CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Teacher’s Manual

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**Helpful Headings in this Teacher’s Manual**

### OBJECTIVES

### OVERVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

### EXPLANATION

### application

### class processing

### assignment

### 

### ObjectiveS

At the end of this course, the participants should:

* recognize the importance of developing Christ-like character as leaders
* examine the biblical character qualities of humility, diligence, faithfulness, and perseverance
* evaluate and reflect on his or her character and determine areas of growth

**OVERVIEW**

Session 1: **The Foundation of Leadership I**

Secular vs. Christian Leadership

Session 2: **The Foundation of Leadership II**

Character is the Foundation of Leadership

Session 3: **Character Qualities I**

Humility

Session 4: **Character Qualities II**

Diligence

Session 5: **Character Qualities III**

Faithfulness

Session 6: **Character Qualities IV**

Perseverance

# THINGS TO KNOW

[Important notes for the teacher/s of this course]

*Christian Character is a two-day* course that has a total of six sessions of 60 minutes (maximum) per session.

In this teacher's manual, students' notes are enclosed in boxes for easy reference. The blanks in the students' manual have been filled in this manual. However, spaces for notes in the students' manual have been removed from this teacher's manual. Also, notes enclosed in brackets in this manual are guidelines or recommendations for teachers.

The general structure to be followed for each session includes: teaching, application (through discussion questions), class processing, and activity (when applicable). Please note that the discussions and activities may be revised based on context and location. More time may be allotted for the activity. Most discussions and activities are done in small groups. Removing the application and activities to give way for a longer teaching session is not recommended. Class processing is done at the end of the application (discussion questions) to gauge individual learnings and possibly answer questions the participants might have. A ten-minute break should be given after every session.

The goal is to be engaging and dynamic by creating variety in content delivery during teaching.

Deviation from teaching notes comes with preparation and mastery. All teachers are encouraged to vary the methods of teaching, but not at the expense of omitting content by adding extra-biblical material. Allow for participants to interact with the material and with the other participants, thus giving way to discussion, activities, and application.

As a teacher, focus your preparation time on communicating the key points of each session and giving examples or illustrations that will inspire and encourage the participants. Not all the provided illustrations from the teacher's notes have to be used, and others may be substituted for more relevant or personal illustrations.

It is highly recommended that Scripture narratives used in explaining points be delivered by storytelling, whereas short verses may simply be read verbatim to support the validity of key thoughts. Please note that the students' manual uses the ESV Bible translation.

Lastly, a simple evaluation form is provided at the end of this course. Please allow for participants to fill this out and submit by the end of the final session. This will help provide feedback for improvement and future implementation of the course.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOTMENT PER TOPIC

*[Please allow for flexibility in the time allotment.]*

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| **DAY 1** | | |
| SESSION 1 | DURATION | TOPIC |
| **The Foundation of**  **Leadership I**  Secular vs. Christian Leadership | 5 minutes | Welcome and Introduction |
| 25 minutes | Lecture |
| 10 minutes | Application |
| 5 minutes | Class Processing |
| 10 minutes | Break |
| SESSION 2 |  |  |
| **The Foundation of**  **Leadership II**  Character is the Foundation of Leadership | 5 minutes | Welcome and Introduction |
| 25 minutes | Lecture |
| 10 minutes | Application |
| 5 minutes | Class Processing |
| 10 minutes | Break |
| SESSION 3 |  |  |
| **Character Qualities I**  Humility | 5 minutes | Welcome and Introduction |
| 25 minutes | Lecture |
| 10 minutes | Application |
| 5 minutes | Class Processing |
| 10 minutes | End of Day 1 |
| **DAY 2** | | |
| SESSION 4 |  |  |
| **Character Qualities II**  Diligence | 5 minutes | Welcome and Introduction |
| 25 minutes | Lecture |
| 10 minutes | Application |
| 5 minutes | Class Processing |
| 10 minutes | Break |
| SESSION 5 |  |  |
| **Character Qualities III**  Faithfulness | 5 minutes | Welcome and Introduction |
| 25 minutes | Lecture |
| 10 minutes | Application |
| 5 minutes | Class Processing |
| 10 minutes | Break |
| SESSION 6 |  |  |
| **Character Qualities IV**  Perseverance | 5 minutes | Welcome and Introduction |
| 25 minutes | Lecture |
| 10 minutes | Application |
| 5 minutes | Class Processing |
| 10 minutes | End of Day 2 |

# Session 1 – THE FOUNDATION OF LEADERSHIP I

### WELCOME AND introduction (5 MINUTES)

[Welcome the participants to this course. Begin with a time of prayer and invite the Holy Spirit to be with you. Then briefly introduce the course objectives and an overview of each session.]

