unbelief is a central component of discouragement, despair and depression. It inflames every fear and anxiety. It gives rise to every sinful attitude. If we believed the truths of God with a full heart of faith we would all be singing with the angels, no matter what has happened to us or to our loved ones. It only takes a little unbelief to block a whole lot of faith. The primary truth we encourage everyone needing emotional healing to fully and absolutely believe is Romans 8:28: "We know all things work together for good for those who love God."

A Model Session

This model assumes that a good deal of instruction in basic issues of inner healing has come first, including the three keys. Without generous preparation much teaching will have to happen during the session. With sufficient prior teaching, the individual will come in far more willing and able to cooperate. Our model in the past provided up to 40 hours of group teaching sessions, many of which included group ministry sessions. A lot of healing and deliverance happened both during the lessons (as the lights went on) and during the group ministry times (as the issues were dealt with *en masse*). At the end of it all would come the individual ministry times,



usually of only ½ to one hour in duration. It is easy to pull weeds (issues) after so much good rain!

Since the heart remains broken wherever hurt or loss is still felt in the memory, the person's sense of pain can be a reliable guide to where the break occurred. Only Jesus can heal the broken heart, but prayers of repentance and reconciliation are necessary for Him to be able to do His work. So, cast your cares on Him and get your heart ready, because the session is about to start.

- Introduce yourself and your prayer partner(s)
- Pray to open the session.
- There are two questions to ask which will help them get focused. It is OK to start with where they are at present (the bad fruit they are dealing with), but always be looking for the roots (the issues that are lodged further back in the past). Part of the problem people have in getting free is too much focus on present problems and too little willingness to pull up and look at the painful issues that they have buried. We want to help them resolve some of those buried issues with the help of the three keys.

1) Where are you stuck? What key issue(s) are you still struggling with?

2) Where does it still hurt?

- If they are not sure, begin with their earliest relationships and earliest memories. Go over their relationship with father and mother, then other close family members as they were growing up. It saves time if you have had them fill out a brief confidential ministry form which you can review before the session.
- Do not allow rambling on. Sometimes people start talking about a loved one's problems, or their own self-pity may divert and derail the real issues. Remind them, that this time is for them and their issues. You are not looking for everything, but for one or two crucial areas where their heart was broken. Once you have a sense of the source of their pain you are ready to begin prayers. You can't get to it all, nor do you need to. Stay focused.
- Take the pain and apply the keys of the kingdom once you ask them, "Are you willing to pray/forgive/confess/believe?" (whichever is needed).

1. Repent (of any sins, ie. agreements with the enemy) and receive forgiveness.

2. Repent (of the sin of un-forgiveness towards God, self or others) and release forgiveness.

3. Repent (of any unbelief, especially in the promises of restoration) and choose to believe God's truth as it applies.

- Most people will need you to lead them out loud and word for word in how to pray. See [How to Forgive](#) for 10 steps to lead people through in releasing forgiveness. When the prayers are completed, rebuke any spirits you discern, and then pray for God to heal the broken heart. Ask Jesus to speak to them His words of comfort and guidance now and in the days ahead.



- Allow time for the Lord to speak. Ask what they have heard (if anything). It is not necessary that they hear a word from the Lord, but it is something to celebrate with them if they do. Many people are so wounded or poorly equipped that they don't know how to recognize the way the Lord speaks, so don't dwell on this if they can't.
- Remind them to "walk it out." The enemy is certain to come around tempting them to fall back into their former heart attitudes. They need to be on guard against this, resist him when it happens, and trust that the Lord will ultimately use such attacks to deepen their freedom.
- Close with prayers of thanksgiving and infilling. Make sure they have come to at least a measure of peace and release before closing. Sometimes you cannot get a point of pain healed, but you can always pray for the Lord to close the wound and heal it in the future.

Tread Lightly!

