



SLING 495
YEAR 1



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THE CEO FORUM

MISSION

To engage, encourage, and disciple CEOs and Senior Executives and their families as Christ-following leaders who advance the Kingdom of God.

PURPOSE

Discipling Business Leaders of Influence

VISION

Transformed Executives, Transformed World

WELCOME TO THE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Dear Spiritual Leadership Institute Next Generation Participants,

Thank you for committing to participate in the Spiritual Leadership Institute (SLI) Next Generation Core Class. Our prayer for you is that by walking through this Core Class, you will be sharpened into an even more effective leader and grow in your walk with Christ in all areas of life. This SLI Next Generation Class is part of CEO Forum's ENTRUST Initiative, an impact project of the CEO Forum designed to disciple high performing next generation business leaders. Our prayer is that God would use this three-year experience to develop you into a spiritual leader of influence who advances the Kingdom of God, in both your personal and professional lives.

The heartbeat of the SLI Core Class curriculum is this: your primary calling as a Christ follower is to abide in Christ. When you abide in Christ, transformation – by the power of the Holy Spirit – will occur. When transformation occurs, you recognize what God is doing in your life and in the lives of others. What a privilege and a blessing it is to be joining Him in this Kingdom work as a spiritual leader of influence. A spiritual leader of influence is a trusted agent of the Lord: one who understands, who is willing to follow, and can communicate the message of the heart and mind of God, who seeks to represent Christ in word and action so that His kingdom will be expediently advanced.

One of the primary works of service to God and to others is service through your business. As work is a place where you likely spend over 60% of your waking hours, it is divinely designed by God, for us to be a vital piece in accomplishing His purposes. He accomplishes His work in the world by equipping you with talents, skills, and abilities that he expects to be utilized in service to others and service to him. This work is also a spiritual formation practice where God is using the people, experiences, and workplace challenges to continually mold you into the image of Christ.

Therefore, we rejoice that you are stepping into this formative experience as SLI Next Generation Core Class students. May you aim to grow in the fullness of Christ together, and may God bless you on this journey through the SLI Core Class.



Dr. Rick Lytle
President and CEO, CEO Forum

SLI CORE CLASS SYLLABUS

Year 1: Called by God

Content Overview

- **Session 1:** Experiencing God's Great Salvation
- **Session 2:** God Versus The World
- **Session 3:** Learning to Recognize God's Activity Around You

Learning Objectives

- Understand the critical requirements to live out a God-centered life.
- Understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, both outwardly and inwardly.
- Be able to define God's great plan of salvation and understand its impact for your life.
- Clearly describe the role of the Word and of the Holy Spirit as it pertains to hearing from God.
- Discern the personal costs and benefits of a more intimate relationship with God.

Year 2: Conformed by God

Content Overview

- **Session 1:** Created to be Conformed to the Likeness of Christ
- **Session 2:** Conforming Our Will
- **Session 3:** Conforming Our Choices

Learning Objectives

- Understand how God has equipped you to make choices that honor Him.
- Understand the expectations God has for your decision-making process.
- Implement the truth of "to whom much is given, much is expected" in your stewardship.
- Define the role that prayer and the counsel of others has played in making God-honoring choices.

Year 3: Commissioned by God

Content Overview

- **Session 1:** The Source of Our Assignments
- **Session 2:** The Power for and Impact of Our Assignments
- **Session 3:** The Reward - Becoming a Spiritual Leader of Influence
- **Graduation:** Thesis Presentation "My Life as a Spiritual Leader of Influence in the Marketplace"

Learning Objectives

- Understand your calling from God from Scripture.
- Understand the call God has placed on your life and how He has communicated that to you.
- Understand the necessary needs for you to be able to respond to God's calling.
- Describe your personal calling for today and for your next assignment from God.
- Understand the importance of finishing strong and the impact it has on a believer's life.
- Evaluate where your life is at now and understand how to finish strong.

TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Richard Blackaby | *Spiritual Leadership Institute Teaching Faculty, Senior Teacher*
Email: rblackaby@blackaby.org
Phone: 678-545-2428

Dr. Michael Blackaby | *Spiritual Leadership Institute Teaching Faculty*
Email: mike@canvschurch.ca
Phone: 778-533-2309

Dr. Richard Lytle | *President and CEO*
Email: rick@theceoforum.org
Phone: 325-518-2943

Dr. Vince Vitale | *Faculty Scholar*
Email: vince@theceoforum.org
Phone: 470-316-2655

Joshua Dickens | *Manager of Curriculum & Programs, Spiritual Leadership Institute*
Email: josh@theceoforum.org
Phone: 817-319-8877

Casey McMullin | *Manager | Next Generation & Global Impact Initiatives*
Email: casey@theceoforum.org
Phone: 719-310-4069

Mac McQuiston | *Founder*
Email: mac@theceoforum.org
Phone: 719-359-9340

Kyndal Singleton | *Assistant Director, Spiritual Leadership Institute*
Email: kyndal@theceoforum.org
Phone: 682-999-0327

SLI CLASS PREP CHECKLIST



2 Months Before Class

- RSVP For Class
- Book Your Hotel Room
- Schedule Your Flights



1 Month Before Class

- Review Previous Class Materials (Curriculum, Case Study, Notes)
- Complete Assignments (If Applicable)
- Hotel Booking Deadline (Approximately 1 Month Before Class)



1 Week Before Class

- Preview Upcoming Class Materials (Curriculum and Agenda)
- Review Prayer Requests
- Pack For Class (Business Casual Attire, SLI Journal, SLI Curriculum, Bible, Pen)



After Class

- Plan your Discipleship Conversations
- Review Prayer Requests
- Review Post-Class Information on Cohort Page

Your Cohort Page

This is the home base for current dates, materials, and all event details. Please save for future reference.



YEAR 1
CALLED BY GOD... BEING
(Mark 1:16-20)

SESSION 1
EXPERIENCING GOD'S GREAT SALVATION
(John 15:5; Ephesians 1:3-14)

HOUR 1: UNDERSTANDING GOD'S SALVATION



Key Question: *What happens to you in salvation?*

- I. What does it mean to be “born again”? (**John 3:1-21**)
- II. Foundational truths – SLI participants come from diverse denominational backgrounds. However, there are some core truths concerning God’s salvation that is foundational to all Christ-centered denominations:
 - A. The way to experience salvation. (**Hebrews 4:1-4**)
 1. Salvation is from sin and its consequences. Sin is choosing to disobey God’s word, missing the mark, and living in defiance of God’s will. (**Romans 3:23**)
 2. The consequence for sin is alienation from God, others, and self. Sin not only results in eternal death but brings death, to everything it touches. (**Romans 6:23 & Colossians 1:21**)
 3. God sent His Son to pay the penalty for your sin. (**John 3:16 & II Corinthians 5:21**)
 4. Jesus Christ is the only means of achieving salvation from sin. (**John 14:6; Romans 1:16-17; I Timothy 2:5**)
 5. To be saved, you must confess your sin and place your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. (**Romans 10:10 & Luke 13:3-5**)

Salvation (confessing your sins and placing your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord) is solely by God’s grace – His gift to you, experienced by faith and not based on your efforts. At salvation, you pass over from death and condemnation to life eternal – secure and never to be lost, and become a new creation in Christ. You then begin the process of being transformed into His image, and experience the fruit of the Spirit as you are conformed into the character of Christ. (**Ephesians 2:8-9; John 5:24; John 3:3; II Corinthians 5:17**)

 6. The evidence that you have experienced salvation:*
 - a. The witness of the Holy Spirit within you. (**Romans 8:14-16**)
 - b. The witness of a transformed life. (**II Corinthians 5:17**)
 - B. Scripture is a believer’s foundational and primary guide for Christ-centered living. Out of your relationship with God, the Holy Spirit will guide you to understand and to apply Scripture to your life; as well as reveal to you wisdom regarding His will and desires for your life. (**II Timothy 3:16 & Ephesians 6:17**)*

- C. For many, Christianity has become a religion and not a relationship with God. Religions are mankind's attempts to connect with or understand God. God seeks a personal relationship with you through the person of Jesus Christ. **(John 1:9-14)**
1. Everything you are and do that matters for the Kingdom of God and for eternity will flow out of your relationship with Christ. **(John 15:16)**
 2. Eternal life is to know (progressively, experientially, intimately, and personally) God the Father and God the Son. **(John 17:3)** *“And this, so that I may know Him [experientially, becoming more thoroughly acquainted with Him, understanding the remarkable wonders of His Person more completely] and [in that same way experience] the power of His resurrection [which overflows and is active in believers], and [that I may share] the fellowship of His sufferings, by being continually conformed [inwardly into His likeness even] to His death [dying as He did].”* **(Philippians 3:10, Amplified)**
 3. Every other goal and success in your life is worthless compared to knowing Christ. **(Philippians 3:7-9)**
- D. There are numerous types of changes that may be required of us so we are of maximum use to God. This may involve adjustments in our:
- Beliefs.
 - Values.
 - Priorities.
 - Time.
 - Commitments.
 - Money.
 - Home.
 - Family.
 - Preparation.
 - Focus.

Summary: Religion is man's attempt to become a better person in an effort to reach out to or please God. God's salvation is revolutionary – a transformation from death to life – becoming a new creation. The process to experience this restoration of a broken relationship with Him involves owning your choices that caused your rebellion and alienation, owning your hopelessness, accepting His provision, Jesus Christ, and knowing and trusting who He reveals Himself to be through the Scriptures. This necessitates an ongoing adjustment of your life to Truth – confession and forgiveness – so that His Kingdom, His will becomes paramount in your life.

**Please see the Appendix for further notes on Understanding God's Salvation*

Reflection Questions:

1. Are you currently experiencing the Holy Spirit confirming with your spirit that you are a child of God?
2. Has your Christian life been characterized more by religion or by relationship with Christ?

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

HOUR 2: ABIDING IN CHRIST (John 15:1-11)



Key Question: *What does it mean to abide in Christ?*

- I. The purpose of abiding—to produce much fruit.
 - A. The Vinedresser expects the branches to produce fruit. He is a master at achieving the maximum yield.
 - B. From a horticultural perspective, fruit is the result of the overabundance of sap/nutrients in a plant. Sap will always flow first to sustain the trunk, branches and leaves of a plant before it will go into the fruit.
 - C. Spiritually, fruit is the twofold result of Christ living out His life IN you and THROUGH you.
- II. The participants in abiding:
 - A. Vinedresser—God the Father: He has the master plan and ultimately holds each branch accountable for its fruit.
 - B. Vine—Christ. He is the One who brings life to each branch.
 - C. You—as you abide in the Vine, you produce much fruit.
- III. The nature of abiding:
 - A. Abiding means to remain, dwell, live in, rest in, be vitally connected to.
 - B. Abiding in Christ involves a deep, intimate, vibrant, and growing relationship.
- IV. The focus of abiding—we abide in the Person of Christ:
 - A. Christ is your Savior.
 - B. Christ is your Lord.
 - C. Christ is your source of rest and strength. **(Matthew 11:28-30)**
 - D. Christ is your Judge. **(II Corinthians 5:10)**
- V. The result of abiding:
 - A. You bear much fruit. **(John 15:5)**
 - B. You are pruned. **(John 15:2)**
 - C. You have Christ’s joy overflowing in you. **(John 15:11)**

D. You love your fellow believers. **(John 15:12)**

E. You are Christ's friend. **(John 15:14)**

F. You glorify the Father. **(John 15:8)**

VI. The consequences of not abiding:

A. You fail to produce fruit. **(John 15:5)**

B. You are cast away. **(John 15:2)**

C. You accomplish nothing. **(John 15:5)**

Summary: Your primary calling as a Christ-follower is to abide in Christ. That is to dwell, remain, focus, rest and constantly trust in the person of Christ. It is only as you abide in Him that you can produce fruit.

Reflection Questions:

1. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 representing abiding to the degree Christ intends for you, at what level are you currently abiding in Christ?
2. What is the evidence that you are abiding in Christ?
3. In what ways is God currently pruning you so you will produce more fruit?
4. Do you currently have Christ's joy as a result of abiding in Him?

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

HOUR 3: THE IMPLICATIONS OF SALVATION — THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INDWELLING (John 14:15-18; John 14:25-26; John 16:5-15)



Key Question: *What difference does the Holy Spirit make in your life?*

- I. Becoming a follower of Christ is moving beyond adopting religious practices, embracing a moral code, or affirming a doctrinal statement. It involves the powerful working of the Holy Spirit in which He produces a radical transformation of every aspect of your life.*
- II. When someone becomes a follower of Christ, the Holy Spirit immediately enters their life and begins to produce the following transformation. **(Acts 2:1-4, 38)**
 - A. It is to your advantage to have the Spirit within you rather than Jesus beside you. **(John 16:7)**
 - B. The Spirit will relate to you in exactly the same way that Jesus related to His disciples. **(John 14:16)**
 - C. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He will always tell you the truth of your situation. **(John 14:17)**
 - D. To have the Spirit dwelling within you is to have Jesus dwelling within you. **(John 14:18)**
 - E. The Holy Spirit will teach you everything God wants you to know and remind you of what He has said. **(John 14:25-26)**
 - F. The Holy Spirit will convict the world of: 1) sin, 2) righteousness, 3) judgment. **(John 16:8)**
 - G. The Holy Spirit will speak to you what He hears in heaven. **(John 16:13)**
 - H. The Holy Spirit will prepare you for what He knows is coming in your life. **(John 16:13)**
 - I. The Holy Spirit will glorify Christ in your life. **(John 16:14)**

Summary: God provides the Holy Spirit to believers so they can be fully equipped to accomplish God's will. The Holy Spirit enters believers at the moment of salvation. To have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you is to also have the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit relates to you in the same manner in which Jesus related to His disciples. If you want to know what you can expect from the Holy Spirit in your life, examine how Jesus related to His twelve disciples.

**Please see the Appendix for further notes on the Implications of Salvation*

Reflection Questions:

1. How important has the Holy Spirit become to you and your daily living since you became a Christ-follower?
2. What does the Holy Spirit's voice sound like in your life?
3. What is an example of when the Holy Spirit convicted you about something you were doing?
4. What is an example of when the Holy Spirit prepared you in advance for what He knew was coming?

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

APPENDIX

Hour 1 Additional Information

Evidence you are alive in Christ...what God expects from you:

- Growing an intimate love relationship with God. **(Mark 1:16-20)**
 1. Abiding. **(John 15:5)**
 2. Word. **(John 8:28-30; Mark 4:20)**
 3. Prayer life. **(Psalm 147:1, 7; Psalm 145:18-19)**
 4. Delight and rest. **(Psalm 1:2; Psalm 40:8; Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:9-11)**
- Conforming your character to the likeness of Christ. **(Romans 8:29)**
 1. Abide. **(John 15:5)**
 2. Deny self, take up cross and follow Him. **(Matthew 16:24-26)**
 3. Seek to do His will. **(Psalm 40:8)**
 4. Obey His instructions. **(John 15:9-11)**
 5. Self-examination and testing. **(II Corinthians 13:5; II Peter 1:3-11)**
- Willingly embrace God's assignments.
 1. Make disciples – teach people to obey. **(Matthew 28:18-20)**
 2. Bear fruit that lasts. **(John 15:16)**
 3. Minister reconciliation. **(II Corinthians 5:18-21)**

How to Study Scripture

As you read Scripture, ask the Holy Spirit to open your spiritual understanding to what you are reading.

Seven questions you should ask of every Scripture:

1. What does this verse reveal about God? (The Bible is God-centered, not people-centered.)
2. What does it reveal about the ways and purposes of God? **(Psalm 25:4)**
3. What conditions are there to this (these) verse(s): “if, then”; “therefore”; “but”; “however”?
4. How could this verse set me free from something that presently has me in bondage?
(John 8:31-32)
5. How should I adjust my life to the truth of this Scripture?
6. How will this verse affect my life in my workplace?
7. How is this verse a moment of judgment and an opportunity to experience change, redemption and grace? **(II Corinthians 5:9-11)**

Because God is the author of Scripture, it is helpful to keep a journal when you read from it (review CEO Forum Bullet Point Thoughts on Journaling). A journal records the growing and deepening relationship with Christ He wants you to experience.

APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

Your calling is to a relationship. Out of that relationship the Holy Spirit will conform you into Christ's image. **(Romans 8:29-30; II Corinthians 4:11)** As you become more like Christ, the Holy Spirit will give you specific assignments to serve God. **(Mark 1:17)**

1. Relationship...will always be the priority...growing each and every day; as you are growing, you will be experiencing character transformation.
2. Character transformation...determines your usefulness for the Kingdom of God; as you grow and experience character transformation, you will receive God's commission/assignments.
3. Commission/assignments...the size and scope will be determined by God, based on the size and scope of the character required for the assignment.

Hour 3 Additional Information

- The Holy Spirit dwells within believers. **(I Corinthians 6:19)**
- The Holy Spirit is the seal or earnest money God gives to you as proof that you now belong to Him. **(Ephesians 1:13-14)**
- The Holy Spirit brings liberty. **(II Corinthians 3:17)**

YEAR 1
CALLED BY GOD... BEING
(Mark 1:16-20)

SESSION 2
GOD VERSUS THE WORLD - UNDERSTANDING THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CHARACTER AND WAYS OF
GOD AND THE CHARACTER AND WAYS OF THE WORLD
(Isaiah 55:8-9)

HOUR 1: THE CHARACTER OF GOD

(Isaiah 40:18)



Key Question: *How do you serve a perfect God in an imperfect world?*

18 "To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him? 19 The workman molds an image, the goldsmith overspreads it with gold, and the silversmith casts silver chains. 20 Whoever is too impoverished for such a contribution chooses a tree that will not rot; He seeks for himself a skillful workman to prepare a carved image that will not totter. 21 Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. 23 He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless. 24 Scarcely shall they be planted, scarcely shall they be sown, scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, when He will also blow on them, and they will wither, and the whirlwind will take them away like stubble. 25 "To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; Not one is missing. 27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God"? 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

(Isaiah 40:18-31)

- I. It is crucial to know God as He truly is.
 - A. God is unique. There is no one else remotely like Him. **(Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 46:5,9).**
 - B. God does not change. He relates to you today in the same manner He related to people in biblical times. **(Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8)**
 - C. For you to get the most out of your relationship with God, you must understand His character and His ways.
 - D. You become like what you worship. **(Psalm 115:8; 135:18)** If you have an improper view of God, it will harm you and others.
 - E. God's character and nature is so vast and complex that you naturally struggle to know Him fully. Every name of God mentioned in the Bible provides a glimpse into a specific characteristic of God. When God told Moses, "*I am . . .*" **(Exodus 3:14)**, He was inviting Moses to experience specific aspects of His character. When Moses needed power, he experienced "God Almighty." When he needed provision, he experienced "God the Provider."
 - F. For every characteristic of God, the fallen world upholds the opposite characteristic.

II. The character and nature of God.

A. Holiness: (Leviticus 11:44-45)

1. Holiness permeates every trait of God.
 - a. God is entirely separate and apart from people. **(Revelation 4:8-11)**
 - b. God is absolutely righteous, pure, unblemished, faultless, sinless and perfect.
 - c. God is wholly consistent, undeviating, unchanging, and unfaltering.
2. All of creation is fallen and under a curse. **(Romans 8:20-22)**
 - a. The world is dominated by Satan, the “prince of the power of the air.” **(Ephesians 2:2)**
 - b. Satan, who dominates much of the earth, is evil **(John 17:15)** and the father of lies. **(John 8:44)**
 - c. The world encourages lust and pride. **(I John 2:16)**
 - d. Those who love the values and ways of the world do not love God. **(I John 2:15)**
 - e. Satan and his evil forces are determined to wreak as much havoc on humanity as they possibly can. **(Revelation 12:12)**

B. Omniscience:

1. God’s knowledge, understanding and wisdom are infinitely superior to people’s. **(Job 38:1-41: 34)**
 - a. God knows every detail of creation. He has existed from the beginning of eternity. **(Genesis 1:1)**
 - b. God knows the future. **(Isaiah 42:9)**
 - c. God knows people’s thoughts. **(Genesis 18:13)**
 - d. God’s plans and purposes are perfect, without fault and beyond disputing. **(Job 40:2)**
2. People’s thoughts and wisdom are miniscule compared to God’s. **(Isaiah 40:25)**
 - a. There are vast areas of nature and science that people do not know or understand.
 - b. There are innumerable facts of the past we are unaware of.
 - c. People speculate about the future, but they cannot fathom it. **(I Corinthians 2:6-14)**
 - d. Human wisdom begins with the fear of God. **(Psalm 111:10)**

C. Glory:

1. God desires and deserves all glory from creation. **(Luke 2:14)**
 - a. Glory is the honor, recognition, praise, and adoration due someone worthy to receive it.
 - b. God will not share His glory with another. **(Isaiah 42:8)**
 - c. God expects His creatures to seek His glory. **(Matthew 6:13)**
2. Creatures are tempted to hoard glory to themselves. **(Isaiah 14:12-21)**
 - a. People tend to overestimate their ability and underestimate their dependence on God. **(Luke 12:13-21)**
 - b. Even God's people can become proud of themselves and their success. **(Revelation 3:17)**
 - c. God opposes the proud. **(I Peter 5:5)**
 - d. Christ expects to receive glory from His Church. **(Ephesians 3:21)**

D. Omnipotence:

1. All power belongs to God. **(Psalm 62:11)**
 - a. By His power, God created the heavens and the earth. **(Revelation 4:11)**
 - b. By His power, God creates and sustains life. **(Job 39)**
 - c. By His power, God defeated sin and death. **(Ephesians 1:20-23)**
 - d. God makes His exceedingly great power available to His people. **(Ephesians 1:19)**
2. The world craves power. **(Job 40:9)**
 - a. People seek to make their own gods so they can control them. **(Isaiah 44:6-20)**
 - b. Humanity behaves as if it can challenge God. **(Psalm 2)**
 - c. Proud rulers defy God but are all eventually brought low. **(Isaiah 36-37)**
 - d. The world seeks power from alliances, treaties, politics and military might. **(Isaiah 30:1-17)**

Summary: For you to function in God's power you must first fully understand the clear differences between God's ways and the world's ways. You must then take an ongoing inventory of your life to know when and where your choices/actions align with God's character and ways. This inventory will reveal where you must adjust your life ("cease and desist") away from the world's standards.

Reflection Questions:

1. Why is it necessary for me to make the effort to truly understand God's character and ways?
2. What is the evidence that I am worshipping the true God rather than an improper image of God?
3. What does taking God's holiness seriously look like? How is this being reflected in my life?
4. What aspect of God's character do I need to learn and emulate more of?

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

**HOUR 2: GOD'S NATURE VERSUS THE WORLD'S—
GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS!**
(Isaiah 46:5,9)



Key Question: *How does the nature of God affect the way you live?*

- I. God is unique. No one is like Him. The world often promotes values opposite to who God is. *“To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike?... For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me” (Isaiah 46:5, 9)*

II. Love:

- A. God is not merely loving; He IS love as well as the source of love. **(I John 4:8)**

1. God's love leads to action. **(John 3:16)**
2. God's love always takes the initiative. **(Romans 5:8)**
3. God's love covers all sins. **(Proverbs 10:12)**
4. God's love persists. **(I Corinthians 13:4)**
5. God love extends even to enemies. **(Matthew 5:44)**

- B. The world's love is far inferior to God's.

1. The world's love is often merely lust. **(II Samuel 13:1-20)**
2. The world's love is self-centered. **(II Timothy 3:2)**
3. The world hates its enemies. **(Matthew 5:43)**
4. The world's love is fickle and can run cold. **(Revelation 2:4)**

III. Peace:

- A. God is characterized by a peace that surpasses all human understanding. **(Philippians 4:7)**

1. God's peace can guard your heart and mind in the most troubled times. **(John 14:27)**
2. Christ is the Prince of peace. **(Isaiah 9:6)**
3. The fruit of the Spirit is peace. **(Galatians 5:22)**
4. Christ does not merely give peace, He IS your peace. **(Ephesians 2:14)**
5. God wants His peace to rule over your heart. **(Colossians 3:15)**

- B. The world is characterized by turmoil and an absence of peace. **(Isaiah 59:2-8)**
 - 1. Sin leads to an absence of peace. **(Jeremiah 6:14; 8:15)**
 - 2. Satan brings turmoil to people's lives. **(Luke 8:26-35)**
 - 3. God instructs people to seek and pursue peace. **(Psalm 34:14; II Timothy 2:22)**
 - 4. God invites you to cast your cares on Him. **(I Peter 5:7)**
 - 5. Jesus expects His people to bring peace to others. **(Matthew 5:9; 10:13)**

IV. Forgiveness:

- A. God's heart abounds with mercy and is always prepared to forgive. **(Psalm 86:5; 129:4)**
 - 1. God will forgive sins confessed to Him. **(I John 1:9)**
 - 2. God forgives people for His glory. **(I John 2:12)**
 - 3. God extends forgiveness not because of what you have done but out of the riches of His grace. **(Ephesians 1:7)**
 - 4. God's forgiveness brings life to those who are forgiven. **(Colossians 2:13)**
 - 5. God's Gospel concerns the forgiveness of sins. **(Acts 13:38)**
- B. God expects His people to forgive others. **(Colossians 3:13)**
 - 1. God commands people to confess their sins to one another. **(James 5:16)**
 - 2. God will forgive people based on how they forgive others. **(Matthew 18:35)**
 - 3. Forgiveness flows from a kind and tender heart. **(Ephesians 4:32)**
 - 4. Only those who have experienced Christ's forgiveness can extend the same to others. **(Luke 7:47)**

V. Joy:

- A. God is characterized by joy. **(Psalm 16:1)**
 - 1. Christ desires His people to have His joy. **(John 17:13)**
 - 2. No one can remove God's joy from God's people. **(John 16:22)**
 - 3. When people abide in Christ, His joy overflows the embankments of their heart. **(John 15:11)**
 - 4. God's joy can withstand the worst suffering, injustice, and pain that life can experience. **(Acts 16:25)**

- B. The world strives for happiness but cannot produce God's joy.
1. The world seeks happiness in wealth, but great riches cannot bring joy. **(Luke 19:1-10)**
 2. The world seeks happiness in sex, but that cannot match God's joy. **(II Samuel 11:1-12; 23)**
 3. The world seeks happiness in parties and indulgence, yet they fall short of God's joy. **(Daniel 5)**
 4. The world seeks happiness in power, but this often brings greater suffering. **(Matthew 2:16-18)**

Summary: You will become like whatever or whoever you focus on. If you focus on lies or distortions about God's nature, you will make decisions that reflect that. To make healthy/God glorifying choices, you must know the truth about God's nature.

Reflection Questions:

1. How do my decisions reflect what I believe and know about God's nature?
2. How do I discern between God's ways and the world's ways when in the heat of competition and opportunity in business?
3. Which of the characteristics of God do I have difficulty experiencing in my work and home life? Why?

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

HOUR 3: RESPONDING TO GOD'S WAYS VERSUS THE WORLD'S WAYS (Matthew 7:13-14)



Key Question: How do you make God-honoring choices in a God-denying world?

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 16:25)

- I. God's ways and the world's ways are opposites.
- II. God's ways and the world's ways require different responses. Each one produces profoundly different consequences.
 - A. Truth versus deception. **(John 8:31-47)**
 1. God always speaks truth because His nature is truth. **(John 14:6)**
 - a. Jesus did not say He would tell us the truth, He declared He is the truth! Truth is a person. God's truth stems from His nature.
 - b. God's truth can be painful as it confronts your sin and pride. **(John 16:7-15)**
 - c. God's truth sets people free. **(John 8:32)**
 2. The world thrives on falsehood and deception. **(Romans 1:20-25)**
 - a. The world is ruled by the father of lies. **(John 8:44)**
 - b. The world promotes values and beliefs that are inconsistent with reality.
 - c. The world's values lead people into bondage. **(Romans 7:23)**
 - d. The world seeks to convince you that your actions are not sinful, that your life is not displeasing to God. **(Genesis 3:4-5)**
 - e. The world only tells you partial truths, not the full truth. **(Matthew 4:5-7)**
 - B. Faithfulness versus unfaithfulness.
 1. God is by nature faithful. **(Hebrews 10:23)**
 - a. God expects His people to be faithful because He is by nature faithful. **(Lamentations 3:23; I Thessalonians 5:24)**
 - b. Faithfulness comes from walking in the Spirit. **(Galatians 5:22)**
 - c. Faithfulness means obeying God. **(Matthew 24:45-51)**
 - d. If you are faithful in a little, God will give you more. **(Luke 16:10)**

2. The world does not promote faithfulness. In a world that rejects God, it does not necessarily appear that faithfulness leads to success. The world's philosophy is: do what it takes to get ahead. Look out for yourself.
 - a. God condemns those who are unfaithful. **(Matthew 25:24-30)**
 - b. Those who do not walk in the Spirit inevitably produce the works of the flesh in their lives rather than the fruit of the Spirit. **(Galatians 5:19-21)**
 - c. Unfaithfulness means doing what you want rather than what God wills. **(Matthew 25:41-46)**
 - d. Unfaithfulness reaps consequences. **(Galatians 6:7)**
 - e. The world justifies unfaithfulness and offers excuses. **(I Samuel 13:11-12; 15:15)**
 - f. The world offers success without faithfulness or sacrifice. **(Matthew 4:1-17)**

C. Obedience versus disobedience.

1. God delights in your obedience and despises disobedience. **(I Samuel 15:22-23; Proverbs 11:20)**
 - a. Those who obey Christ are His friends. **(John 15:14-15)**
 - b. Delayed obedience = disobedience. **(Matthew 5:23-26; James 4:17)**
 - c. Obedience to God exalts both the Creator as well as the creature. **(Isaiah 64:8; II Timothy 4:8)**
2. The world despises obedience and views it as demeaning to human dignity. **(Genesis 3:4-5)**
 - a. The world encourages rebellion against authority and striving for autonomy at all costs. **(Isaiah 45:9)**
 - b. God insists on retaining His right to give people whatever assignment He chooses. **(Romans 9:21)**
 - c. Rebellion against your Creator and His will leads inevitably to judgment. **(Jeremiah 18:6)**
 - d. Your actions, not your words, prove your love for God. **(Titus 1:16)**

D. Losing your life.

1. Christ willingly laid His life down in obedience to His Father and set an example for you to follow. **(Philippians 2:5-11)**
 - a. Jesus cautioned that saving your soul was far more important than accumulating possessions and wealth. **(Matthew 6:19-21)**
 - b. Jesus warned that by trying to save yourself from sacrifice or loss, you would, ironically, lose what mattered most in life. **(Matthew 16:24-27)**

2. The world urges people to take charge of their life and to strive to obtain the best that life has to offer. **(Ecclesiastes 2:3-11)**
 - a. The world declares that those with the most wealth and possessions are the most successful. **(Luke 16:19-31)**
 - b. The world reasons why it does not need to sacrifice in order to follow God. **(Luke 18:18-23)**

E. Belief versus unbelief.

1. Jesus declared: *“All things are possible to him who believes.”* **(Mark 9:23)**
 - a. Faith is: *“the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* **(Hebrews 11:1)**
 - b. Without faith being central to your life, you cannot be pleasing to God. **(Hebrews 11:6)**
 - c. God will continually seek to move you out of your comfort zone and into a relationship that requires you to live by faith. **(Mark 1:16-20)**
 - d. God knows how to help you grow in faith. **(Mark 9:24)** There are levels of belief in God.
2. The world disdains belief in the unseen or in God’s Word. It places its trust in what it can touch, see, control, and understand. **(Genesis 3:1-5)**
 - a. The world upholds doubt and insists that you must be able to understand, measure and experience something with your senses for something to be true. **(John 20:24-29)**
 - b. The world insists on signs, proofs and guarantees. **(Judges 6; Matthew 12:39)**
 - c. You continually seek to remain in your comfort zone where you can handle everything in your own strength. **(Luke 18:18-23)**

Summary: Doubt, in and of itself, is not unhealthy or wrong. You need to take your doubts to God and dialogue with Him as the father of the boy with an evil spirit did. **(Mark 9:23-24)** When it is time to decide, you must choose God over your doubts. Anything you do apart from faith – apart from trusting and believing Him – is worthless. **(Romans 14:23)**

Reflection Questions:

1. What is most comfortable to you and why...walking by faith or walking by sight?
2. What is more comfortable to you and why...giving your life away for Christ or holding on to your earthly possessions?
3. What is more comfortable to you and why...embracing and acting on receiving God's truths or those of worldly research?
4. Is there a truth God is revealing to you that is currently making you uncomfortable? What is it and why?

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

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YEAR 1
CALLED BY GOD... BEING
(Mark 1:16-20; Matthew 11:28-30)

SESSION 3
LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE GOD'S
ACTIVITY AROUND YOU
(John 5:1-20)

HOUR 1: GOD IS ALWAYS AT WORK AROUND YOU (John 5:1-20)



Key Question: How do you recognize what God is doing in your life and in the lives of others?

- I. God loves the world and is constantly working to redeem it. **(John 5:17)**
 - A. From the beginning of human history, God has been working to bring salvation to people. **(Genesis 3:15)**
 - B. While people were still sinning and rejecting Him, God was providing a solution for their sin. **(Romans 5:8)**
 - C. Jesus came to join in His Father's activity on earth. **(John 5:1-20)**
 1. Jesus went up to Jerusalem to attend a feast. He most likely would have been a special guest of the one hosting the meal. Jesus had an appointment to keep.
 2. Jesus came upon a courtyard filled with people with medical conditions. They all wanted to be made well.
 3. It was the Sabbath. The Jewish law forbade labor, including healing people, on that day.
 4. Scripture only indicates that Jesus healed one person from the crowd, a man who had been lame 38 years.
 5. The man who was healed did not know who Jesus was. He did not express any belief or faith in Jesus, yet Jesus healed him.

Questions: Why did Jesus choose to only heal one person? Why did Jesus heal a man who did not even believe in Him? Why did Jesus choose to heal someone on the Sabbath when He knew it would infuriate the religious leaders and cause greater opposition to His ministry?

- D. Jesus' ministry was fashioned in response to His Father's activity. Jesus explained His ministry this way:

"Most assuredly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing..." **(John 5:19-20)**

1. Jesus, though He was the perfect, sinless Son of God, did NOTHING on His own initiative.
2. Jesus knew His Father was always at work in the world around Him.
3. The Father showed the Son where He was working.
4. Jesus always joined His Father where He saw Him working.

II. There are two primary places of God's activity that we must respond to:

- God's work in us
- God's work in others

A. God's work in us:

1. God's primary focus with us is our relationship with Him. Business people tend to think of "doing" whereas God thinks in terms of relationship. We tend to view our success by what we accomplish; God views our success by how we are relating to Him. **(Matthew 7:21-23)**
2. Throughout Scripture God invited people into a relationship with Him:
 - a. *"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself."* **(Exodus 19:4)**
 - b. *"O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory."* **(Psalms 63:1-2)**
 - c. *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* **(Matthew 11:28-30)**
 - d. *"I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."* **(John 6:35)**
 - e. *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."* **(John 7:37)**

B. Your relationship with Christ does not prepare you for the work you do for Him; it *is* your calling. **(Philippians 3:13-14)**

1. Jesus invited the fisherman to "follow Me." **(Mark 1:17)** It was in following Him that they came to know Him. Out of their relationship with Christ, God used their lives to change their world.
2. Just as God invited Moses to come to know Him as "*I am...*" so God invites you to come to know Him as you walk with Him and experience the many facets of His character. **(Exodus 3:14)**
3. Paul said he considered every other attainment in his life as rubbish compared to knowing Christ. **(Philippians 3:7-8)**

C. Key issues in recognizing God's work in your life:

1. You must understand the concerns and priorities of God. **(Mark 12:30)**
2. You must recognize the ways of God. **(Isaiah 55:8-9)**
3. You must be aware of the way God has worked in the lives of others who have gone before you. **(Exodus 3:6)**
4. You must learn to recognize God's voice. **(John 10:27)**

Summary: A CEO's mentality is typically - give me a task and I'll handle it. God is inviting you instead, to come alongside of Him, be with Him and let Him show you what He is doing. He expects you to put your relationship with Him ahead of any "doing."

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

HOUR 2: THE PERSON AND ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(John 16:7)



Key Question: *How does the Holy Spirit work in your life?*

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7)

- I. The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity and often the most neglected. He can be treated as a power, or a force, or a ghost, rather than as God. To have the Holy Spirit residing within you is to have God in you.
- II. Although the Trinity functioned throughout scripture, you might view the Old Testament as when the Father is emphasized, the Gospels as when Christ is the primary focus, and Acts and following as when you see the Holy Spirit working most prominently.
 - A. In the Old Testament, people did not have the continual, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in their life.
 - B. God would place the Holy Spirit upon people to enable them to accomplish a God-given task.
 1. God’s Spirit came upon Bezalel so he could construct the tabernacle. **(Exodus 31:1-3)**
 2. The Spirit came upon Jephthah to enable him to defeat Israel’s enemies. **(Judges 11:29)**
 3. The Spirit came upon Samson to defeat his enemies. **(Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14)**
 4. God was with Samuel and let none of his words fall to the ground. **(I Samuel 3:19)**
 5. The Spirit came upon Saul to enable him to be king. **(I Samuel 10:6, 10)**
 6. The Spirit came upon David to enable him to be king. **(I Samuel 16:13)**
 - C. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit could be withdrawn if someone sinned or their task was completed.
 1. The Spirit departed from Samson. **(Judges 16:20)**
 2. The Spirit departed from Saul. **(I Samuel 16:14)**
 3. David feared that God would remove His Spirit from him. **(Psalm 51:11)**
- III. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit enters every believer at the time of their conversion:

“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 2:38)

IV. Truths Concerning the Holy Spirit

- A. There is a difference between receiving the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit. **(Ephesians 5:18)**
- B. The role of the Holy Spirit is to carry out the Father's will in and through your life. **(Acts 1:4-8)** If you are unwilling to obey God's assignment, you have no need of His equipping.
- C. The Holy Spirit will be constantly working to produce spiritual fruit in your life. **(Galatians 5:22-23)**
 - 1. Love.
 - 2. Joy.
 - 3. Peace.
 - 4. Longsuffering.
 - 5. Kindness.
 - 6. Goodness.
 - 7. Faithfulness.
 - 8. Gentleness.
 - 9. Self-control.
- D. While it is not possible to remove the Spirit from your life, you can:
 - 1. Blaspheme the Holy Spirit. **(Matthew 12:31-32)**
 - 2. Quench the Holy Spirit. **(I Thessalonians 5:19)**
 - 3. Grieve the Holy Spirit. **(Ephesians 4:30)**
 - 4. Test the Spirit. **(Acts 5:9)**
- E. The Spirit reveals to you what God intends to give you. **(I Corinthians 2:9-14)**
- F. The Spirit will help you to know how to pray. **(Romans 8:26)**
- G. The Spirit will use God's Word as His sword in and through your life. **(Ephesians 6:17)**
- H. The Holy Spirit will lead you to evangelize others. **(Acts 8:29, 39)**

Summary: The Holy Spirit does not merely work in your life but lives Christ's life within you. **(Galatians 2:20)** You are a container of God's presence in the world. He works in your life by teaching, convicting, guiding, revealing, comforting, and praying for you. For Him to freely work you must maintain a receptive and obedient spirit - living a surrendered life.

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

HOUR 3: SPIRITUAL STATESPEOPLE
(Matthew 7:13-14)



Key Question: What is a Statesperson and how do you become one?

- I. A politician versus a Statesperson.
 - A. Saul (**I Samuel 15:1-22**)
 - B. David (**II Samuel 23:8-39; I Chronicles 20:4-8**)

- II. There are degrees of leadership in the world and in God’s Kingdom.
 - A. Every Christ-follower is a servant of God. The term “Lord” implies that Christ is our Master. (**Philippians 2:11**)
 - B. Some Christ-followers will be called by God to lead others. (**Romans 12:8**)
 - C. Some will be called to lead leaders. (**Exodus 18:21; Daniel 6:1-2**)

- III. There is a difference between a politician and a Statesperson.
 - A. Politicians are motivated by obtaining and holding on to power. They seek to take popular stands that will get them re-elected. They avoid difficult undertakings, regardless of how necessary, if it will endanger their position. They take a short-term view.
 - B. Statespeople are often political figures also. While they, too, are often personally ambitious, they are ultimately driven by what is best for their country or organization. They take a long-term view rather than a short-term view. Such people are driven by conviction, rather than popularity or short-term results. They are admired by their peers. Other leaders follow them. They are typically people of high integrity.
 - C. Consider the following world figures. Were they Statespeople?

George Washington	Bill Clinton	Abraham Lincoln
King Solomon	Franklin Roosevelt	Winston Churchill
Mother Theresa	Billy Graham	Margaret Thatcher
Jimmy Carter	Donald Trump	King David
Martin Luther King, Jr.	Harry Truman	Julius Caesar
Florance Nightingale	Clara Barton	

D. Who would be a Statesperson in the business world?

Henry Ford	John Rockefeller	Oprah Winfrey
Sheila Johnson	Sheryl Sandberg	Steve Jobs
Truett Cathy	Milton Hershey	Warren Buffet
Jeff Bezos	Bill Gates	

IV. Statespeople are people with influence both with God and with other leaders.

A Spiritual Statesperson: someone God calls, conforms and transforms into the likeness of Christ and commissions with assignments to extensively impact God's Kingdom. They are widely respected by their peers and have a track record of success.

A. Statespeople progress from being a disciple (a life-long calling) to becoming a spiritual leader, and ultimately a Statesperson. The process is as follows:

1. A transformed character reflecting the character of Christ.
2. A proven track record of faithfulness to God's instruction and assignments over time.
3. An earned and appointed influence for the purpose of advancing God's Kingdom.

B. Key Scripture: *"Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and mind . . ."* **(I Samuel 2:35)**

1. Salvation is a call to relationship. Out of that relationship, God fashions people's character and their walk with Him to equip them for divine assignments. **(Romans 8:29-30)**
2. Every believer is a priest of God. **(I Peter 2:9)** A priest represents God to the people and represents the people before God. **(Exodus 19:6; 28:1-4)**
3. God assigns individuals to be Statespeople. You cannot volunteer for that role.
4. God chooses people based not on their skills, rank, education, or popularity, but on their heart. **(I Samuel 16:7)**
5. God entrusts assignments to people based on their character. Those who are faithful in a little will be given more. **(Matthew 25:23)** *There is no limit to what God can do through a life that continually surrenders to God's will and faithfully does what God assigns.*

C. Spiritual Statespeople:

1. Serve God's Kingdom, not merely their own company or nation or self-interest.
2. Function out of their relationship with God. They know God's thoughts on the matters at hand. **(Amos 3:7)**
3. Exert a broad influence over other leaders.
4. Face a high level of scrutiny and accountability. **(I Samuel 2:27-36; 4:12-18)**

5. Receive unique rewards. (**Joshua 23-24**)

V. Personal evaluation:

- A. On a scale of 1-10, rate yourself as a disciple.
- B. On a scale of 1-10, rate yourself as a leader.
- C. How far do you have to go before you could be classified as a Statesperson?

Summary: The goal of SLI is to develop Statesperson for the marketplace. This brings us to the end of year 1. There are still two more years to go! Take a spiritual inventory of where you currently are in your walk with God. What needs to change? Where do you need to go deeper? What still needs to be surrendered? What is God saying? What will you do next?

Journal Questions:

What?

So What?

Now What?

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CLASS ACTIVITIES

SLING 495
YEAR 1

NOTES