### BACKGROUND

There is a universal leadership vacuum in our world.

Society often chooses whom they will follow based on a person’s charisma, not character. Consequently, as leadership has become more and more about popularity, a vacuum of character-based leaders has resulted. This vacuum has contributed to the rise of popularized, media-created leadership.

A vacuum will always be filled; if a society lacks leaders, so-called leaders will arise. That is why we must allow God to shape us into men and women who are qualified to lead.

“The Bible takes a realistic, moral approach to human problems. It asserts that the true crisis we face today is not because of economics, health, politics, or education. The ultimate responsibility for social order is personal and individual. Disorder in society is a symptom of a crisis of character.” [[1]](#footnote-1)

### LECTURE (25 MINUTES)

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| **Secular vs. Christian View of Leadership**    *20Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. 21And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” 22Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” 23He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” 24And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. 25But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 26It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 27and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, 28even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*  Matthew 20:20-28 |

### explanation

There is a contrast between the secular path to leadership and the Christian path to leadership.

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| 1. The secular path to leadership is through selfish ambition (1), while the Christian path to leadership is through death to self. |

### explanation

It is noteworthy that even in the secular business world, a significant minority of leaders are challenging the traditional power model of leadership. The growing influence of Robert K Greenleaf (1904-1990) and the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership attest to that fact. Larry Spears, the CEO of the Greenleaf Center, describes servant-leadership in this way: “As we near the end of the twentieth century, we are beginning to see that traditional autocratic modes of leadership are slowly yielding to a newer model – one that attempts to enhance the personal growth of workers and improve the quality and caring of our many institutions through a combination of teamwork and community, personal involvement in decision making, and ethical and caring behavior. This emerging approach to leadership and service is called servant-leadership.”[[2]](#footnote-2) This is exactly what Jesus taught thousands of years ago!

*23And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.*

Luke 9:23,24

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| 1. The secular path to leadership is through self-promotion (2), while the Christian path to leadership is through serving. |

### explanation

EXAMPLE OF SELF-PROMOTING LEADERSHIP: “When Rehoboam became king of Israel the people said to him, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.’ Rehoboam consulted his father’s elders and they advised him to ‘be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.’ But Rehoboam rejected this advice, telling the people, ‘my father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.’ As a result, the kingdom was divided in two.” (I Kings 12:1-16)

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| 1. Jesus set the example (3) of serving.   *1Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*  John 13:1-5  *12When 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? 13You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. 14If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.”*  John 13:12-15 |

### explanation

“His kind of service set an example. He showed His followers how to serve, and He demanded no less of those who would carry on His work on earth. Jesus teaches all leaders for all time that greatness is not found in rank or position but in service.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

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| • We serve God through serving others (4). |

### explanation

*23Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

Colossians 3:23,24

The Salvation Army once held a convention in the Midwest. The founder, General William Booth, who was scheduled to speak, became ill and cancelled. But he promised to send a telegram with his vision of their mission for the next ten years. At the convention, the moderator stood to read the telegram that everyone was so excited to hear. But the telegram had only one word: “Others.” That was Booth’s one word summary of the direction of the entire ministry for the next decade! [[4]](#footnote-4)

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| • Serving is actively (5) looking out for the needs of others. |

### explanation

*3Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Philippians 2:3,4

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| • Serving does not focus on position (6). |

### explanation

*5Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, 2being born in the likeness of men. 8And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name . . .*

Philippians 2:5-9

The American Preacher Samuel Logan Brengle turned down an excellent pastorate to join William Booth and his Salvation Army. Booth accepted his services reluctantly, saying, “You have been your own boss too long.” To instill humility in Brengle, Booth assigned him the task of cleaning the boots of the other officers. Brengle was offended by the assignment. He said to himself, “Have I crossed the ocean in order to black boots?” Just then he saw a vision of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples. “Lord,” he said, “You washed their feet, I will black their boots.” He went on to be the first American born Salvation Army commissioner.

