

NEXT

LEVEL LEADERSHIP

GROW A **HEALTHY**
Church

You & Your Life # 1

Reading Material

MAXIMISE THIS MODULE

READ

Spend time reading and contemplating the content in this module.

REFLECT

Engage with the learning exercises while analysing your own practices.

CHANGE

Work with your pastor to enact change in your life and church.

4 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. How to step back and see the bigger picture of God's ways and processes in your journey.
2. A holistic approach to serving.
3. How to establish and maintain an up-to-date walk with Christ.
4. Discover your current level of emotional energy.

STEP BACK TO SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

How to step back and see the bigger picture of God's ways and processes in your journey.

Prevailing churches are built by leaders who have navigated the problematic waters of serving in the 21st century and have prevailed.

Leaders who have endured through success and failure; betrayal and love; growth and decline; provision and lack; health and illness; temptation and inducements; simplicity and complexity; clear sailing and stormy seas.

Prevailing leaders have acquired a persevering spirit and a courageous heart, but even more importantly an ability to step back and see the bigger picture of God's ways and processes in their journey as a prevailing leader of Christ.

As a leader you will often find yourself caught up in the day-to-day responsibilities and pressures that confront you on a regular basis. The very real pressure to perform and be fruitful can be overwhelming. The juggle between being and doing can weigh heavily upon your heart. Not to mention the genuine needs of people and the immense expectations of others.

However, if you become driven by and focussed solely by performance and the varied pressures of serving it will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on you and your walk with Christ.

Your joy will dissipate and serving will become a grinding chore instead of a passion.

God's work will not be advanced because His work in you will be diminished.

While your responsibilities and pressures are unavoidable, they are manageable if you take the time to:

- step back
- survey the bigger picture, and
- reflect on God's work in you.

As you do, you will begin to see the overarching purpose of God and the particular ways He utilises to get you to this stage of your journey and to your ultimate destination.

*The way I was
doing the work
of God was
destroying
God's work in
me.*

Bill Hybels

THE MAKING OF A LEADER

Dr Robert J. Clinton analysed the lives of hundreds of historical, Biblical and contemporary leaders and in his book, [The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development](#), he outlined the five phases God uses to grow a leader.

A clear understanding of these phases will enable you to see the bigger picture of God's purpose and ways. This will in turn help you to better manage the complexities of contemporary church life and partner with the work of God in your life.

This understanding will also remind you that serving is both a marathon and a sprint. It demands both perseverance and stamina as well as bursts of energy that propel you into new arenas. The demands of the race will overwhelm if you do not place your journey's bigger picture firmly and squarely on your horizon.

THE FIVE PHASES OF LEADERSHIP

God has designed you for longevity, for long term fruitfulness. He has little interest in shooting stars that shine brightly but burn out quickly. Clinton's five phases of leadership will help you see the bigger picture of God's purpose and help build longevity.

PHASE 1 SOVEREIGN FOUNDATIONS

God sovereignly determines your genealogy, family of origin, personality, innate gifts, calling, place of birth and upbringing and the experiences of your early years.

Step back and see the bigger picture by:

- contemplating these foundations
- receiving them as gifts from a sovereign God
- resolving any uncertainties and regrets you have about your upbringing and the circumstances of your formative years
- accepting the unique gifts and personality God has given you

While your goal as a lifelong learner is continuous improvement, you should never embark on a makeover of what God has sovereignly chosen for you.

This stepping back process of embracing God's sovereign choices will help you escape the clutches of comparison that can plague your mind.

It's worth noting that when Peter asked Jesus about John's fate, Jesus replied with a probing question, "What is that to you? You must follow me", John 21:18-22. Jesus didn't want Peter running down comparison alley. It's a dead end.

Embrace your sovereign foundations as unique and appropriate and you will avoid the empty comparison game too many people play.

PHASE 2 INNER-LIFE GROWTH

In the early years of a leader's development Christ focuses on the development of integrity.

There are obedience tests and integrity checks as the Lord observes and increases the depth of your character.

During this formative phase a leader grows in their walk with Christ. A life of prayer is formed. The Scriptures are studied and loved. Submission to experienced leaders is fostered. Reliability, honesty and faithfulness are tested and honed. Temptation is conquered. Mentors challenge and equip.

*Character is
what a man is
in the dark.*

D L Moody

The primary purpose of this phase is to build an immovable foundation of integrity that will guarantee longevity.

Why? Without integrity you cannot have a fruitful ministry because proven character underpins all service and leadership endeavours.

Step back and see again the potent power of integrity and its central role in your service.

PHASE 3 MINISTRY MATURING

In this phase the leader fulfils potential as they grow in their gifts and capacity. They develop their leadership skills as they learn how to cast vision, galvanising and mobilising others towards mission fulfilment. Skills are honed as the leader learns how to be effective with various skill sets.

They grow people skills and develop the necessary abilities to handle a variety of problematic situations.

Tenacity is fostered as they persevere through obstacles and overcome disheartening setbacks including rejection and betrayal.

Maturity is forged as spiritual battles are won and faith is operated.

Step back and reflect on past and current defining moments and formative experiences that Christ uses to make you a leader

PHASE 4 LIFE MATURING

A leader not only matures through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and the processes of service, they also grow through life experiences. As you walk through countless joys and challenges in life you will come to understand truth through experience and not just cognitive reasoning.

You will become wise
through defining
moments and formative
experiences

These experiences will include the good and bad of life. Financial pressures, the ups and downs of marital life, raising a family, health battles, travel, friendships, spiritual encounters and much more.

Some will be heart breaking while others will endure as memorable highlights. The stories that will emerge from your journey will become part of you and who you are as a person and as a servant of

Christ.

Step back and see the bigger picture. Discover why God has taken you through certain tailor made formative experiences and life changing defining moments as He has formed you into a prevailing leader.

5 CONVERGENCE

Convergence occurs when a leader enters their 50s and beyond. They emerge from their many and varied experiences into a place of influence and hard won respect. People observe the fruit of their ways and enjoy their story filled wisdom.

While you may be currently immersed in the midst of a bruising battle, God envisages the day of convergence when your journey will be the means to inspire faith and courage in others. He sees the polished skills and wise reflections being utilised in settings you have not yet envisaged. There is method in this madness!

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM STEPPING BACK

As you step back and see the bigger picture of God's purposes and ways throughout your journey it will help you to:

- 🎯 relax in your current season
- 🎯 focus on longevity as well as the now
- 🎯 reject comparisons with others
- 🎯 lower the pressure to perform
- 🎯 see that character matters more than gift
- 🎯 embrace hardship as well as success
- 🎯 look forward to days of convergence when your effectiveness will be maximised.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Develop a holistic
approach to serving.

Here are two irrefutable truths: Christ has decided to use assigned leaders to be the spiritual leaders of His church. When those leaders are healthy they will build healthy churches.

However, we'd be mistaken to think that spiritual health is the main and only focus when considering the health of leaders.

It is far better to take a holistic approach to your leadership life because you cannot separate your family life from your leadership life nor your emotional world from your physical

world.

Have you ever lost your physical health to crippling pain or disease?







Have you ever suffered with a prolonged bout of depression?

Have financial pressures overwhelmed you and your family?

Have you ever lost your passion for spirituality?

If so, you would clearly understand that we are whole people and our entire life is impacted by the health of various elements.

Taking a holistic approach to your life means looking at all these elements and understanding their impact upon one another:

-  Spiritual
-  Emotional
-  Physical
-  Financial
-  Relational
-  Mental

YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

How to establish and maintain an up-to-date walk with Christ.

An up-to-date walk with Christ is your spiritual foundation. This walk must begin with a vibrant prayer life and regular meditation upon God's Word.

VIBRANT PRAYER LIFE

Healthy leaders obey Christ's admonition to "go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father" Matt. 6:6. They seek solitude with Christ so as to focus their full attention on Him.

In his book [Too Busy Not to Pray: Slowing Down to Be With God](#) Bill Hybels takes a realistic look at prayer. He tackles perplexing topics such as unanswered prayer as well as the mechanics of an effective prayer life. He outlines a simple yet helpful strategy that he utilises in his prayer life which is the age old acronym ACTS.

ACTS stands for:

Adoration = worship. The Psalms are a helpful device to stimulate the worship element in prayer. Also playing worship music can help create a worshipful atmosphere during your devotional time.

Confession of sin = regularly search your heart and confess sin, allowing repentance to do a full work in you.

Thanksgiving = prayers of gratitude help centre your heart upon Christ and His goodness.

Supplication = prayer involves interceding and making specific requests for your family, friends, leaders, departments, special projects and overall mission. Using [Evernote \(affiliate link\)](#) or a journal can help you keep track of specific items and special prayer requests.

Prayer tracks like ACTS are helpful. You may want to use this one or try the Lord's Prayer or one of Paul's prayers in Ephesians. Either way you will find that the movement in these prayer tracks will help keep you actively engaged with the different primary elements of prayer.

Hybels also encourages us to pray big, to move in on our immovable mountains. He challenges us to focus on God as our mountain mover. This is a vital element of a leader's prayer life as we seek to access God's ability to act on our behalf.

Hybels also emphasises the need to slow down, go offline and learn to listen to God in prayer. Leaders need to spend time actively waiting in the presence of the Lord, seeking His face and will.

Even though there are many activities that could grab our attention we must realise that waiting time is never wasted time.

*Authentic Christianity is
a supernatural walk
with a living, dynamic,
communicating God.*

Bill Hybels

REGULAR FEEDING ON GOD'S WORD

A healthy leader spends personal, devotional time in the Scriptures, giving regular time to feeding on the Word of God through reading, study and meditation.