What if the person refuses to repent? Here is a suggestion. Ask them: *In your ignorance, you sinned. In their ignorance, they sinned against you. Are you willing to forgive? If not, are you willing to confess that as sin?*

Let the Holy Spirit convict—do not force recognition of a sin upon them. If they will not take steps to forgive, gently speak to them about the necessity of forgiveness and let them know that you cannot effectively minister beyond that point. Ask if they will at least pray "Lord, help me want to want to forgive them" as an invitation to God to begin working with their hearts.

As you can see the ministry of inner healing is primarily a ministry of helping people discover where they need to repent and then helping them do it by the use of the three keys. What did we expect? Sin is unhealthy! It locks us out of the very place of freedom from pain and freedom for joy that we want to get into. That's why these kingdom keys are so effective: They enable us to "repent for the kingdom of God is at hand." Jesus knew we would need them.



CHAPTER NINE

Values and Guidelines

Thanks to the ministry of inner healing and deliverance, there are countless thousands, perhaps millions, of Christians who have been marvelously healed and set free. Sadly, there are also others who have been thrown deeper into bondage and pain, because the enemy was able to use over-zealous and under-trained ministers to cause damage. When the footing is potentially treacherous, it is always best to slow down, walk carefully and pray a lot! Let these values and guidelines give you balance and show the way to mend old wounds without causing new ones.

It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 2 Thessalonians 3:9-10 ESV

A Good Example

We all benefit from a good example. Paul lived his beliefs out before the eyes of everyone in the churches he planted, intentionally giving them an example to imitate. Consider how this helped them. By Paul's teaching they knew (for instance) that Jesus had given them the Golden Rule to follow, but they never had the chance to see Jesus during His lifetime. How should they apply it? In Paul himself these new converts could see that rule fleshed out in countless ways.

These are values and guidelines learned from the teaching and example of many leaders in the field of Christian ministry. For those of us who have been mentored by the direct example of a great leader, the image is impressed on one's heart. Such a person need only consider, "How would my mentor have handled this?" and the right thoughts spring instantly to mind. For the rest of us, learning by their stated values and guidelines will do just as well, if we take them to heart.



Go over these two lists slowly and prayerfully. Take time to really think them through. See how they would apply in your own life and ministry. Then thank God that you can learn from a good example and not have to find these things out for yourself the hard way.

Values Surrounding Ministry

- **If you want to disciple others**, you must be a disciple yourself. That means keeping the Big Five (Bible, prayer, worship, fellowship and service) in good working order in your life, so that you are doing your level best to trust Jesus, deny yourself, and follow Him daily.



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- **If you want God to use you to help others get free of sin**, you have to be dedicated to repenting of and resisting sin in your own life as the Holy Spirit shows you. No compromise!
- **If you want God to use you to bring emotional healing to others**, you have to let Him into all of your wounds. You don't have to be fully healed (or none of us could have started), but you should be more healed than wounded (otherwise your wounds will get in the way).
- **Maintaining good relationships** is essential to ministry and to life. Keep short accounts with others. Do all in your power to be at peace with them.
- **Mutual love includes** respect and submission, intimacy and accountability. This means being connected to the Body of Christ in some meaningful way through a church or a home fellowship and allowing those relationships to test and grow you.
- **Agape love allows** the other person to be free to be themselves. No one likes being badgered by a controlling person, a fault finder or a busy body—for good reason: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.”
- **Never mistake the shadow side** for the person who cast it. Try to see everyone as a new creation deep down (if they are Christians) or in potential (if they are unbelievers). Practice separating people from their sins in the way you see them--just as Jesus does.
- **Confidentiality acts as a covering** to one another and guards each one's dignity. Wounded people are sensitive to any words that expose their “nakedness.” Whenever the Lord allows you to see their vulnerability, pain or shame, it is a sacred trust. Never violate it.
- **Speak about others only** in a way you wouldn't mind being overheard by them. This eliminates both spreading gossip and sowing division.
- **Don't go around saying** “so and so has a spirit of ____.” Who does that help? That's just your guess. You don't know that as a fact unless God has given you vision into the invisible realm and if He has, save it for a time of ministry. Otherwise, you would be doing the work of “the Accuser of the brethren” for him.
- **Don't speak ill** of Christian leaders, churches, or denominations. Honor His Bride. Always remember that Jesus loves His church and that the church is first and foremost His people, but it also includes those institutional bodies He has been working with for two millennia. If the organized church looks like a mess to you, what does that tell you about how you view His leadership over it?
- **Speaking the truth in love**, revealing the hurt of our heart, releasing forgiveness and entering into God's rest (by believing a promise of His over the situation that concerns you) really do usher in God's way of bringing change. Be patient, keep the faith, stay within these boundaries and you will see genuine transformations happen by the Hand of the Lord.
- **Only friendship and leadership** convey the privilege of giving words of correction. Don't presume that you have a right to tell others what you think about them, or their behavior. Just think how many people Jesus could have spoken to about their sins, but didn't. (The answer is everyone He met.)
- **No one has to be perfect**, just willing to try to stay within the proper boundaries while they are growing. Perfection is our unachievable goal. We will never be perfect this side of heaven, but we are dedicated to seeking it, because we are dedicated to seeking Him. We want to be as close to Him as possible and as like Him as possible. That's our burning desire!
- **There is plenty of room for failure**, trial and error, and issues undergoing repair. Be honest, open and transparent and you will always find grace. Mercy and love “cover a multitude of sins,” but not a single excuse!



- **A teachable attitude**, a yielded heart, a surrendered spirit are greatly to be prized. With them we will find grace to keep learning and growing. Without them we may fall by the wayside and not even know it.

Guidelines During Ministry

- **Minister in pairs with one in the lead.** Jesus sent the disciples two by two. Paul always took someone along on his missionary journeys. Married couples can be especially effective as a ministering team. Having a “partner” provides balance, the strength of mutual encouragement, and additional insight.
- **Avoid one-on-one ministry with a person of the opposite sex.** We would prefer that ministry be men with men and women with women and seldom if ever be only men ministering to a woman or only women ministering to a man. If it needs to happen, see that you find a place where others are around. Watch out for unwise patterns developing in your behavior! Any secret desire to minister to someone of the opposite sex should be taken as a warning sign that the enemy is toying with your heart.
- **We minister the gospel**—we do not give counsel, advice and direction, or make decisions for others. That is the Holy Spirit’s job. Consider this: You can’t even give consistently good advice and direction to yourself without the Holy Spirit helping you. We certainly can’t take His place in other lives, no matter how tempting it seems.
- **We point to the scriptures** that seem to speak to the situation, give encouragement, share our testimonies, offer our observations, suggest things to consider, pray issues through, bless and love, bless and love.
- **If anyone**—team member or attendee—receives a prophetic revelation, let it be brought to the leadership in private to be judged by them whether it is to be shared with others.
- **Be careful how and where you touch people** as you minister to them. Some wounded people draw back at even the slightest touch. Always ask permission first, before laying on hands in prayer. Be aware that when praying for the opposite sex hands should not be placed lower than the shoulders. Ask a prayer partner of the same sex as the prayee to be the one to give an embrace, if it seems to be needed for the sake of ministry and would be welcomed.
- **We pray with our eyes open** so that we can observe what is going on with the person who is being ministered to. You will want to see how the Lord is moving upon them, or if the enemy is manifesting. Encourage them to simply relax, receive and focus on the Lord. If they begin praying in tongues, gently ask them to remain quiet instead.
- **We do not speak in tongues out loud.** People are coming to meet the Healer, not the Baptizer. If you feel led to pray in tongues, do so quietly within yourself.
- **We do not do guided visualizations** or tell Jesus what to do in anyone’s memory.
- **We never try to recover lost memories.** That is something no one can rightly interpret or judge, since none of us were there. The Lord says that only He can search out the hidden mysteries of the heart—don’t presume that you can. Many people have been unjustly slandered by this practice. Ordinary remembrances during ministry don’t bring sweeping reversals of life events. Such memories you can work with. Beyond this you are getting in over your head. Have the good sense to admit your ignorance and close with prayer.
- **Don’t diagnose** their physical or psychological problems. You are not their doctor or psychiatrist. Don’t undermine their relationship with theirs.
- **We never tell the person to stop taking medicines** or medical treatment. If they have truly been healed, their doctor will want to get them off the medicine.



