

The Sunset Years Workbook

*A Transformation Group designed for people who want
to help Seniors gain the most from their sunset years*



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and social transformation™*



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and social transformation™*

WELCOME FROM DENNIS PEACOCKE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF SCS

Dear “Sunset Years” T-Group Leader,

It is a special privilege for me to be involved in this “Sunset Years” transformation study course because it has given me a unique opportunity to work with my 87-year-old mother on something of particular interest to her—the issues and concerns of those in their crowning years. In compiling these course materials, we had an amazing opportunity to dialogue together around numerous subjects, a real treat for me. My mother carries a burden for helping people prepare for eternity, and that is what this course is all about.

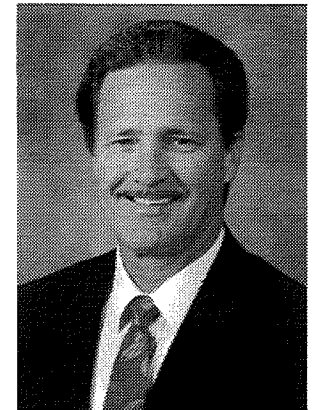
It is our desire that “The Sunset Years” material will encourage and assist you in reaching out to those seniors in your sphere of influence. This 12-week study course can be effective with seniors in your home, your church, or in a full-care environment.

“The Sunset Years” takes participants through the process of looking back on their lives, evaluating their past and the principles by which they lived, and passing on what they've learned to the next generation. At each step in the course, seniors are given an opportunity to get right with God and others and to experience transformation in their lives.

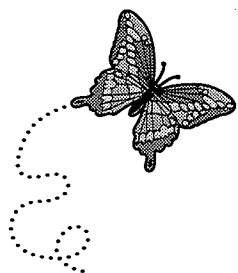
It is my prayer that Father would bless you as you digest these materials and use them, along with your creativity and teaching skills, to minister hope and life to those seniors you serve.

Your fellow servant in Christ,

Dennis T. Peacocke



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WELCOME FROM IRIS PEACOCKE
AUTHOR OF *SAVORING YOUR SUNSET YEARS*

Dear Friend,

As a mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, I've been on this journey of "life" for some time now. Through the work on my book, and more recently this workbook for SCS, the time of sharing my own memories and some of the lessons I have learned has been a joy. At this stage of my life, it has also been great fun working on such a challenging project with my son, Dennis, and grandson, Adam. I have also enjoyed the time spent with some of the men and women in Santa Rosa who brainstormed with me on this.

Researchers have found that as we age, our long-term memory and the knowledge acquired through work, and love, and family does not leave us. We remember a world and a way of life that no longer exists. Even though there may have been difficult years along the way, there are lessons for this and future generations in what we have experienced.

This workbook gives us an opportunity to explore our memories for two purposes: first, to prepare ourselves for eternity, and second, to prepare a legacy for those who come behind us, using our own memories to provide a link between the generations before us and those after us.

My pleasure would be in knowing that this Transformation Group experience will bring light and joy to your senior years and enable you to bring your own memories out on the table so that the generations to follow will hold them close, gain understanding from them, and pass them on again in their own time.

Iris Peacocke

Iris Peacocke





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WELCOME FROM ADAM PEACOCKE COORDINATOR OF SCS TRANSFORMATION GROUPS

Dear "Sunset Years" Participant,

For over twenty years now, our ministry has worked to provide truth that is relevant to men and women of all walks of life. With this transformation group, "The Sunset Years," we are, for the first time, specifically reaching out to seniors. I am truly excited about this material. I believe that it is going to serve those who engage it in a truly unique way and impact many others as the effect it is having on their parents, grandparents, and even great grandparents brings positive influence into their own lives.

We have worked hard to make the truths of "The Sunset Years" accessible to seniors in many different stages of life. Please take the time to carefully evaluate which approach to the material is going to be best for you, and feel free to customize the study to your particular needs. Remember, as you are preparing to engage this material together, that the purpose of the workbook and the study questions is first and foremost to facilitate a transformation in the life of the seniors who participate. Those who are not wanting or willing to change are going to miss the heart of this material. But those who are anxious to continue to grow as people, or to find a pathway to restoration in family relationships, or be equipped to pass on what they have learned to others, will find themselves propelled into an exciting and life-giving journey.

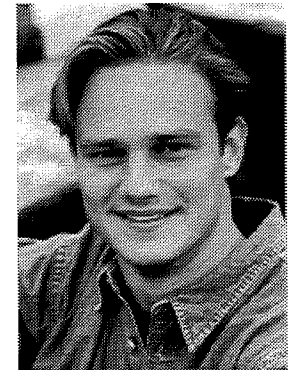
I would highly recommend that those who are planning on using this material with a small group of active seniors listen to our methodology tapes for leading transformation groups entitled "The Transformation Voyage." I would also encourage you to take the time to fully engage the workbook activities as they are designed to provide meaningful reminders of the truths of the material long after the small group has completed the lessons.

Finally, I want to encourage you to remember the importance of prayer as you proceed. My prayer for you is that all that God has given to my grandmother and those who have so nobly assisted her in developing this material would jump off the page and into your heart!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adam Peacocke". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Adam





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SCS REBUILDERS INSTITUTE

We believe with all of our heart that the time has come for the Church to make her presence felt in the cultural dialogue. The Rebuilders Institute exists to train and equip believers to advance the gospel within the sphere of influence God has given them. The vision of the Rebuilders Institute is to develop in men and women applicable truths and specific skills which they can reproduce in the lives of others.

The Rebuilders Institute is comprised of a series of trainings designed to equip people to conduct small group studies and service projects within their church, business, or community. This year the Institute offers six small group trainings. It also offers training in how to conduct effective community service endeavors. Materials are provided in each of the transformation groups, enabling attendees to duplicate the training with others.

STRATEGIC CHRISTIAN SERVICES (SCS)

Founded in 1979 by Dennis Peacocke, who serves as President, Strategic Christian Services is a prophetic ministry committed to training leaders in every sphere of culture in “discipling nations” and transforming their world. Santa Rosa, California serves as the international headquarters for SCS. While our ministry is U.S. based, our vision is international. We have offices in Switzerland and New Zealand. We see God’s Spirit beginning to form a movement which unquestionably will transform us all in the coming years. We intend to remain on the cutting edge of this movement as it gathers momentum globally.

Our mission is to pioneer in transforming the world we know into the world God has intended. This transformation, which requires genuine, lasting change in every area of contemporary life, is the venture to which the men and women of Strategic Christian Services have dedicated their lives. Strategic Christian Services touches the nations through The SCS Leadership Institute, The Rebuilders Institute, numerous seminars, locally based “transformation groups,” and a host of educational products. These products and services encourage and enable men and women to discover and live out their God-given destinies with passion and excellence, thereby strengthening the families, businesses, ministries, and nations which they lead and serve.

“THE SUNSET YEARS” TRANSFORMATION GROUP



WHAT IS THE FOCUS?

“The Sunset Years” transformation group format provides opportunities for helping people in their crowning years to look back on their lives and evaluate where they’ve been, and what they have learned. The course materials can help seniors utilize the latter years of life to prepare for eternity, while also eliciting a deeper awareness of their life’s experiences that can be shared in meaningful ways with the next generation. *If life is a test for eternity, what did I get out of the exam? How can I pass on what I have learned?* This is how these materials can serve seniors.

WHAT MATERIALS ARE INCLUDED?

“The Sunset Years” transformation group (T-Group) materials consist of this SCS Workbook, the book by Iris Peacocke, *Savoring Your Sunset Years (SYSY)*, and a number of audio tapes. You will also have a number of postcard size response cards for students to mail before and during the twelve-week study group. A master of each is included in your package so that you can reproduce cards as you need them. **Participants need to bring 12 sheets of paper and a folder.**

HOW CAN THIS T-GROUP BE USED MOST SUCCESSFULLY?

“The Sunset Years” transformation group is ideal for use by individual seniors, seniors in a Sunday School or Bible Study, a family with a senior adult living in the home, or in small groups at a senior resident facility. The material provides wonderful context for outreach and evangelism to seniors. It can also be used as part of a curriculum to help young people better understand their parents and grandparents, and may also be used as an outreach program to connect youth with seniors in a community service project.

WHO WILL BENEFIT MOST?

“The Sunset Years” transformation group will interest seniors who have a zest for life and want to see others benefit from the lessons they have learned, and the principles they have practiced. For those seniors who would like to move beyond any regrets and hurts in their lives, this T-Group provides an encouraging format that will help them review their years and deal with difficult memories so as to find healing, restoration, and a fresh awareness of God’s plan and purpose for their remaining years and an assurance of His love.

WHAT ARE PEOPLE WHO TOUCH THIS MATERIAL SAYING?

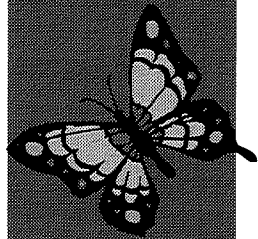
“I found myself being curious about the lives of seniors, and I became interested in finding out more. It made me realize I could enjoy working with seniors.”

J.S., California

“The life questions and principles in the book could form the basis of building a scrapbook or journal to leave a legacy of heart, vision, and beliefs for family members.”

R.T., California

C O N T E N T S



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR T-GROUP FACILITATORS

HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

This SCS Workbook, *The Sunset Years*, serves two groups:

- “active,” 55 and over, seniors
- older or more challenged seniors in full-care situations

The main text of this workbook encourages both groups of seniors to enter into dialogue about their life experiences through a variety of questions. In some instances, where questions are pointedly Christian, an alternative question is provided that will enable facilitators to use this material successfully outside the environs of the church. The main text also refers back to *Savoring Your Sunset Years*, and utilizes some of the commentary in that book, especially at the opening of a particular lesson. In a setting where there are older, more challenged seniors, use the *Alternate Teaching Ideas* presented in the lightly-shaded boxes that are part of each lesson. (These ideas mostly draw from the original book, *Savoring Your Sunset Years*, which was designed specifically for seniors in full-care facilities; ideas are meant to be fun and encouraging, even silly at times, to brighten their sometimes difficult circumstances or surroundings.)

SUGGESTED LESSON DEVELOPMENT

- Study the lesson material for each week—on tape, in this workbook, and also in the corresponding chapter of *Savoring Your Sunset Years* (SYSY). Lessons are generally designed for a 45 to 60 minute session; you can lengthen particular sessions, add another week to a lesson, or have the class complete work at home.
- Plan each session around this suggested time schedule, depending on a 45 min. or 1 hour time slot
 - **Theme discussion and questions**—35 minutes
 - **“Inheritance of the Heart” folder**—5-20 minutes
 - **Choose a postcard to send**—5 minutes (you might ask someone to sell a book of postcard stamps to each participant at the first lesson or include the cost of stamps in the price of the class)
- The “Inheritance of the Heart” folder can be whatever the student wants as to beauty or practicality. A pocketed folder would be fine. For full-care facilities, where it is probably best that the facility be asked to keep each person’s file in a safe place between sessions, a simple file folder could be kept with other personal records in the main file cabinet.
- Use of the various postcards will put feet to the discussions that take place in your sessions. At the onset of the first class, have everyone choose one or more people they want to have walk with them through their experience. Have them prepare the first card, “From My Life Journey,” and mail immediately. Unless their recipient voices an objection, this will provide an open door to continue sending postcards throughout the twelve weeks. After the first card, encourage participants to send one or more of the postcards (Thinking of You, Please Forgive Me, Making It Right, or Inheritance of the Heart) each week, some to those same people and some to the specific person from whom they are asking forgiveness or sharing their thankfulness (see page 10 for more information on the postcards).