A temptation you may have faced in leadership is spending time in the Scriptures only to find messages for team talks, small group meetings and so on.

The "read to feed" mentality can turn you into a professional Christian who only approaches the Scripture for ministry reasons rather than for personal devotion. This subtle trap can lead to a personal barrenness of soul and turn you into a hypocrite as you exhort others to seek a devotional life which you do not possess.

Wayne Cordeiro's book, [The Divine Mentor: Growing Your Faith as You Sit at the Feet of the Savior](#), contains an excellent methodology for getting the maximum results out of Bible reading. His method is easy to implement and is readily adaptable.

It is called S.O.A.P. which stands for:

Scripture – read the Bible methodically. Cordeiro’s annual reading plan is intense as it covers the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice. Therefore it’s wise to adapt this plan to suit your personal needs. The YouVersion 345 plan is less intense plan that covers the New Testament in one year by reading 5 chapters a week.

Observe – choose a text or two that stands out and ponder on what it is saying to you.

Apply – now consider what you are going to do with this truth in your daily life.

Prayer – fashion a prayer around this truth.

Cordeiro encourages the use of a journal to record your S.O.A.P.

Using a journal may not be comfortable at first but it will help you slow down and engage more fully with the text. Over time you will build your own personal commentary on Scripture with a record of various seasons you enjoyed and endured. Interestingly, Cordeiro states that 95% of his messages come out of his daily devotional practice.

As you consistently and wholeheartedly take your world offline and engage with these two foundational spiritual practices you will receive strength for the journey, answers for the complexities and peace to handle the tensions. At times you will also find it beneficial to accompany these practices with other spiritual practices such as silence, solitude and fasting.

YOUR EMOTIONAL LIFE

LEARNING

OBJECTIVE:

Discover your current level of emotional energy.

Energy management has a profound impact on our emotional well-being.

Energised leaders generally feel on top of things. Likewise, de-energised leaders often feel overwhelmed and unable to cope.

Encouragingly, we can increase our energy and thus positively impact our emotional world.

Take 5 minutes to complete this energy management snapshot.

Please tick the statements below that are *currently* true for you:

BODY

- ☐ I don't regularly get seven to eight hours of sleep and often wake up feeling tired.
- ☐ I frequently skip breakfast, or I settle for something that isn't nutritious.
- ☐ I don't engage in cardio-vascular exercise at least twice a week.
- ☐ I don't take regular breaks during the day to truly recharge, or I often eat lunch at my desk, if I eat it at all.

EMOTIONS

- ☐ I frequently find myself feeling irritable, impatient, or anxious at work, especially when work is demanding.
- ☐ I don't have enough time with my family and loved ones, and when I'm with them, I'm not always really with them.
- ☐ I have too little time for the activities that I most deeply enjoy.
- ☐ I don't stop frequently enough to express my appreciation to others or to savour my accomplishments and blessings.

MIND

- ___ I have difficulty focusing on one thing at a time, and I am easily distracted during the day, especially by email or social media.
- ___ I spend much of my day reacting to immediate crises and demands rather than focusing on activities with longer-term value and high leverage.
- ___ I don't take enough time for reflection, strategising and creative thinking.
- ___ I almost never take an email/social media-free holiday.

PURPOSE

- ___ I don't spend enough time at work doing what I do best and enjoy most.
- ___ There are significant gaps between what I say is most important to me in my life and how I actually allocate my time and energy.
- ___ My decisions at work are more often influenced by external demands than by a strong, clear sense of my own purpose.
- ___ I don't invest enough time and energy in making a positive difference to others or to the world.

On the next page calculate the results:

HOW IS YOUR OVERALL ENERGY?

Total number of ticks: ____

- 0-3 Excellent energy management skills.
- 4-6 Reasonable energy management skills
- 7-10 Significant energy management deficits
- 11-16 A full-fledged energy management crisis

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO WORK ON?

Number of ticks for each category:

Body ____

Emotions ____

Mind ____

Purpose ____

- 0: Excellent energy management skills
- 1: Strong energy management skills
- 2: Significant deficits
- 3: Poor energy management skills
- 4: A full-fledged energy crisis¹

Discuss your results with the team during the group coaching session as well as any changes you can make to increase your energy.

¹ Adapted from the *Harvard Business Review*

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF RECREATION

Emotional energy is like physical energy in that it can be replenished.

Replenishment can come through a variety of means including time out with a friend, solitude or a good night's sleep.

It may come from listening to your favourite music or catching a movie.

It might require quality reflection time or spending time with a spiritual director.

Another key, yet often underestimated way to replenish emotional energy is the development of recreational pursuits.

An engaging activity, hobby or the pursuit of a passion that is clearly distinct from your church life will not only replenish your emotional reserves, it will also add vibrancy and interest to your daily life.

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