

2 – Doctrine and Life

A reformatted presentation of Relational Elders Training
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Relational Leadership Training

Developing Disciple Making Leaders

Session Two

Introduction:

This training session establishes a fundamental principle that is foundational for this training. Throughout the Relational Elders Training you will be taught a lot of biblical truth (also referred to as “doctrine”). The goal is that you do NOT simply gain head knowledge but that you learn to intentionally apply doctrine to your own life and to the life of your church.

Pre-session Assignment:

1) Read the article “Biblical Doctrine and Your Life”.

As you read:

- A. Place the letter “N” in the margin near information that is “New” to you.
- B. Underline what strikes you as very significant.
- C. Circle terms or ideas you might need to have clarified.
- D. Write down any questions you might have in your Learning Journal for this session.

2) Take some time to think about the following aspects of the article you read for this session. Write your thoughts in your Learning Journal and be ready to discuss these during the next group instruction time.

A. Carefully reread Matthew 7:24-27; James 1:22-25; Hebrews 5:11-14 and make a list of the following:

- i. The negative (harmful) effects of not obeying biblical truth.
- ii. The positive (helpful) effects of learning to obey biblical truth .

B. Where in your life have you observed some of the items from the list of negative effects?

C. Where in your life have you observed some of the items from the list of positive effects?

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With Others – *During* Group Instruction

Step 1 (In Triads) – Share experiences, outcomes, and “Aha Moments” from the personal application activities from the last session.

Step 2 (With the Whole Group) – Have someone from each triad summarize to the whole group a few outcomes and experiences from the personal application activities from the last session.

A. any questions or concerns that came out of the triad sharing time.

Step 3 (In Triads) – Review together the section “The Training Model of 2 Timothy 3:14-17” of the article “Biblical Doctrine and Your Life”. After reviewing the section, answer the following questions:

- A. Why is it important to understand that ALL Scripture is breathed out (inspired) by God himself?
- B. Why is it important to understand that all Scripture is “profitable” (beneficial, of value) for learning doctrine and for bringing change to our lives?
- C. Scripture is profitable by addressing correct doctrine/belief (teaching), wrong doctrine (reproof), wrong living (correction), and right living (training in righteousness).
 - i. What are some reasons it is important to include all four of these aspects of training for spiritual growth and maturity?
 - ii. What happens to people (and churches) that only stress one aspect, such as correct doctrine, while ignoring the other aspects?

Step 4 (With the Whole Group) – Using 2 Timothy 3:16 as a framework, analyze and interact with Matthew 28:16-20. Use the questions below as guidelines. Record your answers in your Learning Journal.

- A. Teaching (*What is true.*) – What are the key biblical truths of this passage?
- B. Reproof (*What is not true.*) – What is something false or inaccurate that you personally have believed related to the topic of this passage?
- C. Correction (*What not to do.*) – In relation to this passage, what is something in your life that needs to change?
- D. Training in righteousness (*What to do.*) – What are some things you need to learn to do (or not do) in order to live in a way that reflects the truth of this passage?

Then thoughtfully and honestly answer the following three questions. Record your answers in your Learning Journal.

- A. What does the truth of this session look like in my life now?
- B. What could the truth of this session look like in my life one month from now or one year from now?

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Post Session Follow Up:

1) Using **2 Timothy 3:16** as a framework, analyze and interact with **Matthew 7:24-27**. Use the questions below as guidelines. Record your answers in your Learning Journal.

- A. Teaching (What is true.) – What are the key biblical truths of this passage?
- B. Reproof (What is not true.) – What is something false or inaccurate that you personally have believed related to the topic of this passage?
- C. Correction (What not to do.) – In relation to this passage, what is something in your life that needs to change?
- D. Training in righteousness (What to do.) – What are some things you need to learn to do (or not do) in order to live in a way that reflects the truth of this passage? Interact.

2) Discuss with your wife:

- A. The main ideas of this session, and your follow up assignment

4) Prayerfully think about what you have learned with regard to the truths of this session, your experience during the assignment, and your conversation with your wife. Use the questions below to guide your reflection (thinking). You do not necessarily have to write out answers to all of the questions but take the time to prayerfully think about each one and then write down some thoughts pertaining to one or two of them. Be ready to share your thoughts and insights during the next group instruction time.

- A. Do you need to repent of any disobedience? If so, what?
- B. Do you need to acknowledge any unbelief? If so, what?
- C. What biblical truth do you need to trust to be true for you?
- D. What promises of God can you trust in and expect Him to keep?
- E. What signs of growth do you perceive in your life?
- F. What can you give thanks to God for?

3) Record any “Aha Moments” from this session (i.e. insights gained that are important for you to remember). Record these in your Learning Journal.

Biblical Doctrine and Your Life

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:16

The Connection Between Doctrine and Life

In Scripture there is a direct connection between doctrine and life. Or, to say it another way, there is a connection between what we believe and how we live our lives. What a person believes impacts how they live their life and, correspondingly, how they live their life indicates what they really believe.

The clear expectation of Scripture is that biblical truth is to be applied to life through discernment and obedience.

An overarching biblical principle is that blessings come from obeying truth and not simply in knowing it. For example,

- James 1:22-25 – *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. [23] For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. [24] For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. [25] But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*
- Hebrews 5:11-14 – *About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. [12] For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, [13] for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. [14] But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

Jesus himself stresses the important connection between knowing God's word and obeying it.