Lessons 1-12



USING THE ENCLOSED POSTCARDS (see also page 8)

Postcards are required for those in the active senior group, but those in full-care facilities may find the process too difficult. If there are active seniors among the group in full-care, offer them the opportunity to work with you privately after each class and assist them in using the cards. The process is to choose someone with whom to share your experiences from the class—spouse, child, sibling, or friend. The postcards have the potential to unlock estranged relationships as well as to provide an opportunity for sharing lifelong experiences that perhaps have been forgotten or stored many years without an outlet to share.

TYPES OF POSTCARDS INCLUDED

- From My Life's Journey—one time only at beginning of the study
- Inheritance of the Heart—sharing a principle learned in the week's lesson
- Please Forgive Me—acknowledging error and sending an apology
- Thinking of You—shared memories and thankfulness for person addressed
- Making It Right—a card of apology with an area for explanation of principle being learned



WHAT WILL GENERATE USING THE POSTCARDS?

We expect that people who participate in this T-Group will respond each week in one of two ways.

- They will rejoice because they realize they did a lot of things right in their life, and here is a practical opportunity to pass on what they have learned through their life's journey.
- They will experience a sense of remorse for certain choices they have made, and the postcard will offer a means of apologizing to someone and/or making restitution where necessary. *If that person is lost or deceased, be sure that participants understand that repenting and apologizing to God is sufficient for removal of all sin and guilt.*

EXAMPLE OF HOW THE CARDS WORK

From My Life's Journey—sent only at the first sessions.

For instance, this could be sent to an adult son whom the participant doesn't see or talk with very often. This card is simply an invitation to share the journey of these twelve sessions without requiring any commitment or response from the son.

Thinking of You, Please Forgive Me, Inheritance of the Heart, or Making It Right—sent after each session. For instance, a senior may choose a card to share a principle just learned, a note asking forgiveness, or a thank you for a shared memory. Again, no response is required from the recipient of the card. This continues weekly.

Often times, participants will want to send several different people *Please Forgive Me* or *Thinking of You* cards at the end of a particular lesson. A *Please Forgive Me* card should explain the principle learned that created the desire to repent and apologize, (i.e., *"In my study class this week, I learned that children can really be hurt when we fail to keep a promise. I am so sorry for promising you that fishing trip to the Ozarks when you were 12 and failing to follow through. I am beginning to understand that our family fell apart because I always put work ahead of your mom and you kids. Please forgive me."*) If a relationship has been strained or estranged, cards like this can begin to break down some walls and open communication.

Rainbow Days

LESSON ONE

Major Life Principle: The Power of Choice

Our choices as individuals and families determine whether or not we live under the covenant blessing and promises of God. When we live under God's rainbow of promise, we can better fulfill His mandate to Adam and Eve, and to Noah and his family, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it," and to Jesus' followers in Matthew 28:19, "Go and make disciples of the nations."

Desired Outcome:

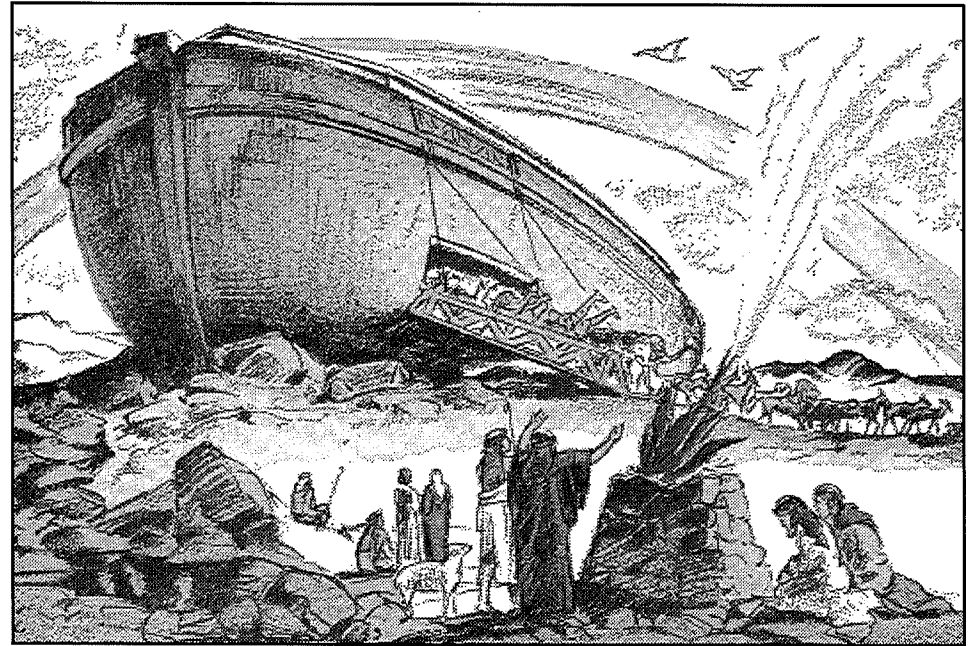
To discover how important our choices really are.

Discuss:

Why the family is the basic building block of society, the primary place for learning the ways of God, and for exercising the power of choice for good or ill.

A. Society is deeply affected according to any family's choices to obey or disobey God.

1. Noah was 600 years old when the flood came on the earth. His choice to obey God provided a way for future families to start from a clean slate.



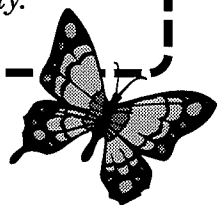
2. During the time of Noah, most families of the earth were disobedient to God, but Noah's family made a choice to obey God. (Read the opening paragraphs on page 11 of SYSY.)
Q. Was there a time in your life where an obedient choice resulted in a blessing that seemed like a rainbow or a promise being given to you or your family?...
3. Noah and his wife, their three sons and daughters-in-law became an example of obedience and courage for all families to make a choice to obey God. Not all families have chosen to follow this example, however, or some who have chosen it for a time have abandoned it, so we continue to see another build-up of sin in the earth today.

RAINBOWS & BUTTERFLIES

Transformation means positive change. You can begin to experience transformation in your life as you follow the “Steps to Transformation” at the end of each chapter.

The symbol we use for transformation is the butterfly, which begins its life in a worm-like state, but is miraculously transformed into a beautiful expression of God’s creation.

The rainbow symbolizes new beginnings. Just as there was a new beginning for the earth after the great flood, God is inviting you to make a fresh new start today.



TIP: During these or other questions, use discretion about pressing for more answers if attendees feel too vulnerable or wary about revealing personal issues. Maybe a private time could be set up with a person who seems especially interested in delving deeper.

4. Our focal point is the “Power of Choice,” and how our choices affect our own lives and the lives of those who come after us. The Bible tells us that “obedience is better than sacrifice” (read 1 Sam. 15:22-23), and that obedience brings blessing (read Deut. 28:2-13). Noah’s act of obedience resulted in a blessing on the whole human race in the form of a rainbow and a special promise from God.
 - Q. What are some areas where we may choose to obey God and be blessed as Deuteronomy 28 promises? (What about honoring your parents, faithfulness to your spouse, honesty and integrity at work, giving to the poor?)
 - Q. Are you experiencing the blessing of God in your life and in your family because you have made consistent choices to obey God after learning what pleased Him?... Can you share with the class one of those right choices?
5. Not knowing God’s will or choosing to go against it (sin) can result in shipwreck upon our own lives and future generations (“Do not be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap”—Gal. 6:7-8).
 - Q. What are examples of wrong choices that might be a source of shipwreck in a person’s life?
 - Q. It is not easy for anyone to face their wrong choices. Why are we skittish about admitting that we did something wrong, or that we might have sinned? (Does it have anything to do with fear of punishment, or an unwillingness to do what it takes to make things right, especially after many years?)

NOTE: Tell people, “This is a safe place to share. If difficult things come up, we will help you deal with them.”

Alternate Teaching Idea

When you were growing up, did you ever lose something of value, or break it so it couldn't be fixed? Do you remember how that felt? You would have promised almost anything if things could go back again to being all right. After a while, things were made all right again; you were forgiven. How did you feel then?

- B. The family is the primary training place of relational and character skills.** If we didn't learn to apologize or give and receive forgiveness in our childhood, perhaps we never practiced these relational skills in our own homes and thus never passed these gifts on to our own children; it is important that we self-consciously consider where we succeeded, or where we failed, and why.
- C. Redemption and transformation are available to all who desire it, at any age.** Carpe diem! Seize the day! The Bible declares—“Today is the day of salvation.” God has made a provision for turning situations around. With God's grace and love, it is possible to have a fresh, new start. We want to talk about the process, and walk through it with you.
- Q.** Are you willing to make some choices right now to experience transformation in your life so that others will know that it is possible, even after 50, after 70, after 90?
- Q.** If those choices involve repentance, are you still willing to consider moving in the direction of transformation? What does the word repentance mean to you? (turning around 180 degrees? admitting you were wrong? apologizing?)

NOTE:

As we experience transformation in these sessions, we'll discuss some ways you could use your position as an elder in your family or business to share a testimony and provide insight for your adult children, grandchildren, colleagues, or friends that will help them avoid the icebergs and whirlpools that affected your life and may even be affecting their lives now.

D. STARTING THE “INHERITANCE OF THE HEART” RECORD

Participants should have brought a file folder, at least 12 sheets of paper, and a pencil or pen. If participants do not have a copy of Savoring Your Sunset Years, make copies of the basic text from Lesson One so they can read it at home and use questions there and on page 16 of this book as part of starting their record.

From each lesson, participants will recall something of their heart for the next generation:

- *A personal, historical record* of the time they lived—there will be questions at the end of each week’s lesson that can be answered by participants at home (active seniors) or during and after class with the assistance of volunteers (full-care seniors).
- *A testimony* of what they learned in this life from their personal choices and experiences—as participants begin to self-consciously evaluate their life, they will discover the principles behind their successful marriage, terrific children, financial wealth, etc. They can write into their record what these principles are, and how they put them into practice in a way that the next generation can also practice. In the process of evaluation, most participants will also discover areas where they made wrong choices, and some may feel miserable. At this point, the facilitator must show them what action to take so they will not leave in a state of self-condemnation. To help participants deal with wrong choices, use the ideas below and then follow with the steps on the next page.

E. THE WAY OF TRANSFORMATION IN CHRIST

Transformation means positive change. The symbol we use for transformation is the butterfly, which begins its life in a worm-like state, but is miraculously transformed into a beautiful expression of God’s creation. This study group provides an opportunity for transformation. We may make wrong choices out of ignorance or impulse, but more often than not, the wrong choices we make are what the Bible calls “sin” (choosing something that pleases us, rather than acting in accordance with God’s will). Sin is “missing the mark.”

