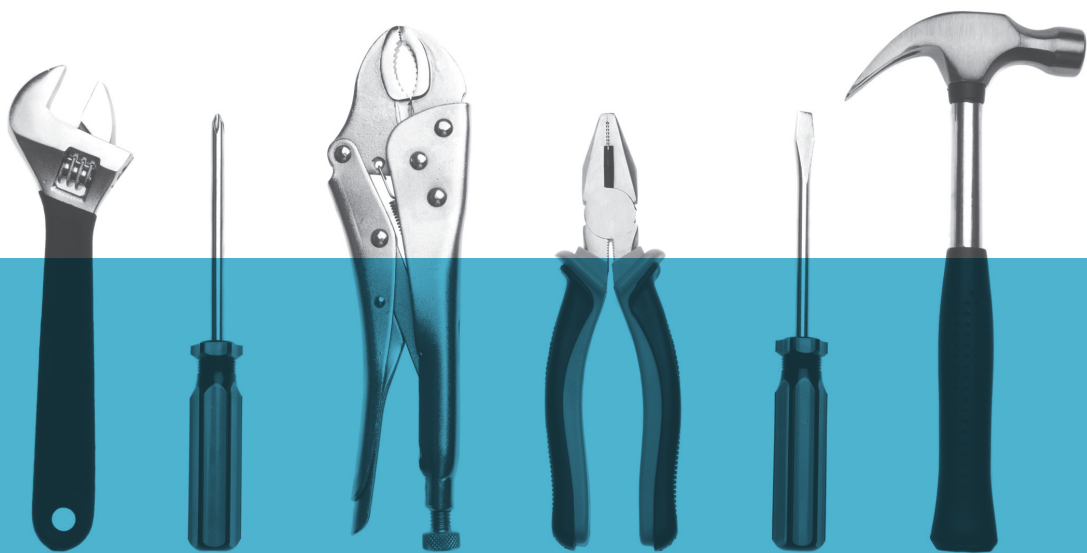


Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands

HOW TO HELP OTHERS CHANGE



PAUL DAVID TRIPP

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Instruments
in the Redeemer's
Hands

How to Help Others Change

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Paul David Tripp
Timothy S. Lane, Contributor



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Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: How to Help Others Change
Facilitator's Guide

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A Word of Welcome

Welcome to *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*. We are thankful for you and your desire to use this material to equip God's people to be effective servants for Christ. Our prayer is that this course will produce a wonderful harvest of lasting change in you, in the people of your church or ministry, and in those they reach.

This is an ambitious goal, and one we don't take lightly. But the hope of the gospel is that God radically transforms sinners! This means that personal growth and ministry are not only about helping people to feel better and to fix their situations. The primary focus is on fundamental changes in the heart that result in fundamental changes in the way people speak, act, and relate. Our goal is to help you equip God's people to be part of his work of change.

Perhaps a few words would be helpful about the course you are about to teach.

1. Our goal is to prepare you to equip people for personal growth and ministry. We want this material to be "yours," yet we ask you not to alter or add to its content. What is here has been carefully and prayerfully included and tested in churches throughout the country.
2. Many people in our culture would call this a counseling course because it talks about personal growth and change. We, however, see it as second-half-of-the-great-Commission material. It teaches people to live practically as followers of Christ in the way they think of their own identity and problems, in the way they serve others, and in the way they relate to God. The principles of this course should not only impact the official ministries of the church but all the interactions that take place in the hallways, family rooms, and minivans of everyday life. As followers of Christ, we are being transformed and called to be agents of transformation. This is the lifestyle this course seeks to encourage.

3. It is vital that you and the people you train personalize this material. You cannot give away something that you don't have! As you experience God changing your heart, you will bring integrity and enthusiasm to the material that cannot be found any other way. Pray that God will reveal new things to you and your students. Pray that he will change you as you seek to train others to be his instruments of change.
4. Although this course "systematizes" personal ministry, discipleship is much more than a system of change or a set of techniques. To us, the most distinctive element of this curriculum is its emphasis that people need a Redeemer, not only a system of redemption. Our ultimate goal is to encourage people to:
 - Rest in God's sovereignty
 - Rely on the resources of his grace
 - Practically do his will

This curriculum is intensely Christ-centered because we believe that in him are hidden "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). It is vital that this difference be clearly communicated to the participants.