- **We do not pronounce the person healed** or guarantee that they will be healed, no matter how strongly we may believe that it is coming. We hold out hope and encourage their hope. Let the Lord prove His work in His time.
- **Draw the person into recognition for themselves** concerning the area you see as the potential blockage or bondage which needs ministry. Remind them of teachings they have received during teaching time, but do not accuse them of “having a spirit of _____.” Ask the person if it would be OK to deal with or to pray for such and such. See if they have a witness of their own, before beginning.
- **Be sensitive and gentle.** Don't pressure people to repent. Each person has to be ready to acknowledge and confess by their own recognition of sin as the Spirit turns on the lights within them. Some just won't be able to see it, but give them the benefit of the doubt. They are here because they want to be free. Let's not hold their blindness against them.
- **Do not allow your own emotional hurts** to become part of ministry by going into your entire story. Using the good that came out of your testimony may be helpful, but be brief and to the point. Keep the focus on the person you are ministering to, not yourself.
- **Don't show your insecurities.** We all receive better if the person doing ministry with us is confident, peaceful and at rest. Remind yourself that you are only the vessel—Jesus is the true Healer present and to Him belongs the glory. It's not about you and what you can do. It's about Him and what He *may* do through you. Let your sense of inadequacy draw you into trust and dependence on Him.
- **Don't be legalistic—God isn't.** Flow with the Spirit. The Lord will leave out some things you thought necessary and bring in other things you wouldn't have imagined, if you let Him stay in the lead. Jesus sees the hearts of all involved. He is working even when we don't feel it or see it. Sometimes the best thing to come out of a session isn't something anyone noticed at the time.
- **Relax.** Know that the person's healing and progress in the Lord does not depend upon you. Let the weight of the concern for the ministry time truly fall on Him. You are not their only hope—Jesus is. Even if the ministry time doesn't go as well as you hoped or as far as you desired, remember that Jesus will still be with them. Pray every sense of lack or failure back into to His Hands.
- **Honor the confidentiality** of what you see or hear. Carefully guard their identities and issues. Beware of wanting to boast about a good session later and you won't fall so low when the not so good ones happen!

CAUTION: If your church already has ministry teams, join them. These lessons may complement, confirm or enhance what you will be learning from them. The best way to learn ministry is always from people who are already doing it successfully. Do not, therefore, go off on your own, if the Lord has already set before you leaders who can teach you. These online articles are solely for the purpose of giving elementary instruction to those of you who have no one reasonably nearby to learn from—and you honestly believe the Lord is calling you to get involved. In that case the best you can do is learn what you can by written word, pray and proceed with caution, walking humbly with your God.

The Highest Value

Now that's a lot of things to remember! If you focus too much on specific rules you'll run the risk of being tripped up by guidelines, rather than helped by them. Genuine Christianity isn't about rule keeping anyway. It's about trusting and following the One who created the rules and who



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Himself keeps all of them by an effortless grace. If we yield ourselves to His leadership, His Spirit will lift and lead us into doing the right thing at the right time. Besides, it's well known that Jesus simplified all of the rules into one: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The Golden Rule is the rule of spiritual friendship. With every person we meet in ministry, we are being given an opportunity to make a friend for all eternity. Such friendship is our highest value, because it is also His.

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. John 15:15-17

Seen in this light the Golden Rule positively shines through all the values and guidelines of this chapter. We give them to you as a way of fleshing out that prime directive with specific applications. As you read through them, your heart agreement with them actually gives the Holy Spirit permission to bring them to your remembrance as situations arise. Those little nudges, if we are being attentive, are what keep the ministry on track—one further example of why we can't do Christian ministry without the Holy Spirit helping us. Fortunately, we don't have to. He is always right there inside of us, ready to power us up from within and right there above us, ready to bring heaven down when we call. May your adventure in ministry be one of growing an ever-greater love for God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and that sea of lost, hurting humanity surrounding you.

***You have been chosen.
Now, go and bear much fruit!***



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