Because everyone “sins” most every day—in word, thought, or action—by the time our hair comes in gray, we have a huge pile of “sin” stacked up unless we have dealt with it wisely and regularly. *That pile can really weigh us down, or make us unsettled, irritable, angry, depressed, bitter, sad, sick, or miserable.*

To remove this pile of “sin” from our hearts, we must **agree** that we have “missed the mark” of God’s will, that we have sinned against God Himself, and perhaps also sinned against other people or even ourselves. Then we can **repent**, or turn around (decide to obey God), and **receive** forgiveness through Jesus Christ, so that we can begin to **go** in a new direction with Him and experience transformation.

The Ten Commandments describe some basic “sins.” Whether we took (stole) coins from our parents’ drawer or committed adultery at 42, have we ever thought to own up to those “sins”? Nothing we do—good works, kind words, being sorry—will take away our sin. Only Christ’s sacrifice on the cross is acceptable before God the Father as perfect atonement for each and every sin.

Study these practical steps as a guide to follow in each lesson when participants desire transformation in their lives.



Alternate Teaching Idea

Use what your group is able to apply of the “Inheritance of the Heart” and this transformation section. Then take banners or homemade musical instruments and sing a favorite song like, “Amazing Grace.”

You might use a puppet like Kermit the Frog, or a plastic croaking frog to sing with you (a piano or record for background music would be great, but not a requirement—it could be a way to involve youth volunteers, however). The teacher plays the role of Kermit as he sings with the group (The full-care seniors always seem to enjoy this fun ending!).

STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—“Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me, and help those I’ve injured to forgive me.”
2. **BELIEVE**—“Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ’s sacrifice for my sins.”
3. **RESTITUTION**—“Lord, please show me what I can do to help change the effects of my sin” by:
 - a. Asking injured people’s forgiveness.
 - b. Sharing with them the choice I should have made, and
 - c. Sharing with them the principle that I’ve seen that has made this truth clear to me.
 - d. Dropping them a “Please Forgive Me” card, or making a phone call or visit, depending on the relationship.We’re not responsible for results, only for obedience.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Have participants read Chapter 1 of *SYSY* plus the questions on the next page, and begin to think about choices made, and the “Inheritance of the Heart” to pass on. Besides an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the past and discover new peace, joy, and perhaps even destiny in life, consider how the testimony can be an encouragement in so many ways to others who inevitably struggle with some of the same choices.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER, AND A SONG LIKE “AMAZING GRACE”

As the first class is ending, realize all issues cannot be resolved, nor everyone’s story heard in this brief time, but take a moment to pray along these lines:

Heavenly Father,

We believe you want to do an amazing work among us. Today is only the beginning. We place before You all the thoughts, dreams, and concerns that are stirring in us right now. Our trust is in You, that You know our hearts, that You can bring about transformation, that You can prepare us for eternity. Help us, Lord, to leave a legacy of hope for those who come behind us, to the glory of Jesus Christ, Your Son. Amen.

“Inheritance of the Heart”—start in class, add to each week, perhaps bring in at end of study. To start a personal record (hand out files, paper, etc.), use the following questions and the questions in *SYSY* as the foundation. *These questions are merely an encouragement; build out from these.*

Alternate Teaching Idea

Volunteer helpers could assist full-care residents for this day (a good project for older youth who are interested in community service). See that each person has something sturdy to write on, or stand by and write for them. Make arrangements with full-care homes for safe keeping of “Inheritance of the Heart” records between class times so they can be added to, either in class, or perhaps with a volunteer who comes in on another day to help a resident complete his/her history.

Teacher: Bring in some object from your family that you have saved over the years. Show and tell its story, “I want to tell you a story about this. It serves as a link between the generation that has gone before me and the generation that will follow me. I have been entrusted as caretaker and steward of this item, as well as the memories that connect it to the generations... You may not always have such keepsakes in your possession, but there may be some items in your memory bank that will trigger their own stories, such as a lamp your mother carried to every new home or a special dish always used for cranberries at Christmas.”

1. Names of father, mother, and yourself in order of birth among brothers and sisters
2. How each person looked physically (hair and eye color, height, etc.)
3. Personality (cheerful, optimistic)
4. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, neighbors (as much as you can remember of people in your life)
5. Describe your first family home—its address, location (rural, city), outdoor interest (treehouse or vegetable garden), and description of rooms or furnishings
6. Did you ever try to run away?
7. First day of school?
8. First love?
9. What were “absolute” rules of the family?
10. What about chores, clothes, sharing, school, etc.?
11. What were your hobbies or talents, grades, distinction?
12. What about brothers or sisters—talents, etc.?
13. What were your hopes and dreams? Which ones were fulfilled and how? Which ones were not, and why? Do those answers have to do with choices you made?
14. Family dining—what did that look like?
15. Add your own ideas as you go

Work together with people in the class to come up with ways that these files can be shared with adults or children. Someone in your family or a friend or neighbor will be interested in your personal record. Some may not value it right away, but when they have children or retire from their busy career, they will begin wondering about the past and wanting to pass on a history to their family. The things you can remember and record now will be valuable to others some day.

Our Voice Identifies Who We Are

LESSON TWO

Major Life Principle: The Power of Communication

Our ability to speak gives us an outward means to identify and express ourselves, to explain the choices we make, and the principles and values that are important to us.

Discuss

- The remarkable power of the human voice to comfort, soothe, reconcile, damage, or destroy (see Proverbs, James 3)
- Controlling our emotions, and subsequently, what comes out of our mouth
- Trained and properly used, our voice can be used to testify or to debate truth, to sing and praise God, to teach, preach, and exhort, or to actually calm a stormy sea.

Desired Outcome:

- To rediscover the value of our voice for communication and begin to train together to make the most of the amazingly powerful communication tool God has given us.

- A. **Our voices are part of our identity, and help us to express ourselves even before we are old enough to use words.**

Different characteristics mark the voices we recognize—high, low, sad or gleeful, fast or slow. Besides the sound of our voice, the way we talk (our sentence structure, language base, and pronunciation) helps others to identify us without seeing us. Frequent use of particular words can also be identifying marks.

- Q. If our voices are part of our identity, how are we identifying ourselves? Our **words** may somewhat express how we feel, or what we want to say, but what part do our **voices** play in seeing that our thoughts or requests are granted? Can we use our voices even more than words to manipulate people—voices that whine, demand, exude pride, false humility, confidence, kindness, rebellion, or anger? What would people say about your voice?

BOB **TOM**
Peg
LESTER **Sue**
Abby **Dan**
FRED

B. Our voices, as well as our words, need to be brought under self-government.

Scriptural Use of Voice:

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead... Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim. 4:1,2).

Alternate Teaching Idea

Read and follow the ideas in the five opening paragraphs in SYSY, page 17. Also, to increase the actual use of the voice and to stimulate thought and some fun, set up the "Identifying Voice" project on page 19 of SYSY.

Sing some favorite, easy songs such as "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," pointing to different ones to voice what the cow, the sheep, etc. says. Or start a line from an old song, and residents can finish: "School days, school days..." "My Bonnie lies over the ocean..." Any military or patriotic song. Or try completing favorite lines from famous books or movies.

- Q.** If we have a responsibility to bring the words we say and the tone and manner of our voice under self-government, what does that mean, and how do we do it?
- Q.** If we are to be ready in season and out of season, what do we need to learn now about handling our emotions and the thoughts so that our words and our voices will always be ready to speak the truth in love to family, friends, and co-workers?
- Q.** In keeping with our discussion in the first lesson about how our choices affect our lives and the lives of those around us, are there specific ways we can hurt or damage people through the use of the voice?... Can anyone share a story?

Encourage participants to write down the different issues for their "Inheritance of the Heart" folder as they come to remembrance through the discussion. At the end of class, help them deal with each instance of "missing the mark" by following through with the Steps to Transformation.

- Q.** How can we repair damage that our voice caused in mistreating people, in breaking relationships?... Any success stories to show how reparation was made and relationships restored?

C. Our voices have power for good.

Communication through the spoken word is one of God's gifts to humans. Besides just knowing or believing something, we have the power to share it, to express it in colorful language, with different inflections of the voice in word or in song, and to testify to what we know is true.

For example, the man who had been born blind and was healed by Jesus may not have been able to give a doctrinal statement

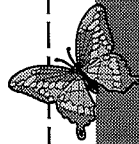
about why he was blind, or how he was healed, but he gave a powerful *testimony*, “I was blind, and now I see” (John 9:1-34).

Alternate Teaching Idea

The breathing exercise in *SYSY*, page 15, would be good for full-care people to practice daily (check with their nurses) as well as the project on page 20 of writing the alphabet with their foot.

STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—“Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I’ve injured to forgive me.”
2. **BELIEVE**—“Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ’s sacrifice for my sins.”
3. **RESTITUTION**—“Lord, please show me what I can do to help change the effects of my sin” by:
 - a. Asking injured people’s forgiveness.
 - b. Sharing with them the choice I should have made, and
 - c. Sharing with them the principle that I’ve seen that has made this truth clear to me.
 - d. Dropping them a “Please Forgive Me” card or following up with a phone call or visit. We’re not responsible for results; only for obedience.



Q. What are some ways that we can use our voice for good in this world? (“A soothing tongue is a tree of life.” Proverbs 15:4)

Q. What are some experiences?

- Comforting a friend?
- Directing a crowd?
- Teaching a class?
- Promoting a campaign?
- Speaking up with truth in a class?
- Being in a choir or play or part of a debate team?

What are some biblical examples of using the voice for good?

- Jesus calmed the sea with His voice
- God created the world with His spoken word
- Others?

Q. Have we possibly taken our voices for granted?

ASSIGNMENT

Complete the questions from Lesson One in “Inheritance of the Heart” records.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Ask who would like to use their voice to close this session by praying for everyone, leading all in thanking the Lord for voices, for the opportunity to use them for good, and asking Him to make everyone very aware this next week of bringing our voices and the words we speak under His direction and control—that what He has created for good might truly be used for good.

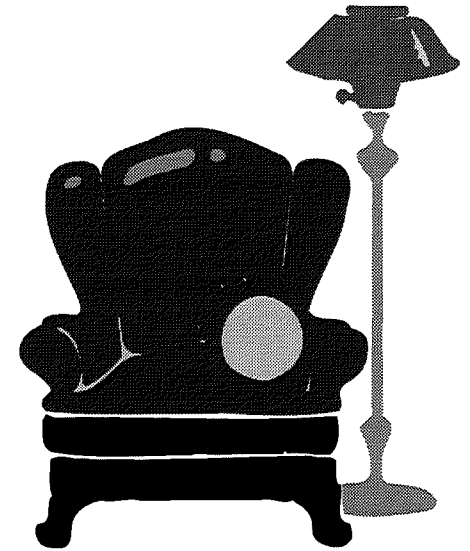
Who Is Sitting in My Chair?