Let me say again that we are excited that you are embarking on this journey. Remember, we are here to help and support you in any way we can. Our hope is that this course will be just the beginning of a long ministry partnership between CCEF and your church or ministry.

In Christ,

Paul David Tripp
Timothy S. Lane

Acknowledgments

It would be impossible to acknowledge the host of people who have contributed to the content and development of this curriculum over the years. However, I must mention a few. Thanks to Sue Lutz, whose editorial work has made this a much better training tool. Jayne Clark contributed her organizational skill and made a dream a doable project. Karen Barnard typed and retyped draft after draft until the job was done. The faculty of CCEF encouraged and supported me throughout the design and writing of the curriculum, and contributed to its content. The entire staff of CCEF has touched this project in some way. Thanks to all of you.

We want to offer special thanks to all the churches around the country that were willing to test this course. You have encouraged us and sharpened the curriculum. Your work has been a very important step in creating the final product.

Our particular gratitude goes to the churches and individuals who gave sacrificially to support the development of this curriculum. This is the most costly and time-consuming project CCEF has ever done, and we could not have completed it without your help. Your partnership has not only enabled us to continue, but it has encouraged us along the way. On behalf of the churches around the world that will use this material and the myriad of people who will grow and change as a result, we say thank you.

Few things in ministry have so clearly depicted to us what Paul says about the church in Ephesians 4:16: “From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

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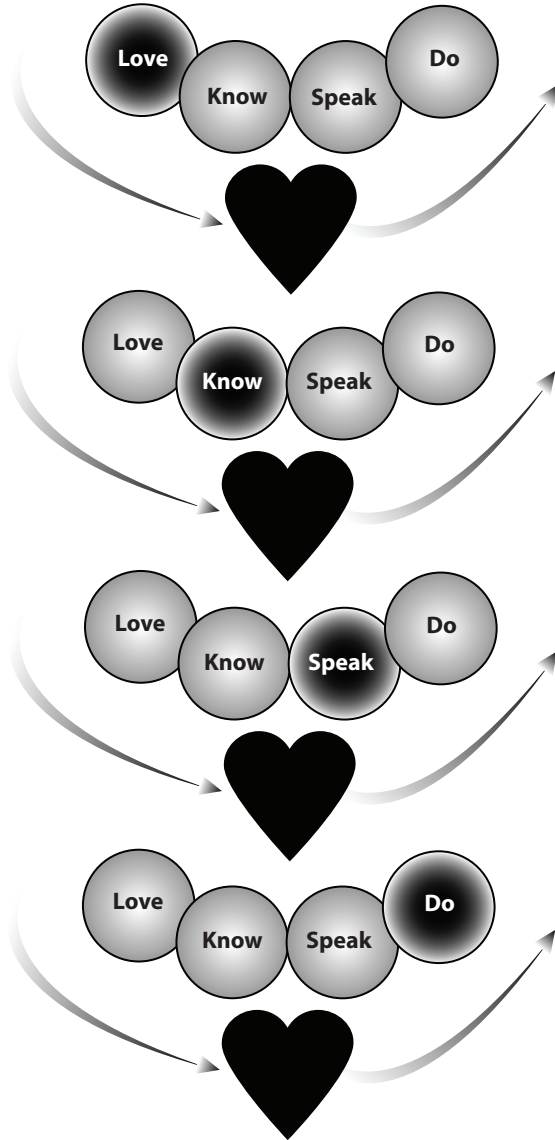
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Leader's Preparation Guide

This course has been designed to teach people:

- How God changes hearts and lives
- How they can be instruments of change in his redemptive hands

The biblical principles that are the foundation of this course can bring lasting growth and change to people's lives if they are taught and implemented faithfully.

When you trained to teach this course, you were presented with a Christ-centered view of personal transformation quite different from secular perspectives. Now, as a leader, you will rediscover these fundamental differences as you familiarize yourself with the content once again. This guide (and the participant's workbook) has been carefully designed to help you convey the scriptural principles that are the foundation for heart transformation, which is the core of any lasting personal growth and change.