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| APPLICATION [The teacher may choose just one question and ask the participants to answer it by discussing within their groups. Class processing will be done after their discussion.]   1. What is the primary difference between a secular view of leadership and its Christian counterpart? 2. Over the past few months, recall a specific point in your life that demonstrates you being a servant leader instead of a selfish leader. 3. How would you lead differently as a result of what you have learned? (Be specific.)   a. Victory group or discipleship coach  b. Volunteer ministry  c. Family  d. Vocation (workplace, campus, neighborhood, etc.) |

### CLASS PROCESSING (5 MINUTES)

### [At this point, the teacher will ask two to three participants to share what they have discussed in the group discussion during the application.]

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| assignment Study the following passages: John 13:1-5, 12-15, and look for principles related to serving and leadership. Record your findings. |

### BREAK (10 MINUTES)

# Session 2 – THE FOUNDATION OF LEADERSHIP II

### lecture (25 minutes)

In a recent national survey, the Barna Research Group of Ventura, California, delineated four aspects of successful Christian leadership: the sense of their calling from God to leadership, the nature of their character, the strength of their competencies, and the aptitude they possess for leadership. This course will concentrate on the second aspect: the nature of our character.

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| **Character is the Foundation of Leadership**  The foundation of Christian leadership is character. Leaders may have charisma and ability, but if they do not have character, their influence will not last.   1. Almost all of the qualifications (1) Paul and Peter listed for leaders are related to character.   *2Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.*  1 Timothy 3:2-7  *5For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 10Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.*  2 Peter 1:5-10 |

### explanation

Theodore Roosevelt, one of the strongest leaders in American history, said, “Character is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike.”[[5]](#footnote-5)1

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| 1. Character is defined by the following statements:  * Character is the actions of a person under pressure (2). |

### explanation

“The depth and strength of human character are defined by its moral reserves. People reveal themselves completely only when they are thrown out of the customary conditions of their life, for only then do they have to fall back on their reserves.”[[6]](#footnote-6)2

Helen Keller: “Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”[[7]](#footnote-7)3

Dwight Moody: “Character is what you are in the dark.”

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| * Character is who you are and reputation (3) is who people think you are. |

### explanation

“Character is clearly distinct from such concepts as personality, image, reputation, or celebrity. It is the inner reality and quality in which thoughts, speech, decision, behavior, and relations are rooted. As such, character determines behavior just as behavior demonstrates character.”[[8]](#footnote-8)4

“Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.”[[9]](#footnote-9)5

Elbert Hubbard: “Many a man’s reputation would not know his character if they met on the street.”[[10]](#footnote-10)6

William Gladstone: “Character must not be confused with reputation. Character is what a man is: reputation may be what he is not. Character is one’s intrinsic value; reputation is what is thought of him - his value in the market of public opinion. Character is stable and enduring; while the reputation of a man is like his shadow; it sometimes follows and sometimes precedes him; it is sometimes longer, it is sometimes shorter than himself.”

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| * Character is the image (4) of God stamped on a person. |

### explanation

The English word character comes from the Greek word “charasso” which means “to cut into, to engrave, to stamp upon by application of pressure.” It first denoted, “a tool for engraving” and then, “a stamp” as on a coin or a seal.[[11]](#footnote-11)7

The stamp used in minting coins had the image of an emperor or a divine personage upon it. When it was pressed into molten silver or gold it would transfer that image to the coin.

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| 1. Character is developed by the following factors:  * Character comes from God’s presence (5).   *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*  2 Corinthians 3:18 |

### explanation

In this passage, Paul refers to Exodus 34 and Moses’ return from the presence of the Lord.

*28So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights . . . 29When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.*

Exodus 34:28,29

This is an Old Testament picture of a New Testament reality. Moses’ face reflected God’s glory because he had spent forty days in God’s presence. In the New Covenant, the believer’s character will reflect the glory of God when he spends time in His presence.