LESSON THREE

Major Life Principle: The Power of Discernment

Part of the power of discernment is explained by the definition itself—the power to make distinctions in the differences between one thing and another. As we exercise discernment in the values we hold and practice, we help build a beacon of values for the next generation.

Desired Outcome: To discern who we really are, and what our core values are.



A. Discerning Who We Are

Discern who is really sitting in your favorite chair—is he/she the one you planned on becoming as you aged?

Discern if your values have changed over the years... For good or ill?

B. Discern the value of unconditional love in becoming whom you wanted to be, or in helping others—spouse, children, friends—become all they could be.

In most every nation, there are days or monuments set aside to honor those who fought and died for their country. Whether the values of that nation or the particular war were good or not, the soldier gave his life unconditionally. We all owe a debt to the soldiers who fought for our freedom.

Alternate Teaching Idea

Read the text on pages 21-23 of *SYSY* up to the “project” and discuss memories of the war years. What values were strong in those years? (Patriotism, love of family, cooperation...?)

What part did participants play in the cooperative effort of those war years? (Soldier, Rosie the Riveter, rolling bandages for the Red Cross, tending the home fires...)

- Q. Did someone’s unselfish love help you become what you are today? Have you ever thanked them?
- Q. How have you helped someone else because of your unconditional, unselfish love? Do you think they have forgotten, or did they ever even realize what you did?

NOTE:

We may have given ourselves unselfishly to help someone else and never been appreciated for that sacrifice. Jesus Christ gave Himself unselfishly for us on a cross, but not everyone has appreciated what He did. He continues to love unconditionally even those who have rejected Him or ignored Him. Those who do recognize, accept and appreciate His incredible love are transformed by that love.

C. Discerning Our Personal Value:
Discernment of the value of our body, our mind, and our spirit can help us choose more carefully how we treat ourselves and others.

- Q.** In what ways can we measure our personal value?
- Q.** Can the Bible help us discern the value of our mind, spirit, body? What scriptures come to mind? (Ps. 139; Ps. 8; Jer. 1:4-8)

D. Core Values Charts

Let's make a "Values Chart" about love based on the verse "Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love your neighbor as

yourself" (Mark 12:30,31). From this scripture, a Values Chart would list our priorities as:

1. God
2. Ourselves
3. Our Neighbor

Would "Our Neighbor" include our spouse, parents, children, siblings, friends, employer, and next door neighbors? Who else? How would we know the order of priority concerning all these "neighbors"? If we only have so much time and energy, how can we discern where to spend it?

Personal Core Values charts can help us with time management, budgeting priorities, and decision making on various levels. If God is number one on our chart, we will be sure He receives some priority time during our day, that He receives the tithe He requires of our finances, and that our decision-making will be based on what His Word says pleases Him.

Prioritizing Our Core Values:

Discernment of the priority of people, events, beliefs, and objects could be used to make values charts against which we can measure our own lives and help others to measure theirs.

If a hierarchy of core values has not been established in our hearts and minds, we could be experiencing unnecessary difficulty or confusion in our life.

When there are no clear priorities, life can become dull (like a flat picture with no background) because there is nothing important that stands out.

Alternate Teaching Idea

Answer the questions on page 23 of *SYSY*, in the last two paragraphs before the "Project." Provide writing materials or craft supplies to make or write cards and letters. Helpers could assist in writing these with the residents, and take care that they are mailed to a veteran's hospital (use whatever holiday is nearest the date of your lesson as a reason to write and send the cards). You might also consider finding those right in your local hospital or in your city who are veterans of WW I or II and other wars.

You might even want to get a special cake with your nation's colors, and sing patriotic songs and honor one another for the part you played during those wars.



Creating Values Charts

Use a separate sheet to draw up Core Values charts for each bold heading below and then prioritize individual values under each heading.

Some core values might be similar from one family to another, but individual values might be more unique.

- Q.** For example, which of these would be part of your core values, and what items would you add or remove from each category?
- **Education** (*put this heading on a separate sheet*)
 - Phonics, vocational school, or college degree for your child?
 -
 -
 -
 - **Family** (*put this heading on a separate sheet*)
 - Family night once a week
 - Patriotism, military service, voting, sitting on a jury?
 -
 -
 - **Food/Health/Exercise** (*put this heading on a separate sheet*)
 - Eating a balanced diet
 - Making sure you set aside time for physical activity every day
 -
 - **Spiritual** (*put this heading on a separate sheet*)
 - Read the Bible every day
 -
 -
 - **Finances** (*put this heading on a separate sheet*)
 - Budget
 - Tithe
 -
 -
 - **Marriage** (*put this heading on a separate sheet*)
 - Date night for married couples
 -

continued on next page

Core values (continued)

- **Recreation, Hobbies** (*put this heading on a separate sheet*)
 - Sports
 - Coin collection
 - Playing music
 -
- **Personal** (*put this heading on a separate sheet*)
 - Abstinence before marriage
 - Sharing your faith
 - Sending cards or letters
 -
- **Other** (*put this heading on a separate sheet*)
 - Keeping aware of what is going on in the news
 -

Each chart can be as long or short as necessary to assist you in prioritizing and ordering your life. The values will help determine such things as where money should be spent, and how much time should be given to different issues. Most of all, they will provide a record for your “Inheritance of the Heart” folder of those things important to you in this life.

NOTE: Values Can Change

Values can change and mature during the different cycles of our life as we have succeeded or failed in choices we’ve made. As a teenager, our core values in life may be self-centered—having a date for the prom or making the football team.

As we marry and have children, our focus can become more other-centered, our love more unconditional and unselfish. As we near retirement, there can be a tendency to put more value on our own desires again. What do you think about this?

E. “Inheritance of the Heart” record—

complete your Core Values charts at home, and add them to your folder. *These would be invaluable for someone in the next generation in setting up a household.*

- In prioritizing things of value to you, explain why voting is important to you, for example.
- Explain the process you used to discern your priorities.

F. Bringing values into line

In “Rainbow Days,” we learned the purpose and value of repentance. Where can repentance be utilized as we see that our values—past, present, or future—do not line up as they should?

Q. Why do people want to “spend their children’s inheritance” as is written on numerous motorhome bumper stickers? What do you think would need to happen in order for those people to choose different values that would be more in keeping with what God has in mind about leaving an inheritance to our children and children’s children?

Q. If your top value as a young adult was something foolish, but desirable, did you get what you wanted? What price did you pay for it? Was the prize worth what it cost you? Did your power of discernment increase because of your experience?

- Q.** If you spent many years running against social convention, against the law, against the rules of safety, or the laws of health, what would you share with others who want to go against the tide?
- Q.** What is your advice for growing older with a pleasant disposition and a positive attitude?

ASSIGNMENT

- Use the “Thinking of You” postcards or stationery to write and thank some people in the participants’ background who helped them learn to discern values and make decisions for good.
- Encourage participants to use the transformation steps below to deal with any issues that came up during this week’s lesson.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Pray that participants will continue to discover who they really are, their core values, and the vision they want to pass on to the next generation.

STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—“Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I’ve injured to forgive me.”
2. **BELIEVE**—“Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ’s sacrifice for my sins.”
3. **RESTITUTION**—“Lord, please show me what I can do to help change the effects of my sin” by:
 - a. Asking injured people’s forgiveness.
 - b. Sharing with them the choice I should have made, and
 - c. Sharing with them the principle that I’ve seen that has made this truth clear to me.
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Love Letters

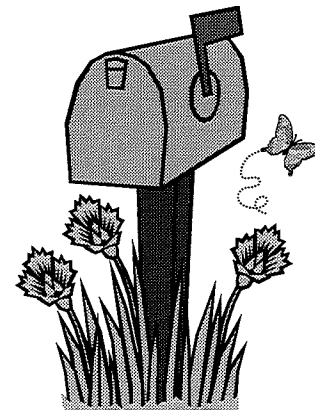
LESSON FOUR

Major Life Principle: The Power of Commitment

The most powerful commitments are those driven by principle. Commitments can range from serious relational agreements, such as marriage, to a simple agreement between a parent and youngster to feed and care for a pet.

Desired Outcome:

To discover the basic requirements for a lasting commitment, how to troubleshoot when problems arise, and how to handle the emotions involved in commitment.



Alternate Teaching Idea

As a teaching aid, bring in a pack of old letters tied with ribbon and untie them as you read from the "Love Letters" chapter starting on page 27 of *SYSY*.

Answer the questions as you go through the pages and share the stories of school-day crushes, first love, engagements, and marriage, seeing how each letter or story brings up more memories to share.

- A. **There are two discussion points in this lesson. One of them concerns emotions**—those that are part of childhood crushes and those that are part of truly committed relationships. Wherever love is involved, there can be strong emotions of ecstasy, joy, and peace, as well as fear, jealousy, and pain.
- B. **The other discussion point concerns actual commitments or agreements**, and how we enter into them and maintain them.

Let's work with emotions, using some of the Alternate Teaching Ideas as you desire.

- Q. What would be the value of remembering the emotions of a childish or even an early adulthood "crush"? How can those memories be put to use in our "Inheritance of the Heart" files? Were there some fun memories around these crushes, such as those remembered in *SYSY*?

Alternate Teaching Idea

Have a pianist play, or just sing old songs together as you continue to discuss attendees' memories of committed relationships in elementary, high school, college, the war years, etc. Ask if they also have old letters they've saved, and what kind are they? Are there any from the war eras? Who of their friends or family served in the armed forces?

Point out God's love for each one from Jeremiah 31:3, where God says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." Discuss whatever heartaches or disappointments they might have had, and remind them of God's continuing love for them.

For their "Inheritance of the Heart" record, ask them which memories should be saved on paper.

Have older youth or other volunteers come in to help record special memories.

TIP: One way to express the depth of feelings in a relationship is to write or tape record the thoughts from your heart.

- Q.** The basic emotions around love relationships never change. Do you think the next generation might appreciate hearing your stories (for example, how you handled not having a date for the junior prom because your supposedly committed beau just decided to break up)?
- Q.** On page 28 of *SYSY* are some biblical emotions of joy and frustration found in the stories of Jacob and King David. As described in the story of Abigail and Nabal, was there ever a time when your good friend or spouse intervened and saved you from making a big mistake as Abigail did for Nabal?
- Q.** Where you experienced pain and heartache from broken relationships, have those been healed through God's provision of His own eternal love for you (Jer. 31:3)? Where you broke another's heart through a failed commitment, can you act on the "Rainbow Days" lesson of repentance? Will some of you share testimonies where you have done this already?

For the record:

These are points to add to your "Inheritance of the Heart" files—

- Name of your mother's best friend and something about their relationship
- Name of your father's best friend and something about their relationship
- Names of good neighbors of your childhood and something about them
- Name your own best friend at different ages, and why you had a special relationship

- Q.** Have you kept in touch with any of these people, and how?

C. Making and Maintaining Commitments

1. Commitments should be freely entered into by each party with a clear understanding of the rights, responsibilities, and expectations of the commitment.
 - Q. What character qualities would you look for in a person or group of people before making an agreement with them (example: sense of duty and honor, responsible, truthful, self-disciplined)
 - Q. How would the *type* of relational commitment affect the kinds of character qualities you would look for? (What would you look for in a business partner? marriage partner? in an agreement to mentor someone in a craft or sport?)
2. Commitment can produce mastery of skills, achievement in the arts, financial success, and a healthy marriage. The most successful commitments are driven by principle.
 - Q. What principles should guide how a commitment is established or maintained?
 - Q. Have you been involved in a commitment—marriage or otherwise—where you decided to stand by that commitment on principle even when the going got tough? What can you share about that?

3. When circumstances surrounding commitments take an unexpected turn, the resulting conflict may require the help of a mediator or counselor.

- Q. If you had prenuptial counseling, did that sufficiently cover all the issues that came up after you were married?
- Q. How can a third party (mediator or counselor) be of value in resolving conflict?

D. Broken commitments, if from your side, need to be acknowledged, repented of, and reconciled with an honest, humble apology, and any restitution necessary.

1. If commitments were broken by the other party, it is wise to examine your own heart to see if you may have contributed to that decision, and if so, follow through with the process steps to transformation.
2. When you have dealt with your own heart, then you can pray with genuine love for the other person (Matt. 7:3-5).
3. If you find that you are still carrying resentment, bitterness, or anger over a broken agreement that cannot seem to be resolved, look again at the steps to transformation. Jesus taught us that we are to forgive our enemies and pray for those who hurt us (Matt. 5:43-48).

Help participants to pray, openly seeking God's help to repent of their own sin, so God can bring justice to their case once they relinquish the position of judge and jury. "Vengeance is Mine," says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19).

Alternate Teaching Idea

Conclude your time together by handing out greeting cards, writing paper, or a telephone.

Do the "Love Letters Project" on page 32 of SYSY and help full-care people to contact those who haven't heard from them in awhile.

Help participants answer the "Inheritance of the Heart" questions on the following pages and add to their record.

- E. Think about long-forgotten commitments you may have made with your children** (a fishing trip, a banana split on Saturday) but never kept because of working late or even forgetting about it.

Surprisingly, children rarely forget.

Think of broken commitments from your own childhood. Have you forgiven your parents in your heart, and let those things go, or are you still holding resentment?

- F. Describe some means that you have used to maintain relational commitments you have made—marriage, business, or as a parent, coach, student...**

Q. Are there any relational commitments you've made over the years that could be encouraged or strengthened today by a letter, a card, flowers, or phone call? Is there someone who would benefit by hearing from you?

Q. Is there anyone from whom you would like to receive a call or letter today? Is there any way you can initiate that contact?

ASSIGNMENT:

- Consider the project of a tape recording or letter as described on the following page and fill in the answers to the “Inheritance of the Heart” questions. Share how you handled love relationships, their pain and joy, knowing that whoever reads your record will also be experiencing many of the same situations in their own time and will learn, grow, and be stronger from hearing what you see from the hindsight of many years.
- Choose a postcard to send with remembered joys or lessons learned about love, perhaps to a grandson or granddaughter in their teens.
- Where this lesson has brought up memories of commitments that you have broken, follow the “Steps to Transformation” below.
- Close with prayer around Jeremiah 31:3, and God’s amazing, wonderful, unconditional love.

STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—“Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I’ve injured to forgive me.”
2. **BELIEVE**—“Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ’s sacrifice for my sins.”
3. **RESTITUTION**—“Lord, please show me what I can do to help change the effects of my sin” by:
 - a. Asking injured people’s forgiveness.
 - b. Sharing with them the choice I should have made, and
 - c. Sharing with them the principle that I’ve seen that has made this truth clear to me.
 - d. Dropping them a “Please Forgive Me” card or making a follow-up phone call or visit. We’re not responsible for results; only for obedience.



“INHERITANCE OF THE HEART” RECORD

- Describe when, where, how you met your spouse, your courtship, favorite outings.
- Describe your wedding—place, date, people involved, any special memories, songs.
- Honeymoon destination, or did you have just one day before your soldier husband was shipped out?
- Your work life—did husband and wife both work, or did wife stay home and tend to family and home?
- How did you show love to one another if you worked separate shifts or one was out of town a lot—letters in a suitcase, notes in a lunch box, phone calls?
- How did the prevailing attitude toward divorce change from the years of your early marriage to more recent years?

In continuing with your “Inheritance of the Heart” project, this would be a good place to consider writing a letter or making a tape recording for your spouse, each of your children, a close friend, coach, or business associate—those with whom you made commitments over the years.

In your own words, share character qualities you appreciate in each person, the principles you have seen exhibited in his/her life, and the way they have blessed you over the years.

One father did this for his son; as he drove his truck, the father spoke into a tape recorder, and the son listens often to this recording now that the father is deceased.

Recall important lessons you’ve learned from or with them, perhaps also acknowledging some areas where you failed to be all you could be on your side of the agreement.

Where appropriate, say the words “I love you.” Many adult children say they have never heard that from a parent or sibling.

Speak words of blessing over them as the patriarchs in the Bible did over their children.

APPROPRIATE TIMING IS IMPORTANT ON MATTERS OF THE HEART—

Perhaps a brief note of love and encouragement is all that should be sent right now, but the tape recording or “love letter” might be saved with your “Inheritance of the Heart” files to be passed on when you are gone. If there is any question, ask someone to help you discern the timing.

LESSON FIVE

Major Life Principle:**The Power of Self-Government**

To fulfill our responsibilities in life, we must all live under government, either from internal forces (self-government) or external forces (civil government). Self-government and a belief in transcendent values promotes prosperity and national pride.

Desired Outcome: To understand and practice self-government so we do our part in making our families and our nation great.

- A. The highways of history are strewn with the wreckage of nations that forgot God and put His commandments aside. A nation's fall begins when individual citizens begin to lose self-government and instead, choose self-gratification.**

Read the opening paragraphs on page 33 of *SYSY*.

- B. One of the national landmarks described in this chapter of *SYSY* is Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. Each of the men represented in that amazing work practiced self-government in their personal lives—Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson established self-government as America's political philosophy through his writing.**

Mapping Out Greatness



- Q.** Do you believe, as Thomas Jefferson did, that the decay of America's moral self-government would result in the failure of the whole system? Explain.
- Q.** What does self-government mean to you? How have you exercised it in the past, and how are you exercising it now? When have you been tempted to fall into the stream of self-gratification?

NOTE:

A nation founded on principles of self-government and moral excellence will promote unity of purpose and national pride, but if that base is allowed to decay, the whole system may fall.

C. If we focus on a culture of personal rights, it will lead to division and chaos. If we focus on a culture of responsibility, it will lead to order and true freedom.

Q. What are some of the differences between today's cultural values in America and those of our grandparents' day?

Q. Did you implement your parents' values and principles in your own life (raising your children, your personal work ethic, etc., or did you choose to do things differently? What was the fruit of that choice?



D. Tom Brokaw wrote in *The Greatest Generation* about the history being made during your lifetime—the defeat of Hitler's Third Reich, the fall of communism in the Soviet Union.

Q. Did you realize, at the time, that yours was an exceptional generation? Explain why you think it was exceptional.

Q. Do you think that same unity is possible today among this current generation of citizens, workers, and soldiers? Is prayer an answer? What about the special prayer of 2 Chronicles 7:14?

Alternate Teaching Idea

Read through the stories in *SYSY*, sharing memories participants have of those places or at different national monuments. Have them share about special local monuments in their home area that are not as widely known. Possibly bring in an extra large map of your country and use colored markers to show each person's home, their travels, etc. Encourage each person to share. Take some time to do any or all of the projects on page 39 of *SYSY*—the parade might be especially fun in the wheelchairs. Bring some volunteers along to help push, to play some favorite patriotic songs, and to help with the "Inheritance of the Heart" records.

ASSIGNMENT:

- Where you have made wrong choices related to self-gratification vs. self-government (you were part of dividing your country, city, or church rather than bringing unity and strength), follow the steps to transformation below.
- Choose a postcard to send with remembered joys to a former traveling companion. Or you might send a note to your birth city telling something special about that place that might end up in their archives (i.e., thank them for putting in the local baseball park or skating rink you enjoyed).

Close with prayer.

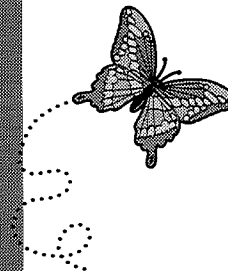
STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—"Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I've injured to forgive me."
2. **BELIEVE**—"Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ's sacrifice for my sins."
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"Inheritance of the Heart" Record

Answer these questions to include in your record. If you have grandchildren in the younger grades, you might include this information in a letter to them because they often have school projects that could incorporate some of these ideas.

- Many of the answers you gave during class for this chapter could be included in your record. What were the greatest accomplishments of your generation? Were you part of inventing or establishing any of them?
- What is your home State? Do you know its flag, flower, or bird? What was important to you about your home State?
- Did you ever visit your State's capitol or your nation's Capitol, and what did that mean to you?
- On what community projects did you serve, or in what way did you contribute?
- Recall your own travel experiences and record those historic places that stirred patriotism in you.



LESSON SIX

Major Life Principle:**The Power to Adapt to Changing Times**

Every period of life and every family has its problems, its advantages, its adjustments, its decisions, and its uncertainties. The ability to adapt and make right responses to changing times and family circumstances in each generation affects succeeding generations.

Desired Outcome: Discover our importance in the chain of generations and our need to continually adapt to stay relevant.

- A. You are a vital link between the generations before and after you. Your decisions count, not just for your personal life, but for all those you influence.**

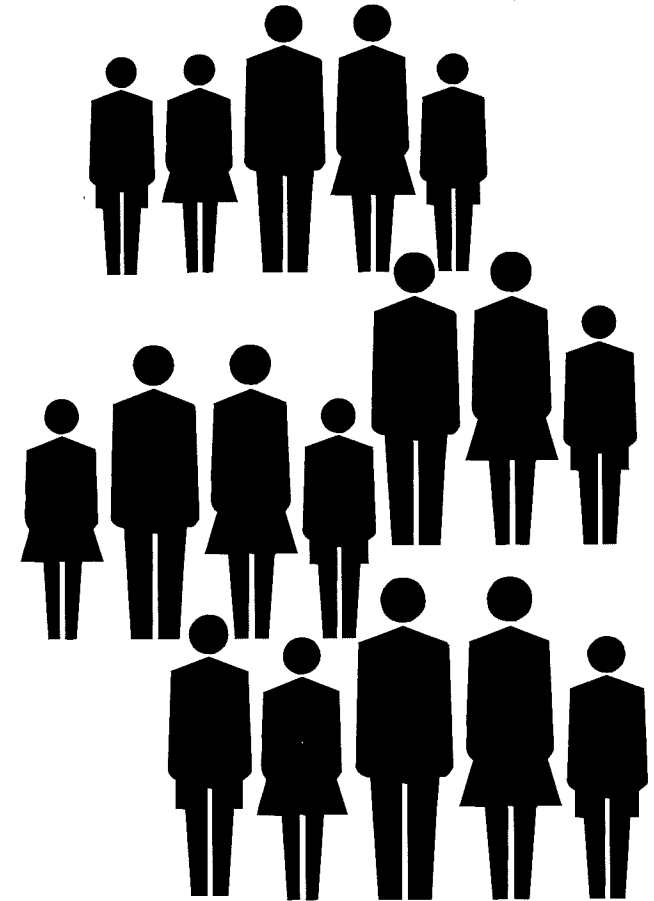
Besides being part of a physical family by natural birth, there is an invitation from God to be part of His own family tree. He wants you to take your place and establish your family under His covenant blessing where you will have access to His unlimited knowledge and wisdom through the Bible, to help you make right choices at every bend of the road. *Though times and circumstances change, the truth of His Word spans all generations and provides the power to adapt to changing times without losing our foundations.*

“Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments...”

(Deut. 7:9)

- B. You have already made a difference in your generation by adapting to the changes of your generation instead of “dropping out.”** Consider the people who held you as a baby, who watched you take your first step. You may have been a blessing to a spinster aunt who was able to mother you as her brother’s child. Whether you ever experience what the world considers “greatness,” you have already touched many people you may not even know.

You Are a Vital Link



Q. Read “Adding to the Chain” on page 41 of *SYSY* **or** answer this question. Really be honest with yourself and think of all the people your life has touched *for good* just because you are you, just because you were a son or an uncle or a team member... who are they?

C. Adapting to constantly changing times and situations—first grade, high school, track team, new job, marriage, children, crisis, empty nest, retirement—requires courage and more.

Q. At what times in your life, and under what conditions, did you find yourself needing to adapt to new circumstances?

Q. How did you handle those situations? What adaptations did you make, and were you successful?

Q. What is the hardest thing about adapting to changing times or situations? What purpose does going through the difficulty of adapting to change serve in our life?

NOTE:

The oldest family members will provide the strong, unifying links because they can look back the furthest and pass on the memories to the newest family members. *You are a vital link in your family chain.*

Alternate Teaching Idea:

Show some family tree pictures, perhaps a biblical timeline, and a timeline of modern improvements that began to make life easier for us and the generations before us.

“INHERITANCE OF THE HEART” RECORD

Read through this chapter in *SYSY*. It is full of questions to jog your memory about your own family stories and relationships. Your grandchildren might even enjoy doing the craft or silly wrist activity with you just for fun.

One of the ladies who helped with this workbook has her father’s handwritten autobiography, a treasure to her and her family. Another lady helped her mother put together a book of memories during her last months of life, about 30 pages ; it included pictures of friends and family. This nicely formatted and bound booklet was given out at the mother’s memorial service some months later.

Alternate Teaching Idea:

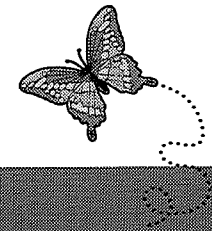
Read through the “Vital Link” chapter in *SYSY*. Encourage participants to see their personal value as a vital link in the chain of history—perhaps in the city where they worked before retirement or in their families. Help them to continue to record their memories, and to do some of the fun projects on page 45 of *SYSY*.

Don't miss these opportunities to get your memories, good advice, and treasured scripture verses down on paper or recorded on tape. Maybe share some of them with your grandchildren now (they often have more time than their parents to enjoy such things with you), and then put them in safe keeping for that day when your children will have the time to enjoy them also.

ASSIGNMENT:

- Choose a postcard to send with remembered joys to special people you haven't yet written who are part of your life chain.
- Where you have made wrong choices in adapting to a new situation or had wrong responses to people out of your frustration over change, follow the steps to transformation and work through those things.

Close with prayer, thanking the Lord for His mercy in choosing us to be part of His eternal family, and making provision for our acceptance in Jesus Christ.

**STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION**

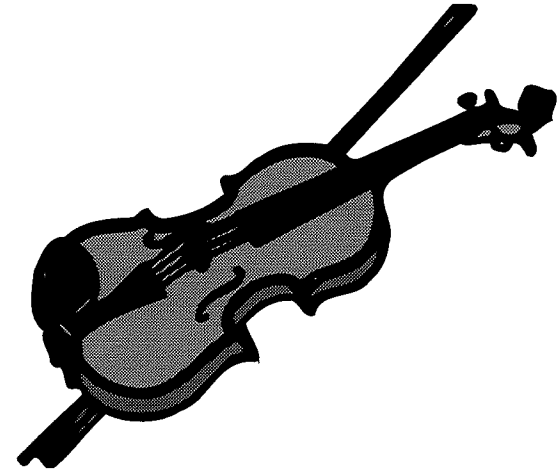
1. **REPENT**—“Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I've injured to forgive me.”
2. **BELIEVE**—“Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ's sacrifice for my sins.”
3. **RESTITUTION**—“Lord, please show me what I can do to help change the effects of my sin” by:
 - a. Asking injured people's forgiveness.
 - b. Sharing with them the choice I should have made, and
 - c. Sharing with them the principle that I've seen that has made this truth clear to me.
 - d. Dropping them a “Please Forgive Me” card or making a follow-up phone call or visit. We're not responsible for results; only for obedience.

LESSON SEVEN**Major Life Principle:****The Power of Work**

Whatever work one does, *how* he does it works into his own character a priceless mark that will distinguish him forever. Even when working or serving someone else, if we put our whole heart and skill into our work, excellence will be a hallmark of our product or service.

Desired Outcome:

To discover the value of work at every age.



- A. More than anyone else, you know the story on the kind of work you do or did, the manner in which you did it, and the attitude you carried during that work. Begin to think about the different work you have done —homemaker, construction worker, president of a corporation, artisan, teacher...**
- Q. What are some of the purposes of work?
- Q. Why did you choose your vocation?
- B. To promote or demand excellence in workmanship from ourself and others contributes to our own personal growth and the continuing progress of our culture.**
- Q. Is anyone really self-made, or does everyone depend on teachers or mentors to develop them in their skill or craft?
- Q. What does it require of a man or woman to produce excellence? Is it only the skill of hands or mind, developed and perfected, or is there more?

Excellence at Any Age

Alternate Teaching Idea

Bring in some work objects, such as a hammer, violin, embroidery hoop, rolling pin. Bring some tape recordings or have someone play some of the well-known songs about work, such as "I've Been Working on the Railroad," "Hi, Ho, Hi, Ho, It's Off to Work We Go," "I'm an Old Cowhand," "The Company Store."

Read the whole chapter in *SYSY* about Antonio Stradivarius from the beginning up to the chapter heading, "What about your life?"

Then ask people to hold out their hands, palms up. Ask them to look at their hands and pretend they can speak: **"What would your hands say about all the kinds of work they have done for you?"**

A potent question, give it some time to sink in. It could evoke many good memories, but it could also bring some unpleasant memories to the surface. Be prepared to rejoice with those who rejoice in the good work they have accomplished, and be prepared to mourn with and pray for those whose hands have done things they regret. Give time for people to share what their hands might be saying to them.

- C. Fine workmanship brings its own rewards. Poor workmanship can bring negative consequences upon the workman.**
 - Q.** What are some of the rewards of producing excellent work?
 - Q.** What are some of the "rewards" of being a careless worker or of producing poor service or product?
- D. If we are unable to do physical work, we can still show appreciation to those caring for us, and show love to family or relatives by thanking them.**
- E. Remember Grandma Moses! Excellence is not something that only young people can produce. In many cases, they may not even have the desire to produce excellence. Older and wiser, the mature adult has an amazing opportunity to contribute something of excellence.**
 - Q.** What talents or gifts have you never really used that people have noticed in you over the years and encouraged you to bring out?
 - Q.** What would you need right now to begin to develop those talents and hidden desires—learning to play an instrument, learning to crochet, singing solo, writing a book? Great-Grandma Iris Peacocke, the instigator of this series, was encouraged by her daughter-in-law to start this series. When 84 year-old Iris said, "Okay," God opened the way.
- F. Close with prayer, drawing on the issues that were brought out during your time together.**

NOTE:

**“If anyone will not work,
neither let him eat.”**

2 Thess. 3:10

Everyone can pray, and prayer
is work (Watchman Nee, *The
Prayer Ministry of the Church*).

Alternate Teaching Idea

Go back to “What about your life?”
in *SYSY* and read the final
paragraphs, encouraging people to
be honest with themselves about
what their work habits and
attitudes were, acknowledging
where they “missed the mark” in
these areas, and praying for them
as a group for God’s forgiveness
and mercy on what was done
wrongly, and for His blessing upon
the good work of their hands and
hearts, that it will continue to yield
abundant fruit in the generations
that follow.

In the full-care center, encourage
participants to express apprecia-
tion to those who care for them—
doctors, nurses, volunteers,
janitors, etc.

ASSIGNMENT:

- Choose a postcard to send with remembered joys to special people you haven’t yet written who exemplified excellence in workmanship—bosses, co-workers, mentors, or employees (if you were the boss).
- Where you have recognized wrong attitudes about your work years, or where you realize you failed to strive for excellence in your work, either in an office, or the field, or as a homemaker, follow the steps to transformation to deal with what you see.
- Go to the next page and work on your “Inheritance of the Heart” questions for your record.



STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—"Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I've injured to forgive me."
2. **BELIEVE**—"Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ's sacrifice for my sins."
3. **RESTITUTION**—"Lord, please show me what I can do to help change the effects of my sin" by:
 - a. Asking injured people's forgiveness.
 - b. Sharing with them the choice I should have made, and
 - c. Sharing with them the principle that I've seen that has made this truth clear to me.
 - d. Dropping them a "Please Forgive Me" card or making a follow-up phone call or visit. We're not responsible for results; only for obedience.



"INHERITANCE OF THE HEART" RECORD

1. Write down the kind of work you did, why you chose it, what kind of training you had, and what you liked best about it. Describe your beliefs about excellence as discussed in the lesson.
2. If you were married, did you partner in work on a farm or in a grocery business, and what part did each of you do? Did your children work with you, or did they have other interests?
3. Did you have a special hobby that you worked at with more enjoyment and diligence than your 9-5 job? Did you receive any awards for your hobby or job?
4. If you were a supervisor, manager, or boss, how did you go about building an effective work force? If you were a homemaker, how did you get your family to work together on projects?
5. Thinking of the people to whom you plan to give this record, write an encouragement to them of what you see as their talents and skills, or ways you have seen them working with excellence.

SESSION EIGHT

Major Life Principle:

The Power of Stewardship

Stewardship and dominion over animals adds a dimension of insight into behavior and character values we might not have known otherwise.

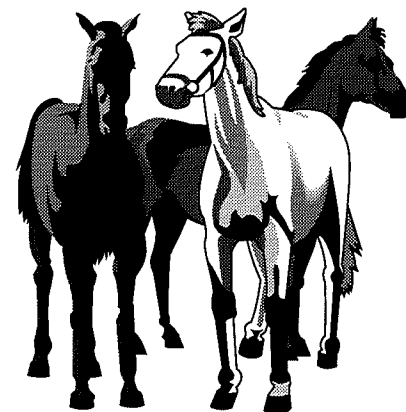
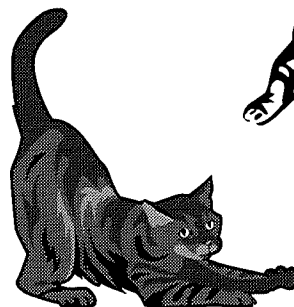
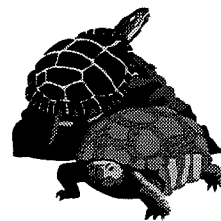
Desired Outcome: To discover the value of stewarding the earth as well as everything God puts in your hands, from pets to finances to special talents.

- A. In the beginning, God created the world, all its vegetation, all the wild animals, livestock, and the animals we have known. Then He created Adam and Eve and placed them in charge. He made them stewards of everything, and told them to “take dominion” or “rule over” all He had made (Gen. 1).

Alternate Teaching Idea:

Bring in stuffed animals for the residents to hold during this session or check with officials at the home about having Canine Companions or Humane Society bring in some gentle animals that residents can hold or pet.

Animals We Have Known



- Q. Why would God have told “mankind” to be a steward over the animals and plants and all that He made?
- Q. What does that mean for us today? Ruling over something usually entails responsibility. What kind of responsibility do we have to our own pets, to animals in general, or to the earth?

B. Besides the general care of the world around us, the Bible clearly tells us that we are to steward our own bodies, our finances, our words, our relationships, and our talents.

Q. What does this mean to you?

Q. Do you think God will require an accounting of us for the things He's put in our hands?

C. SKILL + GIFT (TALENT) = FACULTY

Faculty: the power of mind and intellect which enables us to receive, revive, or modify perceptions, and the power of doing things. What are your major gifts and talents? When did you discover them?

How have you stewarded your gifts, skills, and the resulting faculties?

Q. If we are not doing a good job of stewarding our own selves, what should we do? What resources can you suggest, or can we help each other in some of these areas?

- Using our talents and education...
- Finances...
- Fitness and health...
- Handling our time...
- Spiritual disciplines...
- Relationships...

If a dog were your teacher, you would learn things like:

- When your loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
- Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joy ride.
- When it's in your best interest—practice obedience.
- Take naps and stretch before rising.
- Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
- No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout—run right back and make friends.
- Be loyal.
- Never pretend to be something you're not.
- If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
- When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by, and nuzzle them gently.



Alternate Teaching Idea:

Read the stories about animals and ask the general questions in *SYSY*, pages 55-60; do the "crown project"; and the simple game at the end of the chapter.

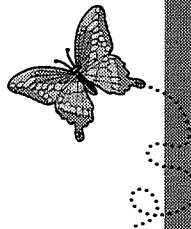
Give group lots of time to share about their pets—names, why they were important to them, and what special things they did together.

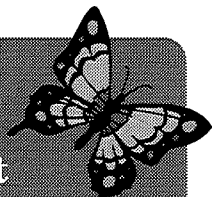
ASSIGNMENT:

- For your “Inheritance of the Heart” folder, write down the names and types of pets you have had, or any experience you had with wild animals. Share some of the unusual things your horse or dog or bird did, and some of the routines they had. Why or how did you come to own these animals, and what difference did they make in your life? What did you learn from these pets? How did you train them?
- You may want to use one of the postcards to share memories or lessons you learned through the years in the area of stewardship.
- If you see areas where you did not steward relationships or possessions that were put in your hands, follow the steps to transformation around those issues.

STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—“Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I’ve injured to forgive me.”
2. **BELIEVE**—“Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ’s sacrifice for my sins.”
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It has been said that “the course of life is run but in one way, and only once,” and that people punish themselves ceaselessly for past mistakes in judgment, lack of foresight, or not seeing things sooner.

But we must not let this keep us from improving the present. It is now, and from here on, that is our opportunity.

If we have missed the Spring, we’d better take the Summer or the Autumn... and not needlessly let the past make us also miss the present or the future.

LESSON NINE

Major Life Principle:

The Power of Relationships

God's love for diversity should be a standard we commit to as our own.

Desired Outcome: To discover the value of diversity and ways to handle the conflicts that arise out of diversity.

A. God manifests His love for diversity among people and nations. He gave to mankind a diversity of talents, personalities, and physical features. He gave to the nations diversity in landscape, natural resources, and purpose or mandates.

Q. What is the purpose of this diversity or the differences among us? Doesn't it just make for arguments among people and wars among nations?

B. Understanding that diversity is a good thing does not mean we will never experience differences. (Read page 61 in SYSY—"Handling Differences Constructively.") **The question is not whether we will have differences, but how we will manage them.**

Peter asked,
"Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

Jesus said to him,
"I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

Matthew 18:21-22

Handling Differences



Q. What happens when your whole family gets together for a reunion, a wedding, or a big event? Are there any unique "characters" in your family, and how are they special to you in their diversity? How does the family handle them if they are a bit difficult?

Q. If there are genuine differences among people that are really no one's fault, but just the way things are, how do you work with those?

Alternate Teaching Idea

Read and follow the story line in SYSY, page 61, changing the holiday event to whatever season you are teaching, or make it a simple picnic or birthday party.

Discuss prayer: Many people who believe in God have never been taught that God is personal and desires relationship with each person. Though in desperation, they might send up a cry for help, they don't expect God to dialogue with them or be interested in their everyday life.

Explain that the Bible is God's letter to the human race about Himself and His ways. Much as we are talking about leaving an "Inheritance of the Heart" record for the next generation, so He has done that with the Bible. Different writers wrote for Him what He wanted us to know about Himself

If we help people understand how much God loves them and wants to help them, they can learn to pray expecting answers—answers from His Word, answers in His still small voice, answers that transform them and those with whom they are in relationship.

C. Even in the best of relationships, at times there will be conflict.

- Q.** Is it important that both parties are willing to look at their mistakes and faults in the matter?
- Q.** In working through conflict resolution, what do you think about Matthew 18:15-17? "If your brother sins against you, go and reprove him in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every fact may be confirmed..."
What is the key factor here? Is this workable?

D. If God loves diversity, and we are to be like Him, the cause for our arguments and wars could be lack of love. If we don't really appreciate and value the different traditions of those around us like God does, we cannot love those who are different from us. We will either want to ignore them as something beneath us, or try to overpower them so we can make them become like us.

- Q.** If it is important for us to learn to love diversity as God does, especially when it involves people and relationships, how should we deal with our misconceptions, biases, or even hatred of another person or people group?
- Q.** To repent is to turn around and go another way. If we truly repent of our dislike for certain people, what action can we take to show to ourselves and to God that we really mean it?

Q. How would it play out in marriage, in sports, or in an office situation if each party, though uniquely different, was esteemed and supported in whatever position or assignment they carried?

E. If it were necessary to rescue a child trapped in a collapsed mine shaft, a host of people would draw together to attempt the dangerous assignment. Everyone would need to lay aside their individual egos and vision and take orders from the leader, bringing all their diverse gifts and talents to serve that rescue.

Q. Our culture is in need of rescue—the way is fraught with danger. What will it take for us to put aside the things that divide us so that we can work together to rescue our cities, our nation, and our world?

TIP:

Every time you are tempted to criticize, think of a secret compliment about that person instead. See page 62 in *SYSY*.

Alternate Teaching Idea

Continue reading in *SYSY*, page 62, of different ways to pray about difficult relationships. Do the project and activity on page 63 with your group.

Have volunteers read to give assistance with these activities and to help record the “Inheritance of the Heart” memories.

ASSIGNMENT

Where there is a flood of wonderful memories around family events, you might want to take the time to send a “Thinking of You” card to someone who was part of those memories.

There may be several relationships that have come to mind during our discussion where there are unresolved or unreconciled issues. Take a look at them through the “Steps to Transformation,” and see what part you can play in reconciliation through an apology or forgiveness, first seeking resolution between you and God.



STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—"Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I've injured to forgive me."
2. **BELIEVE**—"Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ's sacrifice for my sins."
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"INHERITANCE OF THE HEART" RECORD

Try to remember and write down some of the special family events from your childhood, and up to the present.

- Are there reunions, weddings, graduations, anniversaries, or funerals that particularly stood out to you?
- Who were some of the "characters" there—ones who always had a funny story to tell, someone who always sang a solo or played the piano? What were the family "characteristics" that seemed to carry through each holiday or special event—kids always did a skit, Aunt Em always made her famous angel food cake with strawberries...?
- Which part of the family got together for Christmas or Thanksgiving or Easter? What were the traditions around those times?
- What were the big discussions around the table—were they around political or intellectual or spiritual matters?
- What were the family sayings or jokes?

Helplessness and Hymns to Comfort

LESSON TEN

Major Life Principle: The Power of Humility

True humility is the self-conscious recognition of the limitations of our own self.

Desired Outcome:

To discover how to humble ourselves and to help us recognize that true humility is the key to true spiritual growth.



A. The single greatest obstacle to true spiritual growth is pride.

Q. What is pride?

Q. What does it mean to humble ourselves ?

B. We might ask why a good God permits bad things to happen. God often allows things to come into our life to show us our need of dependency on Him.

Q. What were some of the negative experiences that you had in life?

Q. What do you think God was after in you?

Q. How did you respond?

Q. How can you use what you learned to help others (2 Cor. 1:3,4)?

Alternate Teaching Idea

This chapter is important for those living in full care homes or lonely at home because it deals with the helpless feeling of being dependent on others, or of being unable to get around and do things as we once did. There is an answer for each individual in the love of God, the friendship of Jesus Christ, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Take some time to share the helplessness stories and also the solutions in *SYSY* on page 67 and the top of page 68. Here are more questions for discussion:

- Would you prefer to know what lies ahead, or rather not know?
- Can helplessness bring on feelings of panic or anger?
- Is there a grieving process we need to take when our life takes a huge turn? What about humbling ourself and dealing with the shock, anger, sorrow, and helplessness so we can get past it and let God make the most of our present situation?
- Sing together, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

C. If we are out of money, in pain after surgery, lost in the woods, or lonely, we desire physical help and someone to care about us or comfort us.

Q. What is the best way to get the help we need?

D. God is the Source of all comfort; God the Holy Spirit is even called the Comforter. The Bible tells us that "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

1. Pride blames others, including God. Pride looks for a quick fix so it can get back to its own agenda. Pride constantly demands rights instead of responsibilities. Humility evaluates self, repents where needed, seeks transformation, surrenders to God's sovereignty, and receives the personal comfort of a loving Saviour.
2. Without humility, we cannot admit our mistakes and learn from them or learn from others by soliciting their input and perspective, leaving us trapped in ourselves and our own limited point of view.
3. Without humility, we tend toward ungratefulness, and can never develop the virtue of thankfulness or be gracious when blessed with success.

Q. Who has been able to get past feelings of helplessness by turning in humility to God? What testimony could you share today?

E. If there is bitterness over the helplessness you feel, or if you are angry with God about your circumstances, you are not alone. Jesus Himself did not want to face the cross and asked His Father to please take the cup of pain away if He could make atonement for the sin of the world another way. But Jesus humbled Himself, and added, "not My will by Thine be done" (Mark 14:36). Resurrection and glory followed the cross for Jesus, and we too can see good come from our difficulties if we surrender our will to the Father as Jesus did.