The first step in preparing yourself to teach is to review this Leader's Preparation Guide. It is essential that you, yourself, understand and internalize the information so that you can communicate it clearly and convincingly to the participants.

It is important to note here that each lesson is not only a body of content to be covered in a certain amount of time. Rather, each is a unit of thought. You may not cover all the material in a particular lesson in one meeting of your group. We have divided the course material into twelve units that develop twelve key points about God's grace and personal growth and change. You may need more or less time to develop these points, depending on the group you are teaching.

This guide will give you an overview of the course, lesson by lesson. In each lesson, you will be directed to nine elements where preparation is critical to your teaching success. The nine critical elements in each lesson are:

1. *Homework Discussion*. Each lesson begins with a discussion of the Make It Real section from the previous lesson. It is very important not to minimize this section. As participants reflect on the material, they are given a personal experience of how God uses people as his instruments of change. This discussion also gives you a week-by-week perspective on how well your students are understanding and applying what they have been taught. There will be times, as you seek to be responsive to the Spirit's work in those you teach, when this section is all you will complete. If this happens, don't be discouraged; God is actually doing, in people's lives, what the curriculum teaches!
2. *Review*. The lessons in *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* build upon one another. To fully grasp the material in any lesson, participants need to understand what was taught previously. The review at the beginning of each lesson reinforces the connections in the truths that have been presented and shows how the new lesson fits into the curriculum as a whole.
3. *CPR*. Each lesson has three points of focus and application. These points are summarized at the beginning of each lesson. "C" stands for the central point that the participant needs to understand and master. "P" stands for the application of the central point to the participant's personal life. "R" stands for the ways these concepts set the agenda for the participant's relationships and ministry. Be sure you understand each statement enough to present it clearly and simply.
4. *Exegesis (Lesson Content)*. The main body of each lesson is built around key passages of Scripture that summarize the important themes on which this course is based. The passages in this course are not used in an out-of-context, proof-text manner, so please do not omit passages. Take time to read the passage when directed to do so. Allow time for participants to locate the passage and read along. Have extra Bibles available

for those who may not have their own. Each passage should be studied until you can understand its meaning, apply it to the topic at hand, and draw out the main point(s) that are critical to the principles taught in the lesson.

5. *Illustrations.* Interesting, cogent, clear illustrations are hallmarks of effective teaching. From time to time, you will be asked to supply your own illustrations to support or apply a lesson idea, though in many cases we have supplied illustrations for you. The most effective illustrations emerge from your own life; if you can present a personal illustration that “carries the freight,” feel free to substitute it for the one supplied. Choosing an illustration that explains and applies a particular principle demands thought and preparation, but it is well worth it!
6. *Group Discussion.* Good teaching includes keeping the participants engaged, active, and involved. Group discussion is one of the best and easiest ways to accomplish this. A meaningful discussion that moves beyond the “blind leading the blind” requires preparation on your part. As you prepare, allow ample time for the assigned discussions. Do not omit these critical teaching tools! Establish in advance your goal for each discussion, and then plan how you will bring participants to that goal.
7. *The Big Question.* Near the end of each lesson you will find “The Big Question.” This question helps participants use the core teaching of the lesson to examine themselves and their ministries. It is our hope that God will use these questions to further the work of transformation and ministry preparation he has begun in each of them.
8. *Expanded CPR.* At the end of each lesson, the single-statement CPR from the beginning of the lesson is expanded to three statements under each category. This is meant to be the crescendo of the lesson. These statements are simple but not simplistic. Each contains truths that are potentially heart- and life-transforming. Be sure that you understand each statement’s meaning and implications.

End each lesson with a careful examination of each CPR statement, helping your students to grapple with the theological, personal, and relational implications of what they have been studying. As you give attention to the CPR statements at the beginning and end of each lesson, you bracket the lesson with direct, practical, and personal application.