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| * Character comes from God’s pressure (6).   *3Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4and endurance produces character, and character produces hope . . .*  Romans 5:3,4 |

### explanation

*For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

Hebrews 12:11

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| APPLICATION [The teacher may choose just one question and ask the participants to answer it by discussing within their groups. Class processing will be done after their discussion.]   1. What happens when a leader has charisma and ability, but not character? Give a real-life example with specific details that support your view. 2. What are you intentionally doing to develop character in your life? |

### CLASS PROCESSING (5 MINUTES)

### [At this point, the teacher will ask two to three participants to share what they have discussed in the group discussion during the application.]

### BREAK (10 MINUTES)

# Session 3 – CHARACTER QUALITIES I

### lecture (25 minutes)

In the next four sessions we will examine several essential character qualities for Christian leadership.

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| **Humility**   1. What is humility? |

### explanation

Humility is one of the most misunderstood character qualities. Therefore, in order to understand what humility is we will first examine what it is not.

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| * Humility is **not** self-deprecation (1), shyness, or a lack of ambition. |

### explanation

Self-deprecation is the tendency to undervalue oneself and one’s abilities.[[12]](#footnote-12)1

A humble person may be loud, assertive, and bold.

The Bible disapproves of selfish ambition – not ambition. Ambition is a “strong desire to achieve something”; it is a godly quality. Jesus appealed to His disciples’ ambition when He said, “Whoever wants to become great among you.” He did not rebuke James and John’s desire to sit at His right hand, only their means of attaining it. Paul also provides an example of godly ambition. He said, “I was more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions” and “I labored even more than all of them.”

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| * Humility **is** recognizing that everything (2) we have and everything we are is the result of God’s grace.   *But by the grace of God I am what I am . . .*  1 Corinthians 15:10 |

### explanation

Humility is the habitual frame of mind of a child of God who feels not only that he owes all his natural gifts to God, but that he has been the object of undeserved redeeming love.[[13]](#footnote-13)2

“There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which every one in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves . . . The essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil; Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind . . . As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”[[14]](#footnote-14)3

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| * Humility **is** acknowledging that we can do nothing (3) of eternal benefit without God. |

### explanation

After the Lord told David that He would make his name great, give him rest from all his enemies, and establish the throne of his kingdom forever, David said to the Lord: “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?” (2 Samuel 7:18)

Jesus is our chief example of humility. He said, “By myself I can do nothing” (John 5:30), “I do nothing on my own” (John 8:28), and “I did not speak of my own accord” (John 12:49). This gives an important insight into humility, in that it is a choice. For us, then, while it is true that we are nothing without God, it is also a choice we must make to live that way.

Martin Luther once said, “God creates out of nothing. Therefore until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him.”[[15]](#footnote-15)4

“The axe cannot boast of the trees it has cut down. It could do nothing apart from the woodsman. He made the axe, He sharpened it, and He used it. The moment He throws it aside, it becomes only old iron. Oh that I may never lose sight of this.”[[16]](#footnote-16)5

“Pride is inordinate self-love and it is the cause of every sin... the root of pride is found to consist in man not being, in some way, subject to God and His rule.”[[17]](#footnote-17)6

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| * Humility **is** properly estimating (4) our self.   *. . . I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment . . .*  Romans 12:3 |

### explanation

“My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.” (Psalms 131:1)

Humility is freedom from a sense of one’s own importance.[[18]](#footnote-18)7

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| 1. How is humility measured?  * Humility is measured by how we respond to correction (5). |

### explanation

Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the Lord, God gave him success. But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to God, and entered the temple to burn incense (a task only the priests were allowed). When Azariah the priest confronted him and said, “It is not right for you to burn incense to the Lord,” Uzziah became angry. While he was raging at the priest, leprosy broke out on his forehead. (Excerpted from 2 Chronicles 26:3-19)

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| * Humility is measured by how we respond to human authority (6) figures. |

### explanation

“He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the word of the Lord.” (2 Chronicles 36:12)

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king. For eleven years God sent messengers to him. But he mocked God’s messengers and despised their words. So God handed him and all his people over to the Babylonians. (2 Chronicles 36:11-17)