- Matthew 7:24-27 – *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [25] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. [26] And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. [27] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”*
- John 13:12-17 – *When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? [13] You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. [14] If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15] For I have given you an example, that you also should do*

just as I have done to you. [16] Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

- Luke 8:19-21 – *Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. [20] And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” [21] But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”*
- Luke 11:27-28 – *As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” [28] But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”*
- John 14:15-17 – *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. [16] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*

In fact, the Gospel of Matthew’s summary of Jesus’ mission for the church (known as the “Great Commission”) includes the explicit command to teach obedience.

- Matthew 28:18-20 – *And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Notice that in verse 20 it does NOT say “teach them my commandments”. Rather it says “teaching them to observe {or obey, do} all that I have commanded you”. We need to teach and know the commands of Jesus (and the Bible) but that by itself is not complete. The clear twofold implication from this passage is that obedience to commands is crucial and that learning how to obey can (and must be) be taught to others.

The Training Model of 2 Timothy 3:14-17

2 Timothy 3:14-17 provides a useful framework to assist with the instruction and application of many different topics covered in this training.

¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

From these verses we can learn some important aspects for moving towards growth and maturity.

- *“But as for you”* – There is personal responsibility for actively pursuing biblical understanding, as well as in maturing into a close walk with God. You cannot abdicate this responsibility to others.
- *“Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed”* – Part of that responsibility is to continue on in the lessons observed in the process of discipleship. This is to include both conviction and action. To not continue in an active learning process may result in you becoming “dull of hearing” instead of teachers who mature and have their powers of discernment trained to distinguish good and evil (see Hebrews 5:11-14).
- *“Knowing from whom you learned it”* – The “whom” is plural indicating Timothy had learned from multiple influences in his life, including his mother and grandmother (see 2 Timothy 1:5) and Paul himself (see 2 Timothy 3:10-11). Likewise, you should have multiple godly influences in your life, whether formal training, personal mentors, or through the reading of good books.
- *“How from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings”* – You are never too young to begin the journey of learning God’s word and growing in your faith. In addition, you should not hesitate to instruct children of all ages in the gospel message and the truth of God’s Word.
- *“Which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus”* – The Scriptures, including the Old Testament (which would be the “sacred writings” he was talking about), point to Jesus Christ (see Luke 24:27, 44). These Scriptures provide the necessary wisdom for our ultimate need, which is salvation. This salvation is obtained only through faith in Christ Jesus (see John 14:6; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:4-10). It is important to avoid the trap of thinking that knowing the Scriptures themselves is the key to salvation, when they point us to Christ Jesus himself (see John 5:39-40).
- *“All Scripture is breathed out by God”* – It is key that you understand ALL Scripture is directly given by God himself (literally “God-breathed”). When you read the Bible, think of God himself speaking the words to you (see 2 Peter 1:19-21). This understanding gives us confidence in the inspiration, authority, and truthfulness of the Scriptures as we “use” them for personal growth and for ministry to other people (see 1 Timothy 4:16).
- *“All Scripture is...profitable”* – Scripture provides more than information about God or even ourselves. It contains truth and principles that are “living” and able to change our minds and hearts (see Hebrews 4:12-13; 1 Peter 1:22-25). The proper teaching and application of God’s Word has benefits, which are temporal and eternal (see 1 Timothy 4:6-8).
- *“Profitable for teaching”* – Teaching focuses on what is “true”. There is doctrine (biblical truth) that people need to be taught. You must be *“able to give instruction in sound {healthy} doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it”* (Titus 1:9).

- *“Profitable... for reproof”* – Reproof focuses on what is not true. You must be able to reprove or rebuke people who are in error of behavior or doctrine. This involves pointing to a specific behavior or belief and saying, “According to God’s Word, that is wrong” or “that is false.” How a person (including yourself) accepts or rejects reproof is an indication of his or her wisdom or foolishness (see Proverbs 12:1; 13:18; 15:5, 31, 32).
- *“Profitable... for correction”* – Correction focuses on what not to do. Correction is restoring something to its proper state or condition. After you have given reproof, it is important to set the person straight and help them get back on track to what is right. Correction should include gentle training and not be forced, instead relying on God to grant the person repentance and knowledge of the truth (see 2 Timothy 2:25).
- *“Profitable... for training in righteousness”* – Training in righteousness focuses on what to do. You are to also provide positive instruction in what righteousness is and through modeling what righteousness looks like (see 2 Timothy 3:10-11).
- *“That the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work”* – The goal is not simply more or the right knowledge. It is so that people are equipped with the skills to be capable of living in a way that reflects who they are in Christ and are able to do the work that God has ordained for them (see Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-14). We know that this good work is always relational work, including loving God and others (Matthew 22:37-40), making disciples (Matthew 28:18-20), and shepherding the flock of God (1 Peter 5:1-4).

Application That Is Linear and Cyclical

The application of 2 Timothy 3:14-17 model for teaching and spiritual growth is both linear and cyclical.

By linear we mean it often “works in a straight line.” As Scripture is taught, people gain understanding of doctrine and learn how to apply that doctrinal truth to their lives. The teaching process may include reproof, correction, and training in righteousness as part of the teaching format. As they apply these aspects of training, they move forward towards maturity and become equipped for every good work.

By cyclical we mean it often “works in a repeated learning cycle.” As the Scripture is taught, people gain understanding of doctrine, but they often also struggle with unbiblical concepts, doctrinal misunderstandings, and sin in their lives. This will require a time to focus on reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. It may be necessary to work repeatedly by teaching reproof, correction, and training, and process a number of times (cycles) in order for the people to get on track. This is not an all-at-once process, but is repeated continually so the people grow toward maturity.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 can be diagrammed in this way:

