

Team Ministry Bible Studies

Eleven Lessons

**WELS Commission on Parish Schools
Team Ministry Process
July, 1998**

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Figure 1. The effect of the concentration of the *Agrobacterium* suspension on the transformation efficiency of *Agrobacterium* strains. The *Agrobacterium* strains were grown in the YEA medium for 24 h at 28°C. The cell concentration of the strains was adjusted to 10⁸ cells/ml. The cell suspension was mixed with the plant tissue and the transformation efficiency was determined. The results were expressed as the mean ± SD of three independent experiments. The asterisk indicates a significant difference between the control and the treated group ($P < 0.05$).

Eleven Bible Studies

Team Ministry

Nine fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faithfulness

Gentleness

Self-control

and

Humility

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Team Ministry Process

Bible Study Series

Introduction

This set of 11 Bible studies has been prepared for use by Lutheran elementary school faculties as part of the Team Ministry Process. The first in the set is entitled *Team Ministry* and focuses on several Scripture passages which contain important truths related to team ministry. The next ones explore Scripture truths related to the nine fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The 11th study explores Scripture truths related to "humility", another vital fruit of the Spirit.

A school's team (teachers, board of education, pastor, and principal) as well as school counselors have weighty responsibilities which have eternal consequences. This work is important and sensitive. We, therefore, turn to Scripture where the Lord identifies numerous characteristics which every team member and every counselor will want to have. The reason for developing these characteristics is to strengthen the team ministry in the school and thus help each school's team member improve his/her ministry.

Each of these studies is estimated to take between 45 - 60 minutes. This is only an estimate. Groups are encouraged to work at their own pace with the goal of understanding the Scripture truths and applying them to the lives of the individuals in the group. Not every group will complete the entire study in the designated time. Having a meaningful group study in which the truths are understood and then applied to individual lives is more important than answering every printed question.

For ease of study most of the Scripture references are printed in the text. In several of the studies the group is asked to read a portion of Scripture which is not printed in the study and is to be read from the Bible. For each printed passage it will help you understand that section of Scripture if you also read the context.

These studies are designed to be used in small groups. Keeping the groups small gives every member of the group an opportunity to share his/her insights regarding the concept being studied. If the group or faculty is larger than five or six, the group could be divided into smaller groups. One goal of these Bible studies is to involve actively every member of the team, because active involvement results in growth.

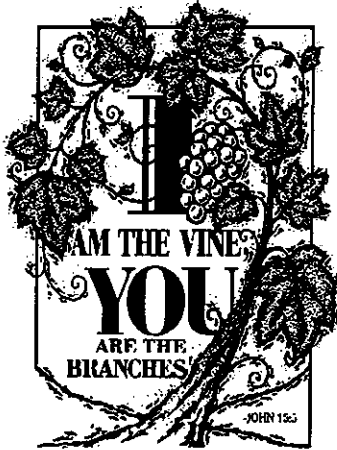
The method suggested for study is simple and straight forward. Members of the group take turns reading the introductory comments and passages out loud, and then the group discusses the question or statement. During the discussion additional insights related to the passage will surface. Discuss these.

Special effort was made to ask questions and include comments so the Scripture truths could be applied to the members of a Lutheran elementary school's ministry team, namely, board of education members, pastor, teachers, and principal.

We encourage each of you to share and disclose your inner feelings, your problems, your weaknesses, your strengths, and your insights. The Holy Spirit will use your discussions of Scripture to comfort you, to strengthen you, to strengthen your team, to strengthen your commitment to working with your team, to gain a greater appreciation of the challenges your team members face, and, most important of all, to strengthen your trust and love for our Lord and Savior.

We beseech our Lord that he guide, direct, and bless your Bible studies so that our gracious Lord is glorified and that the students, parents, and congregation whom you serve will grow in their love and honor for our Lord.

Team Ministry



The Lord has given us in his word some very clear principles regarding the gospel ministry and personal relations among you who work in that ministry.

Those principles of Scripture are the solid foundation on which the Team Ministry Process is built. If you team members, through the Holy Spirit, know and appropriate those truths, the work of Christ's ministry in your school will be enhanced. As our Lord promises he will bless team members, students, and parents as the team members study Scripture truths and apply those truths to their ministry.

This bible study on **Team Ministry** explores numerous truths which are important to the concept of your school's ministry team working together for the common goal of assisting parents with the task of nurturing their children as disciples of Jesus.