9. *Make It Real*. Good teaching needs to be reinforced and personally applied, or it will not take root in the participants' lives and ministries. At the end of every lesson, direct your group to Make It Real. Briefly scan the section and point to one or two questions that illustrate the value in completing the assignment. Most of the homework in *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* is a personal ministry opportunity. The participants are asked to pick a ministry opportunity in their lives and use what they are learning to function as one of God's instruments of change in the life of another. It is our hope that this exercise will lead to personal growth and growth in ministry effectiveness. The Make It Real assignments are intended to keep the curriculum from being impersonal and theoretical, simply the downloading of good biblical information. Instead, they give participants an opportunity to be disciplined by you and by the Lord who gives each lesson its hope.

What follows is a lesson-by-lesson guide to prepare you to teach the principles in each lesson.

LESSON 1: DO WE REALLY NEED HELP?

Exegesis

- Genesis 1:26–28: The need for truth outside myself
- Genesis 3:1–7: The entrance of another counselor
- Hebrews 3:12–13: The issue of spiritual blindness

Illustrations

- Response not based on facts but on personal interpretation of facts

Group Discussions

- Personal definition of discipleship/personal ministry

Homework

- Times when you responded not to facts but to your interpretation of facts
- Times when the Lord used a person or Scripture to reveal your spiritual blindness
- Things that keep you from being willing to help or be helped

The Big Question

- Why do you need help?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 2: THE HEART IS THE TARGET

Exegesis

- Luke 6:43–46: Living out of the heart
- Ezekiel 14:1–5: The principle of inescapable influence
- Romans 1:25: The great exchange
- Matthew 6:19–24: Treasures of the heart
- Hebrews 4:12–13: The Bible as the principal tool in personal ministry

Illustrations

Group Discussions

- What's wrong with the men in Ezekiel 14?

Homework

- “Fruit stapling” vs. real change
- Idols of the heart and their impact on our interpretations
- Implications and applications for helping someone else

The Big Question

- What is your biggest problem?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 3: UNDERSTANDING YOUR HEART STRUGGLE

Exegesis

- James 4:1–10: Ruling desires
- Galatians 5:13–26: How our hearts struggle
- Romans 6:1–14: Christ’s provision for the struggle
- Galatians 5:16–18: The Warrior Spirit

Illustrations

- Real-life example of the James 4 principles
- Passions and desires that are in the way
- Saying no and responding in servant love

Group Discussions

- Last week’s Make It Real: implications of lesson for personal ministry

Homework

- What Jesus discerned about the heart; your personal application

The Big Question

- As you deal with your daily situations and relationships, what things tend to control your heart?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 4: FOLLOWING THE WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Exegesis

- 2 Corinthians 5:14–21: Called to be ambassadors
- Hebrews 4:14–16: Jesus, the data gatherer

Illustrations

Group Discussions

- Last week’s Make It Real: Christ and the heart

Homework

- External change vs. heart change
- Times when God and/or others have used Love-Know-Speak-Do model in your life
- Assessing your role as ambassador in current relationships
- Introducing the Personal Ministry Opportunity project

The Big Question

- Right now, where has God positioned you to be one of his instruments of change?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 5: LOVE I: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN WHICH GOD'S WORK WILL THRIVE

Exegesis

- Colossians 3:12–17: Incarnating the love of Christ
- Galatians 6:1: Ministering with an eye toward self

Illustrations

- Incarnating the love of Christ

Group Discussions

- Last week's Make It Real: Personal strengths and weaknesses
- Lessons 1–4 review
- Struggle of woman whose husband left her
- People God has used in your life

Homework

In light of Personal Ministry Opportunity consider:

- Less than redemptive goals in relationship
- Failure to accept person; giving up on godly agenda for change
- Entry gates into experience of person or group

The Big Question

- Are you building relationships in which God's work of change can thrive?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 6: LOVE II: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN WHICH GOD’S WORK WILL THRIVE

Exegesis

- Hebrews 2:10–11: Christ our brother in suffering
- Titus 2:11–3:8: What does living in grace look like?
- 2 Corinthians 1:3–11: How to tell your story

Illustrations

Group Discussions

- Last week’s Make It Real: Entry gate and incarnational opportunities
- Personal struggles of faith in the midst of suffering
- How did suffering make Christ perfect
- Personal stories: God’s help in suffering
- Titus 2:11–3:8: What does living in God’s grace look like?