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| * Humility is measured by how we prioritize the needs (7) of others.   *3Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*  Philippians 2:3,4   * Humility is measured by how we respond to insult (8) and bad treatment.   *When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*  1 Peter 2:23 |

### explanation

When the Syrophoenician woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter, in an effort to promote bold faith in her, Jesus first ignored her and then insulted her saying, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” Instead of bristling with resentment she responded in humility by saying, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” (Matthew 15:22-28)

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| 1. What is the result of humility?  * Grace (9)   *. . . “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*  James 4:6   * Exaltation (10)   *“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*  Luke 14:11   * Wisdom (11)   *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.*  Proverbs 11:2   * Guidance (12)   *He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.*  Psalm 25:9 |

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| APPLICATION [The teacher may choose just one question and ask the participants to answer it by discussing within their groups. Class processing will be done after their discussion.]   1. Explain the difference between: humility and self-deprecation, and shyness and refusing to rely on others for one’s needs. 2. What types of responses measure our humility? 3. How does God treat a person who is genuinely humble? |

### class processing (5 minutes)

### [At this point, the teacher will ask two to three participants to share what they have discussed in the group discussion during the application.]

# Session 4 – CHARACTER QUALITIES II

### Lecture (25 minutes)

In this session, diligence is contrasted with laziness, and integrity is contrasted with dishonesty.

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| **Diligence**  *Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.*  Proverbs 12:27   1. Diligence is the ability to defer immediate rewards (1) for long-term results. |

### explanation

“It is not difficult to say what is meant by moral virtue. One aspect of it consists in the habitual disposition to resist the temptations of immediate pleasure and to postpone the gratification of immediate desires for the sake of achieving a good life as a whole. Deferred gratification—a willingness to give up the pleasures of the moment and a willingness to suffer momentary pains—lies at the heart of moral virtue, without which no one can succeed in making a morally good life. The essence of immaturity consists in having short-run rather than long-run aims, with an insistence upon immediate as opposed to deferred gratification.”[[19]](#footnote-19)1

Diligence is the decision to steer away from distractions and sinful habits that lead away from our goals.

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| 1. Diligence is the willingness to govern (2) ourselves toward a godly purpose. |

### explanation

The most difficult person you will ever have to lead is yourself. No one will give you more trouble, or be more difficult to manage than yourself.

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| The first principle of leadership is lead yourself (3) (1 Timothy 4:16) |

### explanation

“Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.” (1 Timothy 4:16)

If we cannot govern ourselves, we cannot lead anyone else. “He knows not how to rule a kingdom, than cannot manage a Province; nor can he wield a Province, that cannot order a City; nor he order a City, that knows not how to regulate a Village; nor he a Village, that cannot guide a Family; nor can that man Govern well a Family that knows not how to Govern himself; neither can any Govern himself unless his reason be Lord, Will and appetite her Vassals; nor can Reason rule unless herself be ruled by God, and obedient to Him.”[[20]](#footnote-20)2

“The only conquests that are permanent and leave no regrets are our conquests over ourselves.”[[21]](#footnote-21)3

Self-government starts on the inside and manifests on the outside. “I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies, for the hardest victory is over self.” (Aristotle)

The more internal government we have, the less external government we need. Or, the more we govern ourselves, the less we need someone else to govern us.

A lazy person is one who will not work without supervision. “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.” (Proverbs 6:6-11)

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| 1. Diligence is the forethought (4) to set goals and the refusal to procrastinate in achieving those goals. |

### explanation

A lazy person will not prepare for the future. “The lazy man will not plow because of winter; He will beg during harvest and have nothing.” (Proverbs 20:4)

Procrastination presumes upon God that we will have a tomorrow. Bobby Knight defined discipline as, “Doing what has to be done, when it has to be done, as well as it can be done.”

Diligence is the decision to develop habits that lead toward our goals. Right thoughts produce right actions, right actions produce right habits, right habits produce right character, and right character produces a right destiny.