This study is designed to be used by any combination of team members: board of education members, principal, teachers, or pastor.

We suggest this study method: if the group is large, divide into small groups of three to four and work through the study. Because the Scripture truths discussed in this study are the foundation for the team ministry in your school, it is important that each team member study those truths and apply them to his/her ministry.

1. From the passage below select several important truths related to team ministry. For each truth tell why it is important.

John 15:5-9

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

Your school's mission

1. Your ministry team is similar to most other teams. They have a goal, an objective, something they are striving for. That goal may simply be enjoyment, or it may be winning a prize, or just performing well. Your ministry team also has a goal, a mission. Write on the lines below your school's mission.
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-

2. Now study the following passages, and, if necessary, revise your mission statement.
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Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

1 Corinthians 10:31

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

A servant attitude

Galatians 5:13

Serve one another in love.

1. Tell of some specific act of service one of your colleagues on your school's team has done for you and which strengthened your school's team.
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2. Tell of an opportunity you had to serve one of your colleagues. Share what you did or what you did not do to use the opportunity to serve.
-

Strengthening team members

Recognizing and calling attention to blessings our Lord gives us and our school through the faithful efforts of team members is important. Our Lord did that. So did the Apostle Paul in his letters. Such recognition of blessings from our Lord is important to making your ministry team stronger.

1. Recall several examples when Jesus recognized and complimented someone for his/her faithful action or words.
-

2. Share an example in which you missed an opportunity to recognize a good thing done by one of your team members.
3. It is not particularly difficult to encourage a colleague by complimenting him/her on a job well-done. The more challenging task is talking to a colleague about a weakness which needs to be corrected. The following passages will give us some important insights as go about the work of helping one another by discussing areas of ministry we need to improve.

2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

1. What is meant by the words "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"?

2. Why did our Lord want his word to be in us richly before we teach and admonish one another?

3. Why is it difficult for each one of us to correct, rebuke, and admonish a colleague?

4. In the Timothy passage our Lord tells us "to rebuke...with great patience." In 1 Corinthians 13 our Lord reminds us that "love is kind." Share with one another how we can be patient and show love when we rebuke one another.

5. Why is it harder to rebuke and correct for some of you than others?

6. Give an example of a colleague correcting you with great patience.

7. Why may it be difficult for teachers to correct the principal, pastor, or board of education?

8. What can the principal, pastor, or board members do which would make it easier for teacher to evaluate them?

2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Give an example of how a colleague in a discussion with you demonstrated deep concern for living "in peace."



Love

The list of nine "fruits" in Galatians 5:22 begins with "love." There is good reason for that order. The Apostle Paul explains that in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. One of his comments is: "If I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." That is how important love is in the life of a Christian, and that is especially so in your life as a team member on your school's ministry team. Our love, however, needs a foundation. That foundation is our Lord God's love for us and all people.

These two concepts, God's love and our love, form the content of this Bible study.

Our Lord's love

Vine's *Expository Dictionary* (a part of the *PC Study Bible* which is a software program available in windows format) defines love in this way: "Love can be known for the action it prompts." That explains why Scripture says in 1 John 4:8: "God is love." Our Lord has every right to equate himself with love for he made the supreme sacrifice. The Lord in Psalm 36 and 117 describes his love: "reaches to the heavens" and "the great love of the Lord."

Discuss why the Lord's love needed to be that expansive just for you.

Psalm 33:5

The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.

Why does that verse provide special comfort and assurance for you as team members?

Psalm 86:15

But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

1. The Lord's love and faithfulness go hand-in-hand. That is no surprise. Why?

2. Name several other characteristics of our Lord which pour forth from his love.

Our love for our Lord

Matthew 22:37

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

1. Jesus in verse 38 calls the command you see in verse 37 "the first and greatest commandment." Why?

2. How does loving the Lord first affect the relationships among team members?

Our love for others

John 14:15

If you love me, you will obey what I command.

In your daily life as a team member working with your colleagues, share what that passage means to you.

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

These verses reinforce why the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22 listed "love" as the first fruit. All of the other fruits flow from love. Love, as Vine said, prompts action. For each of the nine results of love listed above give a specific action from your ministry which demonstrates love, especially focusing on your relationship with team members.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Joy



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Romans 15:13

Our Lord has blessed us in numerous ways. Jesus has made eternal joy real for us when we had no hope of making that a reality for ourselves. Then think about the joy our gracious Lord gives us in this life: the privilege of sharing our Lord's comforting message in the public ministry. We will discuss both of those "joys" in this study.

Rejoicing in our Lord

Psalm 5:11

But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

1. Relate a recent emotional, physical, or spiritual situation from your life in the public ministry in which you did "take refuge" in the Lord.

-
2. What happened to make your heart sing for joy?

Psalm 28: 7

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

1. In the first clause of the first sentence, what is the significance of the word "is"?

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2. What is the relationship between that word "is" and the clause "my heart trusts in him"?

-
3. What is our Lord in this passage (consider the entire passage) saying to us in your life as a member of your school's ministry team?

-
4. When we show joy in our ministry, what impact does this have on our coworkers? On our students? On parents?
-

Psalm 51:12

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

The following words of Psalm 51 sung in our Sunday worship service have special meaning for each of us:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your spirit.

1. Share how the Lord worked through a colleague/friend to restore you?

2. What a joy and privilege to be used by the Lord to bring the joy of salvation to a colleague, student, or parent. How can we better prepare ourselves for that joyful and awesome responsibility?

Peace



In our lives as Christians the concept of peace has two main applications: peace between us and our just Lord and peace between me and the people I associate with. We will focus on those two applications of peace in this Bible study.

Peace between us and our Lord

Isaiah 53:5

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

1. Our Savior fought the most difficult, horrendous war imaginable to win peace between us and the just God. What is your personal reaction to that?
-

2. How has and will that fact continue to affect your ministry? Give some practical examples from your every-day ministry.
-

Romans 8:6

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

1. Our life is controlled by the Spirit. What effect does that have on our relations with members of our school's team?
-

2. Agree/disagree. Peace and harmony on your staff is solely a function of the degree to which the mind and heart of each person is "controlled by the Spirit." Explain.
-

Peace between me and my team members

Romans 14:19

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

1. When the Apostle Paul by inspiration uses the words "make every effort", what message is he giving us in our team ministry at our school?
-

2. In the first column below list actions which promote peace on your school's ministry team. Then in the second column list actions which hamper peace on your team. Be specific, think about actions you have done or another team member has done.

NOTE: Discussing the actions of individuals under "hamper" can be very sensitive. As we learned from the first Bible study "Team Ministry" each of you will need to be sensitive to the feelings of others as you discuss each others areas of weakness which need improvement. But be sure to discuss them because we cannot improve if we do not recognize our weaknesses. The goal of each member will be to promote peace by evangelically helping each team member grow in promoting peace.

Promote	Hamper
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

3. Have each individual alone do this exercise. Select two under "promote" which you do well. Then select two under "hamper" which you at times do. Be ready to discuss them with the members of your group.
4. Discuss the two items each team member selected from the "hamper" column. Consider these questions: How can I change? How can we help each other change and thus promote peace?

Patience

Note

Several days prior to beginning the study of this "fruit" ask the team members to read Nehemiah 9 to learn what is the recurring theme in that chapter.



In today's society, one of fast everything, one of instant gratification, patience does not receive much emphasis. But our Lord encourages us to cultivate our patience so it grows. May our patient Lord bless your study so that your patience blossoms and becomes a very special blessing to your personal ministry and to the ministry of your school.

Proverbs 19:11

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

1. Agree/disagree. The wisdom spoken of in Proverbs 19:11 is the same wisdom as the five wise virgins possessed in the parable of the ten virgins which Jesus told in Matthew 25. Explain.

2. Explain the relationship between patience as used in Proverbs 19: 11 and as it is used in **2 Timothy 4:2:**

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction.

Our Lord's patience

Nehemiah 9:30

For many years you were patient with them.

1. As you likely are aware this passage refers to the Lord's patience with Israel. Please read the entire ninth chapter of Nehemiah to help you understand fully the meaning of the 30th verse. What is the recurring theme (think of Israel's action and the Lord's reaction) in Israel's history to this point?

2. Has our Lord displayed the same level of patience with us in our personal life? Explain.

3. Has our Lord displayed the same level of patience with us in our life in the public ministry? Explain.

Paul, our example

2 Corinthians 6: 3-10

3 We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. **4** Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; **5** in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; **6** in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; **7** in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; **8** through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; **9** known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; **10** sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Give two reasons why the Apostle Paul worked very hard to be patient with the Corinthians?

Our patience

Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

4. Which words of this passage tell what our motivation is for striving to be patient?
-

5. What does it mean to "clothe yourselves with...patience"?
-

James 5:10

Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

1. Take turns sharing how you were less than patient with a team member. Give particulars: What did you say? How did you say it? What facial expressions and body language did you use?
-
-

2. Take turns sharing an example in which one of your team members showed great patience with you. Give particulars: What did he/she say? How did he/she say it? What facial expressions and body language did he/she use?
-
-

Kindness

Every Christian appreciates a kind person, one who shows love in special ways: a comforting word in a stressful time, a helpful hand in time of need, or a special hospital visit. A kind person is one who cares about you.

Before we delve into the kindness of people, we will study the perfect example of kindness, our Lord God.



Our Lord, the perfect example of kindness

Ephesians 2:1-10

Read this Scripture selection out loud. Note that a reading of all of these verses is important to the understanding of the word "kindness" in verse 7.

- 1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
- 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.
- 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.
- 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,
- 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved.
- 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
- 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.
- 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--
- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.
- 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

1. From verses 1-3 give four or five expressions which described us before the Holy Spirit rescued us.
-
-

2. In verse 3 the Apostle Paul describes how evil we can become without the restraints of God's law. Which words from the verse describe this condition?
-

3. After reminding us how utterly evil we are, the Apostle comforts us with the welcome message of our Lord's kindness, his love and mercy. Look in Ephesians 3:17-18 and give another description of our Lord's love and kindness.
-

4. In Ephesians 2:10 it says we are "God's workmanship." Discuss what that means for you.

5. Agree/disagree. Our Lord's "workmanship" continues until he takes us to heaven. Explain.

6. Agree/disagree. Because of our individual personalities the levels of kindness which we show may differ. Explain.

Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

1. Explain what is meant by "clothe yourselves with ... kindness"? Does this directive have any time limit?

2. Take turns sharing with the group two examples of each of the following:

a. A situation in which you showed kindness to a team member, student, or parent. Give particulars.

b. A situation in which you were unkind. Then tell how you might have shown kindness.

Goodness



In this study we will identify some of the features of our Lord's goodness. Then we will use the Lord's goodness as the example for our efforts at goodness.

Our Lord's goodness

Exodus 33:19

And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

1. In verse 18 of Exodus 33 Moses asked the Lord to "show me your glory." The Lord responded by saying: "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you." What is the significance of our Lord showing Moses his goodness when Moses asked to see God's glory?

2. What a parade that must have been for Moses. He got a first-hand witness of our Lord's goodness. If you had been there what do you think you would have seen? Before answering orally, have each individual take a minute to write down one or two answers to the question.

2 Chronicles 6:41

Now arise, O LORD God, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. May your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, may your saints rejoice in your goodness.

1. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple included the words of this text. Is the meaning of the Lord's "goodness" in this Chronicles passage the same as in the Exodus passage discussed earlier? Explain.

2. Have the members of your group take turns telling of one evidence the Lord's goodness which Solomon and the people were rejoicing about.

3. Again take turns and share (write them on the line before sharing orally) one evidence of the Lord's goodness in
 - a. your spiritual life. _____
 - b. your family life. _____
 - c. your life as a principal, teacher, pastor, or board member. _____

Nehemiah 9:25

They captured fortified cities and fertile land; they took possession of houses filled with all kinds of good things, wells already dug, vineyards, olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. They ate to the full and were well-nourished; they reveled in your great goodness.

1. Please read the entire ninth chapter of Nehemiah so that you get the full meaning of the 25th verse. Which evidence of the Lord's goodness were the people most grateful for?
-

2. Why did Nehemiah recount for the people the Lord's continuing goodness?
-

Our goodness

Psalms 116:12

How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me?

Before discussing the next two statements orally, take two minutes to write your answers to the statements.

1. Agree/disagree. I can never "repay the LORD for all his goodness to me." Explain.
-

2. Agree/disagree. I have repaid "the LORD for all his goodness to me." Explain.
-

Romans 15:14

I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

1. What is the significance of the Apostle Paul using "full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent" together as he assures his readers that they can instruct one another?
-

2. What does that have to say about us as we serve in the Lord's public ministry?
-

3. If we are "full of goodness" how will that show in your ministry at school?
-

Faithfulness

Faithfulness is another "fruit of the Spirit" which the Apostle Paul, by inspiration, has identified in Galatians 5:22. Acquiring this fruit helps to make us well-rounded servants of Jesus.

What is my grade?

Every reputable employer seeks faithful employees. Pastors desire faithful members. Principals and teachers are thankful for faithful parents.

As a group list the attitudes and behaviors of a faithful person. An attitude is how I feel about something. For example, I think very highly of the Scriptures. A behavior is an action. A behavior which flows from my attitude about the Scriptures is that I read the Scriptures daily.

Attitudes	Behaviors
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

Now each individual working alone is to evaluate himself/herself by placing a grade - A, B, C, or D - next to each attitude and behavior.

Now consider **Isaiah 64:6**:

All of us have become as one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

1. After pondering the passage, grade yourself again. What grades did you give yourself now?

2. Which words in the passage make us realize that we not only deserve "F's" but zeros?

How does **Psalms 51:5** relate to the grade you just gave yourself?

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Grades changed

How depressing it would be if we had to live our entire life knowing that our grades for faithfulness are zeros. That would truly be living without hope. We, however, turn to our Lord's assurances that we have hope. The Easter message we hear in our devotions and worship services provide that hope. In other words, our Lord's faithfulness changes our grades. Examine each of the following passages to see how the Lord changes the grades on our report card.

Psalm 36:5

Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

What impact does our Lord's promise that his faithfulness reaches "to the skies" have on the change in your grades?

Psalm 89:8

O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you.

Our Lord in this verse mentions two of his characteristics in one breath, mighty and faithfulness. Why is that significant for you?

Psalm 117:2

The faithfulness of our Lord endures forever.

1. Why is it important to you to know that our Lord's faithfulness never ends?
-
2. Discuss the relationship of Psalm 117:2 and the parable of the prodigal son as given in Luke 15:11-32.
-

Psalm 115:1

Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.

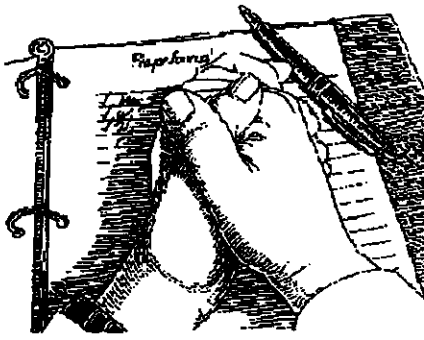
Why is the truth of this passage hard for us to accept?

Application to our lives

Any faithfulness you possess is an undeserved gift from our Lord and as stated in Galatians 5:22 a "fruit of the Spirit." In each of the following situations share with the group why being faithful is very challenging.

Select two or three of these situation. Discuss how faithfulness applies to your service on the team.

1. Arriving early and staying late at school.
2. Working with students who have learning problems.
3. Lesson planning
4. Continuing education
5. If you are a mom or dad your obligation in that role
6. Your personal Bible study



Gentleness

Gentleness is the eighth "fruit" listed in Galatians 5:22. Look at those nine again: love joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Each of those fruits adds a unique dimension to a Christian's life and service. We will study "gentleness" by seeing how Jesus modeled it and then our Lord's expectation of us regarding that fruit.

Jesus models gentleness

Matthew 11:28-29

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Notice the three parts of this selection: Christ's invitation, his assurance, and the result for us. Why is the assurance that Jesus is gentle important to you as you take your burdens to him?

Our gentleness

Proverbs 15:1

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

1. Share with the group an incident at school in which your "gentle answer" prevented a nasty confrontation. Describe the other person's reaction to your gentleness.
-
2. Now compare a time in which you used a "harsh word" with a colleague to try and solve a problem. How did the other person react? Did the result enhance your ministry or the ministry of the other person?
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Proverbs 25:15

Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.

1. Explain what the writer means by "a gentle tongue can break a bone." Refer back to Proverbs 15:1.
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2. From this passage we can conclude that patience and gentle speaking go hand-in-hand. Discuss why. Then give examples from your ministry which would demonstrate that connection. Think of your relationship with colleagues, parents, board members, congregation members.
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Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

1. In this verse the Apostle Paul indicates that humility and gentleness are partners. Explain why.
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2. At the end of the verse the Apostle says: "bearing with one another in love." Explain the relationship between gentleness and love.
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3. Each of us prior to this Bible study practiced a certain level of gentleness. But as Christians, called servants of our Lord Jesus, we are disciples "under construction". We, through the working of the Holy Spirit, strive to follow ever more closely our Lord's encouragement to "be completely ... gentle." Share with the group how you in your ministry will strive to be more gentle. Consider your relationships with parents, colleagues, spouse, students, your own children, congregation members, board of education.
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1 Peter 3:4

Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

Also read verses 1-3 of 1 Peter 3. The Lord here is speaking to wives, but it is abundantly clear from the other passages we have studied that our Lord desires that each of us possess an inner quality stated in this passage: "the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit." What a blessing a person with such a spirit is. Share with the group someone you know who has such a spirit. Tell of an incident in which the gentle spirit was evident.

Self-control

Self-control is a virtue which receives far too little emphasis in our society today. Over-indulgence seems to be the rule of the day whether that is eating, drinking, recreation, sex, anger, or you name it. Satisfying the veil desires of the flesh seems to be the rule of the day. Conversely, as we who serve in our schools, we thank our Lord for the colleague who controls anger well, the student who puts aside his own desires so that he/she can help another student, the parents who teach their children to crucify their sinful flesh in favor of self-control.

In this Bible study we will use the Word, Law and Gospel, to help us as team ministers emphasize two truths: living self-controlled lives is God-pleasing and our motivation for doing so comes entirely from our Lord.

Proverbs 25:28

Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.

Briefly comment on the analogy used by the writer; then make a personal application of that truth to your ministry.

2 Peter 1:5-7

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

1. Discuss the relationship between knowledge and self-control. Be sure to use the appropriate definition for knowledge.
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2. What does our Lord promise regarding your life and ministry if you possess the qualities listed?
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3. Give some specific examples from your ministry which demonstrates the truth the Lord stated, namely, that the greater your self-control the more productive your ministry will be.
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1 Thessalonians 5:4-11

4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1. Discuss verse 6.
 - a. What is the meaning of the first part of the verse?

 - b. Apply the second part of the verse to yourself in your relationship with colleagues or to other parts of your ministry.

2. What is the relationship between faith and love and self-control?

3. Agree/disagree. Verse 11 encourages team ministry. Explain your answer.

4. Go back to the words "be alert" in verse 6. Tell why and how that admonition is important to achieving self-control. As you answer consider how being alert is important to your personal sanctified life and to "encouraging one another" as stated in verse 11.

1 Peter 1:13

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1. Why did Peter encourage us to "prepare your minds" and be self-controlled" in the same passage?

2. Discuss the relationship between self-control and setting "your hope fully on the grace to be given you." Don't forget the word "fully" in your discussion.

Humility

This characteristic is included in this Team Ministry Process series of Bible studies because of its importance in the life and work of a team member. Team work thrives when members of the team possess this quality of humility. Conversely, team work, suffers if one or more of the members do not consistently practice humility in their ministries.

Relationship with Our Lord

Psalm 149:4

For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.

James 4:6

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1. If our Lord "crowns the humble with salvation", what does that say about the spiritual condition of those who are humble?
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2. Discuss this statement: Our Lord rewards with salvation those who are humble, and humility is an undeserved gift from that same Lord.
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James 3:13

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

In our Lord's eyes you are a "wise" person. List some knowledge and beliefs you will possess and some behaviors you will practice because God has blessed you with wisdom.

knowledge _____

beliefs _____

behaviors _____



Relationship with people

1. Why is a proper relationship between our Lord and me necessary before I can establish a God-pleasing relationship with a coworker?

2. Why is humility important when I work with other team members?

Philippians 2:3, 4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

1. Who is meant by “others” in this text? Does the Lord restrict or modify the word “others” ?

2. Apply the truths of this passage to yourself and to team members.

Titus 3:2

Remind the people...to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

1. What is meant by “true humility”?

2. Discuss the relationship between being “peaceable and considerate” and showing “true humility.”

3. Consider this situation: An experienced school counselor is working with a young principal who is having problems. How could each model the Lord’s Word regarding humility?

4. How will an understanding of humility be modeled by the principal and teachers as they complete the teacher analysis phase of the TMP?

5. Have each person from his/her ministry perspective (pastor, principal, teacher, board member) share with the group an example of how he/she might practice humility in dealing with one of the other team members.

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