Homework

- Three situations in which God comforted you during trials
- Things you have learned about God in these situations
- In light of Personal Ministry Opportunity, connect your story specifically to the person or group you have chosen as your focus

The Big Question

- Are you building relationships in which acceptance and a call to change are woven together?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 7: KNOW I: GETTING TO KNOW PEOPLE

Exegesis

- Hebrews 4:14–16: Christ, the data gatherer

Illustrations

- Motel illustration or substitute

Group Discussions

- Last week's Make It Real: God's comfort in the midst of suffering
- Two data gathering role plays

Homework

In light of Personal Ministry Opportunity:

- Places you have been tempted to make assumptions
- Where are there gaps in your information about the person or group
- Open-ended questions to get this information

The Big Question

- As you minister to others, do you ask good biblical questions, or is your ministry weakened by assumptions?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 8: KNOW II: GETTING TO KNOW PEOPLE

Exegesis

- Numbers 11:1–23: Israel, manna, and distorted thought

Illustrations

Group Discussions

- Last week's Make It Real: Incarnating Christ in light of Hebrews 4; open-ended questions
- Asking good questions using Jina case study
- Sharon and the “hooks”

Homework

In light of Personal Ministry Opportunity, use the following categories to organize the information you have gathered about your person or group:

- Situation
- Responses
- Thoughts
- Motives

The Big Question

- In personal ministry, do you take time to organize information in a way that helps you interpret it biblically?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 9: SPEAK I: SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Exegesis

- 2 Corinthians 5:20: God's appeal vs. our opinion
- Joel 2:12–13: Heart repentance
- Romans 2:4: God's kindness leads us to repentance
- 2 Corinthians 5:14: The compelling love of God
- 2 Peter 1:3–9: My identity in Christ
- 1 John 3:1–3: My identity in Christ
- 1 John 1:5–10: God's promise of forgiveness
- Ephesians 3:20: The indwelling Holy Spirit
- Romans 8:1–17: The comfort and call of the gospel

Illustrations

Group Discussions

- Passages on forgiveness and the indwelling Holy Spirit
- Truths of the gospel
- Recognizing your own identity in Christ
- Promises and provisions that lead to confession
- *Age of Opportunity* (chap. 6); time of prayer

Homework

In light of your Personal Ministry Opportunity:

- Are you moving toward the person with a proper understanding of why he/she needs rebuke?
- Are you moving toward him with proper goals?
- How can a gospel perspective, as both comfort and call, help you as you move toward the person?
- What gospel passages can you use to encourage the person you need to confront?

The Big Question

- Is the gospel central when you speak the truth to someone?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 10: SPEAK II: SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Exegesis

- Luke 7:36–50; 14:1–14: Parables as a model of confrontation
- 2 Samuel 12:1–14: Nathan confronting David

Illustrations

Group Discussions

- Last week's Make It Real: Examining your own role in confrontations in light of the gospel
- The five heart questions applied to a personal situation
- Lessons from the Nathan and David story

Homework

In light of your Personal Ministry Opportunity:

- How will progressive steps of confrontation help your confrontation to be godly?
- How will you best confront the person?
- Where do you need to confess unwise or sinful behavior to the person?

The Big Question

- What does it look like to confront someone biblically?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 11: DO I: APPLYING CHANGE TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Exegesis

- Ephesians 4:22–24: God’s call to put off and put on
- Luke 9:23–25: Call to take up your cross and follow Christ
- 2 Corinthians 5:14–15: Call to no longer live for self
- Psalm 145:13: God is faithful to his promises
- Acts 17:24–28: God is sovereign over all things
- Romans 12:14–21: An example of the “trust and obey” lifestyle

Illustrations

Group Discussions

- Last week’s Make It Real: God’s use of self-revealing metaphors; heart attitudes
- Review of lessons 1–10
- Sharon; agenda-setting questions

Homework

In light of your Personal Ministry Opportunity consider:

- Portions of Scripture that help you understand the person or group
- God’s goals for change
- Ways to encourage change
- Where has person tried to do God’s job?
- Where has person waited for God to do what he has called the person to do?
- Clarifying the issue of responsibility

The Big Question

- Do you minister to others with a clear sense of biblical direction and help them clarify their responsibilities before God?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

LESSON 12: DO II: APPLYING CHANGE TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Exegesis

- 2 Peter 1:3–9: Understanding your identity in Christ
- 2 Corinthians 5:15: Our ability to live unto Christ
- Romans 6:1–14: Union with Christ/power of sin broken
- Philippians 2:1–12: Redemptive realities and the life that should follow
- Galatians 6:2: Providing accountability
- Hebrews 3:13: Providing accountability
- Galatians 6:7: The harvest principle

Illustrations

Group Discussions

- Last week's Make It Real: Sharon's two circles
- Big picture course review
- Romans 6:1–14 discussion

Homework

In light of your Personal Ministry Opportunity:

- What kind of accountability do you need to supply?
- Where has the person forgotten his identity in Christ?
- What Scripture passages would reinforce this identity?
- What specific things have you learned through your Personal Ministry Opportunity?

The Big Question

- Do you help others bear the burden of change by providing biblical accountability and affirming their identity in Christ?

CPR

- Establish familiarity with the three-point focus of this lesson

INSTRUMENTS IN THE REDEEMER'S HANDS
LESSON 1

Do We Really Need Help?

DISCUSS HOMEWORK

Leader, because each lesson contains a Make It Real section for the participants to complete as homework, subsequent lessons will begin with a discussion of the homework from the previous class.

INTRODUCTION

Leader, acquaint participants with the course using the following illustration.

Let's first become familiar with your workbooks. As you open them you'll see that there are only a few sections. We'll briefly look at each section so that you can easily find your way.

The first thing to notice is the page at the end of this book that summarizes the course. It is entitled "Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: At a Glance." We'll be referring to this page often, which is why it is in a place that is easily located. This page gives you a quick preview of the model of growth and ministry that we will be learning: Love-Know-Speak-Do. We will explore in depth these four main elements. The numbers in the diagram indicate the lesson that covers the topic. "Course Outline" in the front of the book lists each lesson that we'll cover in this course. Next, turn to "Word of Welcome" at the beginning of the workbook. Take some time later to read this on your own.

We will spend most of our time in the section entitled "Lesson Content" (p. 3). You will be using these pages to take notes. The intention

of those who developed this course is to minimize the amount of notes you need to take. For those who need and are happiest taking more extensive notes, space has been provided.

The last section, “Make It Real,” includes your assignments. Yes, that’s right, there will be homework—but relax, it won’t be collected or graded. This section will help you interact with the content of each lesson so that you can begin to make it a part of your daily life. This may be the most important section of your workbook because it is the place where you will make the course material your own. You are strongly encouraged to do the assignments so that:

- You will begin to understand the Christian life better (who you are and who you are before God)
- You will begin to think biblically about the issues of living
- You will improve your ministry skills

Now let’s begin our first lesson by taking a look at ourselves and remembering an important truth. All of us are both people in need of help and people who have been positioned by God to provide his help to others. We always carry both identities. The one who needs help is struggling with the issues of living and asking important questions. The helper needs to have a firm understanding of the process of biblical change. That is where we will begin in this lesson.

The section below entitled “Concepts and Objectives” is meant to function like a map for each lesson. It will give you a sense of where we’re going. Perhaps you’ve noticed that this section is divided into three parts. *Concepts* lists the truths from this lesson that you need to know and remember. *Personalized* summarizes how those truths need to be applied to your own life. And *Related to Others* points to how each truth sets the agenda for your relationships and for ministry. The initials of these three parts, *CPR*, give us a way of remembering that we are focusing on heart change. By “changing hearts,” God is “changing lives”—your own and those you serve.

CONCEPTS AND OBJECTIVES

Concept: Our need for help is not the result of the Fall but the result of being human.

Personalized: I need truth from outside myself to make sense out of life.

Related to others: I need to learn how to be one of God's instruments of change in the lives of others.

LESSON CONTENT

We all come across situations in our own lives or in ministry where we don't know what to do or say. It is in these moments that we are confronted with the reality that God hasn't given us a neat system of change that our own wisdom can figure out. Our hope for ourselves and for others can only be found in the presence and work of Jesus the Redeemer. Both the helper and the person in need depend on his wisdom and his power for change.

A Firm Foundation

As we think about our own growth and about serving as God's instruments of change, we must build a firm biblical foundation for understanding people, their need for help, and how change takes place.

If you were asked to write down a distinctly biblical definition of *discipleship* or *personal ministry*, what would you write?

Leader, tell participants that space has been provided for them to write their best definition here.

Our culture tends to view personal change as something that requires the help of a professional. But the Bible has a much fuller and more hopeful perspective. The Bible teaches that personal transformation takes place as our hearts are changed and our minds are renewed by the Holy Spirit. And the two instruments that the Holy Spirit uses are the Word of God and the people of God.

Read aloud.

Turn to Isaiah 55:10–13. This is a beautiful word picture of God’s plan to bless us and glorify himself through the changes his Word accomplishes in us. In fact, those changes are a sign of his covenant relationship with us (v. 13).

Read aloud.

Turn next to Ephesians 4:11–16. Here we see that God has given us one another to help us grow to spiritual maturity. Think of all the intricate interdependencies implied by the image of the church as Christ’s body. Both of these passages make it clear that God intends to do a powerful work in us. This means that personal change and growth—including radical change of the deepest kind—can take place:

- When we allow the Holy Spirit to apply God’s Word to our hearts
- When we allow God’s people to encourage, guide, support, pray for, and challenge us in biblical ways

Few of us have fully tapped the potential for growth and ministry that God has given us with these two resources, but this has been God’s plan for us from the beginning. We need a fresh understanding of what the Bible says about this world of personal transformation. We will begin by looking at personal growth and ministry from the vantage point of creation, the Fall, and redemption.

Our Need as Seen in Creation

Read aloud.

Follow along with me as I read Genesis 1:26–28. Here we see human need in the broadest sense of the term. God knew that even though Adam and Eve were perfect people living in a perfect world in a perfect relationship with God, they could not figure life out on their own. They could not live independent of God's counsel.

God had to explain who they were and what they were to do with their lives and their surroundings. Adam and Eve's need for help was not the result of sin's entrance into the world. They needed God's help because they were human. To be human is to need help outside of oneself in order to understand and live life.

Adam and Eve had this need because there were three things that separated them from the rest of creation:

1. They were created by God to be revelation receivers.
2. They were created by God to be interpreters.
3. They were created by God to be worshippers.

We all are actively interpreting life, and we all share our interpretations with one another. None of us live life based on the facts, but based on our interpretation of the facts. So, to be human is to need truth outside ourselves in order to make sense out of life. The first instance of help was not person-to-person, but the Wonderful Counselor explaining life to the people he made in his own image.

Leader, provide a personal story here that illustrates how we respond to life not based on the facts of our experiences but on how we interpret facts.

As we interpret life, we are always expressing some sense of identity. We speak to one another out of some sense of purpose and meaning. We are constantly interpreting life out of a sense of who we are and what we are supposed to be doing, and we are always sharing our interpretations with one another. We all interpret. We are all people of influence.

Our Need as Seen in the Fall

Read aloud.

Now turn with me to Genesis 3:1–7. Something very dramatic takes place in this passage. For the very first time in human history, we see the entrance of another voice. This new speaker takes the very same set of facts (discussed by God in Genesis 1 and 2) and gives them a very different interpretation.

If Adam and Eve decide to believe the interpretation of this new speaker, it would be stupid to continue to obey God. Notice that our interpretations, our advice giving, are always agenda-setting. If we reject the words of God and follow the words of the serpent, we will not think about God, ourselves, or life in the same way, and we will not continue to do the same things.

What are the principles we can draw out of this passage to develop a biblical understanding of personal growth and ministry?

- Thoughts, talk, opinions, advice, and relationships are always agenda setting. Even though we may be unaware of it, we daily tell one another what to desire, think, and do.
- Advice is always moral. It always is defining right and wrong, good and bad, true and false, or healthy and unhealthy. Advice always gives our situations and relationships a moral framework.
- We should hunger for the simple days of Genesis 1 when everything people thought, said, and did was based solely on the words of God. We, however, live in a world of much confusion, where literally thousands of voices speak to us at the same time, each interpreting life and each competing for our hearts.
- We need Scripture to cut through the confusion and make sense out of life for us.

Our Need as Seen in Redemption

Many people have asked the question, “Do believers, who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and have the Word of God, really need personal ministry? Isn’t the cry for this a lack of faith in the Spirit and a lack of confidence in the Bible?” The final passage we will look at speaks in a powerful way to this question.

Read aloud.

Let’s look at Hebrews 3:12–13. This passage is essentially a warning against falling away from the Lord. The falling away is presented as something that is progressive. Notice the steps:

Sinful (subtle patterns of sin I allow in my life)

Unbelieving (subtle excusing of my sin, backing away from the clear words of Scripture)

Turning away (a loss of my spiritual moorings)

Hardened (heart crusted over with the scabs of sin
—no longer tender)

Now what you should ask is, “How could this ever happen to a believer?” This passage declares something about us that explains why this scary warning is necessary. It says that sin is deceitful. And guess who it deceives first? Us! We have no problem seeing the sin in others.

This is the theology of the passage: As long as sin still dwells within us, there will be some aspect of spiritual blindness in all of us. Yes, we can see the speck of dust in another’s eye while missing the log that is jutting out of our own (Matthew 7:1–5)! The passage is basically saying that all of us need help because until we are at home with the Lord, all of us will suffer from some degree of spiritual blindness. And, unlike physically blind people, spiritually blind people are often blind to their blindness.

So, what the writer of Hebrews says is that we need daily intervention. All of us are in the same place. There are no “haves” and “have nots.” Each of us is in need of help and each is called to help, that is,

to function daily as one of God's instruments of change in the lives of others.

If this kind of mutual help is going to become a lifestyle, there are two qualities that each of us needs to have. First, we need the courage of honesty. We cannot be afraid of being lovingly honest. We have to love one another enough to break through the walls of spiritual blindness. Second, we need the humility of approachability. We need to be willing to listen and consider when people challenge us with things that alone we would not see. We need to humbly and joyfully embrace the help that God has provided for us.

Three Questions that Everyone Asks

If we live with and care for people, there are three questions that we have probably asked. These three questions form the basis of any system of growth and transformation. They are questions that we must answer in a distinctly biblical way.

1. Why do people do the things they do? To answer this question we need a biblical theology of human motivation. What does the Bible say causes people to think the things they think, to want what they want, or to do the things they do?
2. How does lasting change take place in a person's life? If we see a person doing something that is wrong or destructive, we want to see change take place in his or her life. What does the Bible say leads to such change? We need a biblical theology of change.

The *How People Change* curriculum addresses these two questions in depth, beginning in lessons 2 and 3.

3. How can I be an instrument of change in the life of another person? To answer this question we need a biblical methodology of change.

These are the questions we will be addressing throughout this course. Our goal is that we will all be changed by God, ready to be his instruments of change wherever and with whomever he places us.

THE BIG QUESTION: Why do you need help?

CPR

Concepts

1. To be human is to need help outside of myself.
2. Influence always carries a moral agenda.
3. Everyone suffers from some degree of spiritual blindness.

Personalized

1. I need to receive truth outside of myself to make sense out of life.
2. I need to humbly examine why I do and say the things I do.
3. I need to recognize sin's deceitfulness and commit myself to being approachable.

Related to others

1. I need to learn how to be one of God's instruments of change in the lives of others.
2. I need to saturate myself with Scripture so that my interpretations and counsel to others are based on God's Word.
3. I need to recognize how I am influencing others in the relationships and situations of daily life.

Make It Real

1. How will the truths of this lesson shape your prayers about ministry opportunities?
2. Tell about a time in your life when you responded not to the facts of a situation but to your interpretation of the facts. Did you realize it at the time?

3. Describe a time when the Lord used a person or the Word of God to reveal your spiritual blindness. What did you learn about your need for such help? If you were helped by a person, what did he or she do to make it a positive or negative experience?

4. What things keep you from being approachable (being helped)? What things keep you from reaching out (helping)? Ask the Lord to help you in these areas and repent where appropriate.