A lazy person is continually stymied by obstacles. “The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.” (Proverbs 15:19)

The lazy man even makes up imaginary obstacles if there are not enough real ones around. “The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion outside; I shall be slain in the streets!’” (Proverbs 22:13)

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| 1. Diligence is the determination to stay on course even during difficult (5) times. 2. God commands (6) us to be diligent to study His Word (2 Timothy 2:15), to watch over our hearts (Proverbs 4:23), and to preserve the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3). |

### explanation

“Be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)

“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)

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| APPLICATION [The teacher may choose just one question and ask the participants to answer it by discussing within their groups. Class processing will be done after their discussion.]   1. What makes diligence so difficult for so many people? What can we do to be consistent and diligent? 2. In what specific area in your life do you struggle the most with laziness? Have you improved over the past few months? Is the problem getting worse? Why? What can you do about it? |

### class processing (5 minutes)

### [At this point, the teacher will ask two to three participants to share what they have discussed in the group discussion during the application.]

### BREAK (10 MINUTES)

# Session 5 – CHARACTER QUALITIES III

### LECTURE (25 MINUTES)

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| **Faithfulness**  What is Faithfulness?   1. Faithfulness is adhering firmly and devotedly (1) to a person, a cause, or an idea.[[22]](#footnote-22)1 |

### explanation

Timothy was firmly devoted to Paul and his cause.

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| *19I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon . . . 20For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22But you know Timothy’s proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.*  Philippians 2:19-22 |

### explanation

Daniel demonstrated this quality of faithfulness. “It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one). Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.” (Daniel 6:1-4)

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| 1. Faithfulness is proving yourself worthy of trust (2).   *Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.*  1 Corinthians 4:2 |

### explanation

Synonyms listed with these definitions are faithful, loyal, true, constant, fast, steadfast, and staunch.

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| 1. Faithfulness is the result of a life of faith (3). |

### explanation

The word used for faithfulness in the New Testament is the noun “pistis”, which has an active and a passive sense. In the active sense it often means “faith, belief, and trust.” But in the passive sense it means “faithfulness and reliability.” It is sometimes difficult to determine whether “pistis” should be translated “faith” or “faithfulness.” The reason is that faithfulness is the result of having faith.[[23]](#footnote-23)2

“Pistis” is indeed a great word. It describes the man on whose faithful service we may rely, on whose loyalty we may depend, whose word we can unreservedly accept. It describes the man in whom there is the unswerving and inflexible fidelity of Jesus Christ, and the utter dependability of God.”[[24]](#footnote-24)3

Senator Mark Hatfield toured Calcutta with Mother Teresa and visiting the “House of Dying,” where sick children were cared for in their last days. Watching Mother Teresa feed and nurse those left by others to die, Hatfield was overwhelmed by the magnitude of the suffering she faced everyday. He asked, “How can you bear the load without being crushed by it?” Mother Teresa replied, “My dear Senator, I am not called to be successful, I am called to be faithful.”[[25]](#footnote-25)4

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| **How do we Learn Faithfulness?**   1. We learn faithfulness from the example of God (4).[[26]](#footnote-26)5   *“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.”*  Deuteronomy 7:9 |

### explanation

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:22, 23) Jeremiah wrote Lamentations during the siege of Jerusalem, one of the darkest times in Israel’s history. Even in the midst of God’s judgment he could still say, “Great is your faithfulness.”

God is faithful to His Word. “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?” (Numbers 23:19)

In the Old Testament, God’s faithfulness and covenant love are closely related. (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 25:10; 85:10) The most profound example of His faithfulness is the bond between God and the people of the northern kingdom of Israel. In spite of their unfaithfulness, God reminds them that He is betrothed to them in faithfulness (Hosea 2:20).[[27]](#footnote-27)6

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| 1. We learn faithfulness from the example of Jesus (5). |

Jesus is our supreme model of faithfulness.

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| *2. . . who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God’s house. . . . 6but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son . . .*  Hebrews 3:2,6 |

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| 1. We learn faithfulness from the example of godly (6) men and women. |

“For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 4:17)

“Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything.” (Ephesians 6:21)

“Epaphras is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf.” (Colossians 1:7)

“Onesimus is our faithful and dear brother.” (Colossians 4:9)

“With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly.” (1 Peter 5:12)

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| **What are the Rewards of Faithfulness?**   1. The faithful person will enjoy God’s presence (7).   *I will look with favor on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister to me.*  Psalm 101:6   1. The faithful person will be blessed (8).   *A faithful man will abound with blessings . . .*  Proverbs 28:20   1. The faithful person will receive more responsibility (9).   *“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’”*  Matthew 25:21 |

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| APPLICATION Why is faithfulness a critical component of the character of a leader? Describe a leader in your life who has been faithful and explain the impact of that in your own life. |

### class processing (5 minutes)

### [At this point, the teacher will ask two to three participants to share what they have discussed in the group discussion during the application.]

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| assignment Read Mark 14 and 15, and look for evidence of the characteristic of faithfulness in the life of Jesus. |

### BREAK (10 MINUTES)

# Session 6 – CHARACTER QUALITIES IV

### lecture (25 minutes)

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| **Perseverance**  What is Perseverance? |

### explanation

“The Bible characterizes the Christian life as a race to run (1 Corinthians 9:24), a fight to win (1 Timothy 4:9), and a work to labor over (1 Corinthians 15:58). Obviously, no one can continue to run, fight, or labor without perseverance.”[[28]](#footnote-28)1

Some of the synonyms for perseverance are endurance, persistence, tenacity, constancy, steadfastness, resolution, single-mindedness, and commitment.

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| 1. Perseverance is steady persistence (1) in adhering to a course of action, a belief, or a purpose.[[29]](#footnote-29)2   *12Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.13Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14I press on toward the goal for the price of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*  Philippians 3:12-14 |

### explanation

“Perseverance is the hard work you do after you get tired of doing the hard work you already did.”[[30]](#footnote-30)3

John and Charles Wesley were blessed with a patient mother. At one time her husband said, “I marvel at your patience! You have told that child the same thing twenty times!” Susanna Wesley looked fondly at the child and said, “Had I spoken the matter only nineteen times, I should have lost all my labour.”[[31]](#footnote-31)4

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| 1. Perseverance is continually doing something in spite of difficulties,(2) obstacles, and failure.   *Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring.*  2 Thessalonians 1:4 |

### explanation

“Perseverance is the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose by even the greatest trials and sufferings.”[[32]](#footnote-32)5

“ . . . when we are persecuted, we endure it . . .” (1 Corinthians 4:12)

“Perseverance is accepting a difficult situation from the Lord without giving Him a deadline to remove it.”[[33]](#footnote-33)6

“But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.” (1 Peter 2:20)

“I’ve missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times, I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”[[34]](#footnote-34)7

In 1968, the country of Tanzania selected John Stephen Akhwari to represent it in the Mexico City Olympics. During the marathon, Akhwari fell and severely injured his knee and ankle. By 7:00 p.m., a runner from Ethiopia had won the race, and all other competitors had finished and been cared for. Just a few thousand spectators were left in the stadium when a police siren at the gate caught their attention. Limping through the gate came Akhwari, his leg wrapped in a bloody bandage. Those present began to cheer as the courageous man completed the final lap of the race. Later, a reporter asked Akhwari: “Why did you continue the race after you were so badly injured?” He replied, “My country did not send me 7,000 miles to begin a race; they sent me to finish the race.”[[35]](#footnote-35)8

Age 22, failed in business / Age 23, ran for legislature and was defeated / Age 24, failed again in business / Age 25, elected to legislature / Age 27, had a nervous breakdown / Age 29 defeated for Speaker / Age 31, defeated for Elector / Age 34, defeated for Congress / Age 37, elected to Congress / Age 39, defeated for Congress / Age 46, defeated for Senate / Age 47, defeated for Vice-President / Age 49, defeated for Senate / Age 50, elected President of the United States. His name is Abraham Lincoln.

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| 1. Perseverance is the steadfast effort to follow God’s commands (3) and to do His work.[[36]](#footnote-36)9   *“As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.”*  2 Thessalonians 3:13 |

### explanation

“The Greek word for perseverance is *hupomone*, which is defined as steadfastness, constancy, and endurance. In the New Testament, it is the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.”[[37]](#footnote-37)10

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| **What Does Perseverance Produce?**   1. Perseverance produces Christian maturity (4).   *2Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*  James 1:2-4 |

### explanation

“. . . if we endure, we will also reign with Him.” (2 Timothy 2:12)

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| 1. Perseverance produces lasting fruit (5).   “As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.”  Luke 8:15 |

### explanation

In Western Africa, it was fourteen years before one convert was received into the church; in East Africa, ten; in New Zealand, nine years before one baptism; in Tahiti, it was sixteen years before the first harvest. William Carey labored seven years before the first Hindu convert was baptized. In Burma, Adoniram Judson toiled for seven years before he had one convert. He said in a letter to England, “Beg the churches to have patience. Tell the brethren success is as certain as the promise of a faithful God can make it.”[[38]](#footnote-38)11

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| **How do we Persevere?**   1. We persevere by keeping our eyes focused (6) upon Jesus.   *1Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*  Hebrews 12:1-3 |

**explanation**

The author is referencing the Greek foot race that was run on a straight course 600 feet long. The judge sat at the end of the course holding the prize, and the participants could see him from start to finish. If a runner took his eyes off the judge to look at the spectators (the cloud of witnesses) or the other runners, he would lose his advantage and jeopardize his chance of winning the race.

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| 1. We persevere by not throwing away our confidence (7).   *35Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. . . . 38”but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”*  Hebrews 10:35,38 |

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| APPLICATION (10 minutes) Describe the difference between faithfulness and perseverance. How do they work together? How are they unique? |

### class processing (5 minutes)

### [At this point, the teacher will ask two to three participants to share what they have discussed in the group discussion during the application.]

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| assignment The author of the letter to the Hebrews was concerned that they would not persevere in the midst of the difficulties they were facing. Read chapters 11 and 12 in that light, looking for spiritual motivations for perseverance. |

### end of this course

### [At this point, you may give last-minute instructions, allow time for filling out feedback forms, and remind the class of the *Christian Character* to be done next class.]

1. Garry D. Nation, Character Deficiency Syndrome, www.leaderu.com [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Larry Spears, Reflections on Leadership, www.greenleaf.org [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ted Engstrom, The Making of a Christian Leader, p. 37 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Quoted in, Rick Warren, Leadership is Serving Others [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 1 www.josephsoninstitute.org/quotes/quotecharacter.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 2 Leon Trotsky, Diary in Exile, entry for 5 April 1935 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 3 http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/character [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 4 Os Guinness, Character Counts, p. 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 5 Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln’s Own Stories [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 6 http://www.quotationspage.com [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 7 Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 1 The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 2 International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 3 C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 4 Quoted in Edythe Draper, Quotations for the Christian World [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 5 Quoted in, J. Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Leadership, p. 81 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 6 Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 1,77 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 7 Revell Bible Dictionary [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 1 Mortimer J. Adler, Parenting: The Toughest Job On Earth [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 2 Grotius (1583-1645) was a Dutch statesman and author. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. 3 Napoleon Bonaparte, http://en.thinkexist.com/quotations/conquest [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. 1 The American Heritage Dictionary [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. 2 http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\_id=457 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. 3 William Barclay, Quoted at http://www.bible.ca/eo/fs/fs\_15.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. 4 http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\_id=457 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. 5 The following New Testament verses proclaim God’s faithfulness: I Corinthians 1:9, I Corinthians 10:13, II Corinthians 1:18, I Thessalonians 5:24, II Thessalonians 3:3, II Timothy 2:13, Hebrews 10:23, and I John 1:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. 6 Louis Goldberg, Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. 1 J. Hampton Keathley, Endurance or Perseverance and Patience, www.bible.org [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. 2 The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. 3 Newt Gingrich, http://www.quotegarden.com/perseverance.html [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. 4 Quoted in, Patience, www.characterjournal.com [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. 5 Strong’s Dictionary of Greek Words [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. 6 Bill Gothard, Institute in Basic Life Principles [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. 7 Michael Jordan, Quoted in, Failing Your Way to Success, entrepreneur.com [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. 8 http://characterthatcounts.gospelcom.net/charqual/endurancenew.html [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. 9 Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. 10 Mark A. Copeland, The Need for Perseverance, www.ccel.org [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. 11 Quoted in, Character Journal #6: Patience, www.characterjournal.com [↑](#footnote-ref-38)