Jesus said,
"I will ask the Father, and He
will give you another Helper,
that He may be with you
forever, that is the Spirit of
truth... I will not leave you
as orphans; I will come to you."

John 14:16-18

Alternate Teaching Idea

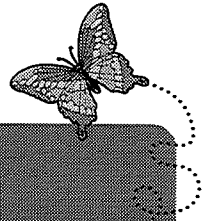
Follow along in *SYSY* where music is offered as a wonderful comfort, and ask some of the questions about seniors' favorite hymns or songs. Have a keyboard or pianist play the songs as they are named.

If possible, pass a battery-run keyboard around the group so people can run their fingers across the keys. Perhaps someone has been a musician at one time, and will play some notes or just enjoy touching something that has meant so much.

This might be a meeting where cookies and juice would be a nice treat and a source of tangible comfort. Have some of your older youth come in to help with "Inheritance of the Heart" records.

ASSIGNMENT

- You may want to use one of the postcards to share what you have learned today of God's comfort and love.
- If you are feeling that you would like to acknowledge your need of a loving God at this time, go ahead and pray through the steps to transformation below, changing the words to say "Jesus, I recognize my need of You. I have sinned in the pride of thinking I could run my own life, and in humility, I now ask You to forgive me as I submit myself to Your Lordship; I ask You to teach me Your ways. Thank you for your forgiveness. Show me what I can do to change the effects of my sin."
- If you have seen ways that your pride has kept you from spiritual growth and the grace of God being poured out in your life, use the steps below to work through that pride, using your own words to express what you have done wrong.



STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

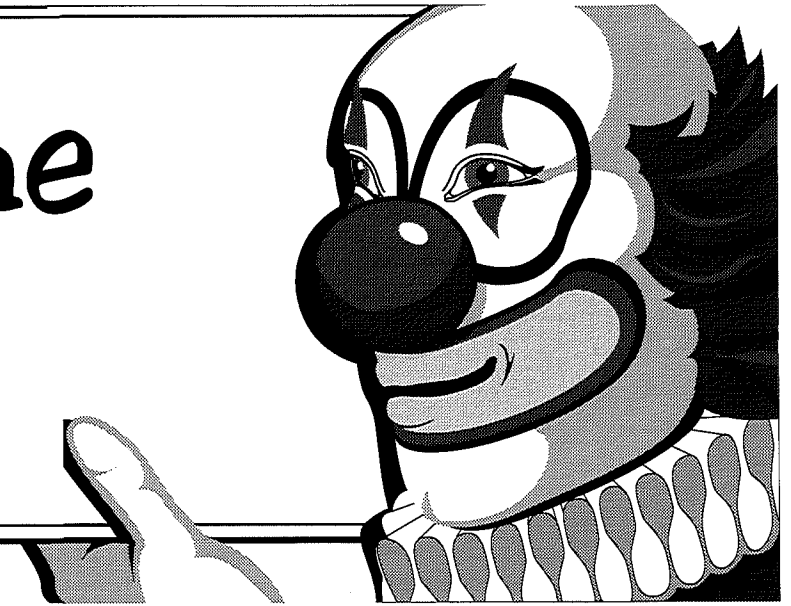
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LESSON 10 *(continued)*

“INHERITANCE OF THE HEART” RECORD

- Write down those times of real need in your life, and tell how the answers came, and what lessons you may have learned from the experiences.
- Share your experience with playing a musical instrument. Do you read music or play by ear?
- Did you have a special music teacher?
- Tell what your favorite songs or hymns are and why—do they remind you of particular events or people in your life?
- If you sing, what type of voice do you have, where did you learn, have you sung professionally, in the choir, or for special events?
- Do you like to attend opera, jazz, or symphony performances? What have been your favorites? Who went with you?
- When did you first gain an interest in music?

Taking Time to Play



LESSON ELEVEN

Major Life Principle:

The Power of Taking Time Out

Play is one way of taking time out. Spending time alone with God while walking on the beach is another. Going on a picnic with family or friends, or out to dinner with a small group also counts if these activities take us away from our work or routine. We all need an opportunity to let our mind and heart clear from the challenges of a busy life or from the challenges of a life spent too much alone.

Desired Outcome: To discover the restoration found in play, and the value of a strategic Sabbath.

A. With the many modern advances in the home and workplace, our work week has been cut dramatically from even one hundred years ago. There is more time to rest and play every day of the week. Many times, however, our rest or play time is as revved up as our work hours because we don't really understand the concept of *taking time out*.

1. God Himself took time out after the work of creation. The book of Hebrews, chapter four, speaks of a Sabbath rest whereby we are no longer striving to earn God's approval by our own works but accept the completeness of Christ's finished work on our behalf.
2. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). These words remind us that the Sabbath was meant to be a blessing, not a burden.

Q. What does "rest" mean to you? Do you take a "Sabbath rest," or how do you restore yourself?

Alternate Teaching Idea

Read and follow the story line in *SYSY*, page 73, making a party day of this lesson, doing the clown activities or bringing in pictures of families playing together, camping, having a picnic, or vacationing. Have a community sing or clapping session in time to favorite nursery rhymes or traditional songs, or bring in large-piece jigsaw puzzles, Yahtzee or Checkers, Uno, Scrabble, or children's games to play together. You might want to bring some punch and cookies as a treat.

- Q. Have you considered taking a strategic Sabbath, one in which you evaluate your week, look at what you are filling your life with, reflect on your relationships, and spend time in celebration of who God is to you?
- Q. Do you know of any proven benefits to observing the principles of rest and rejuvenation?

B. Sharing play times with family and friends bonds hearts and lives together in special ways. It opens up doors to communication that can otherwise be difficult when just sitting down to talk face-to-face.
*(A recent survey showed the single most unifying experience of people who **don't** get a divorce is **camping**.)*

- Q. What results have you seen in your own life or family because you have taken time out for recreation and restoration?

C. Research is saying that “play is a child’s work,” and that children allowed to play without constant adult directives are more prepared for the real world of work, and are more creative.

- Q. Did you have ample time to play as a child; how do you feel that shaped your adult life? Or was your childhood and youth filled with work on the farm or jobs around the neighborhood? Do you have any regrets about that, or do you feel that it was better to work than to play?
- Q. What about your own children? Do you want to apologize to them because you didn't give them ample time to be children, or you made them work in high school to the extent that they could never play a sport or be in the band?

NOTE:

Israel, as a nation, was commanded to rest every seventh day. They were commanded to have three weeks of national holiday each year. Besides that, every seven years, the whole system was to take a year off and re-energize; even the land was to be left to itself to rest for a year, unsown and unpruned. Every 50 years, the system again rested, and the whole economy was reorganized, with debts cancelled and property returned to its original owners.

D. The common bond created by sharing good times with neighbors and friends helps promote a community that can be more resourceful, optimistic, and caring toward the welfare of all.

Q. What experiences have you had with your neighbors or the community in general (amateur show or fund raiser, for instance) where you have seen this bonding take place?

E. “There is an appointed time for everything” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). All humans are equal in one thing—the 24 hours of each day. God and nature lay evidence before us that there is a time to prepare, a time to work, and a time to rest and recuperate (night/day; darkness/light; planting/harvesting; trees budding/shedding leaves; animals hibernating).

Q. In your present season of life, do you see a balanced amount of time for work and play?

ASSIGNMENT

- Play and rest are important parts of our lives. If this discussion has stirred some responses in you, write down what you have learned from the past, and what changes you need to make about your present way of life in regard to planning, work, and play. Follow the steps to transformation as needed.
- Go through the questions in this lesson to see what answers should be added to your “Inheritance of the Heart” record and also utilize the specific questions in the “Inheritance of the Heart” section to complete this week’s file.

- Send a “Thinking of You” card to someone with whom you really enjoyed special play times as a child or teen, or perhaps to your current golf or tennis partner, or to someone who put on a great party you attended.



STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—“Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I’ve injured to forgive me.”
2. **BELIEVE**—“Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ’s sacrifice for my sins.”
3. **RESTITUTION**—“Lord, please show me what I can do to help change the effects of my sin” by:
 - a. Asking injured people’s forgiveness.
 - b. Sharing with them the choice I should have made, and
 - c. Sharing with them the principle that I’ve seen that has made this truth clear to me.
 - d. Dropping them a “Please Forgive Me” card or making a follow-up phone call or visit. We’re not responsible for results; only for obedience.

“INHERITANCE OF THE HEART” RECORD

- Write down some of the relevant answers from this lesson that you want to pass on.
- Share your most rejuvenating way to relax.
- When you were a child, what were some ways your family relaxed together—reading a book out loud, singing, playing a sport, eating beans and hamburgers every Saturday night?
- What ideas did you carry into your own family as you were raising your children, and what new ideas did you add?
- To date, describe the most fun you have ever had.
- What was your best vacation as a child, as a single adult, as a couple, or as a family?
- What were your favorite toys, games, or play activities?

Remembering the Children

SESSION TWELVE

Major Life Principle: The Power of Hope and Trust

Trust in the sovereignty of God enables us to agree with what He has allowed in our lives and to move out of any blame, isolation, or cynicism toward Him or others.

Desired Outcome: To get right with God, family, and friends over our life thus far, and to pass the baton of what we have experienced and the lessons we have learned to the next generation.



- A. In this final lesson of “The Sunset Years,” we want to be clear that because of our human nature, “missing the mark” will be the norm until we die. However, God has made provision for our failure in the finished work of Jesus Christ, so that any time we recognize our sin, we need only apply our hearts to the “Steps To Transformation.”
1. “Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord, ‘though your sins be as scarlet, they will be as white as snow...” (Isaiah 1:18).
 2. “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son...if God is for us, who is against us?” (Romans 8:28, 33).
 3. Hope and trust in God and in His unfailing Word keep us from being sarcastic and cynical. They keep us like little children ourselves—always believing the best, knowing that He will never forsake us, and that He has the power to turn failure into victory.
- Q. What testimonies do we have from these weeks together that will confirm these points?
- B. Examining, evaluating, and chronicling one’s life—both the good and the ill—is not as common as it once was. The Bible is replete with stories of people succeeding and failing—from the first man and woman to great kings, priests, and prophets. In long ago generations, people listened when the elders passed on the oral traditions of their tribe, their nation, or their family. Today, few take time to chronicle, and fewer still take time to listen.

Alternate Teaching Idea

Follow the story line in *SYSY*, starting on page 79, allowing people to reminisce in an area that is rarely forgotten, using the questions in the text.

Incorporate some of the questions on this page to help people with the very difficult issue of estrangement from their adult children or the issue of never having children.

Consider a closing party with punch and cookies and perhaps a small gift of encouragement such as a matted scripture for their wall.

If this will be your last ever opportunity with this group of people, offer them some time during the closing party or later to meet with you privately and discuss anything that they feel is not settled for them. Have some volunteers to help complete "Inheritance of the Heart" records and see that their final postcards are sent to family or friends, and that their record goes into safe keeping in the facility's files.

Q. Where are your children today? Are you proud of them, or have they disappointed you? Are you close to them, or is your relationship distant?

Q. If you never had children, or if they have already passed away, are you still able to believe that there is hope for the next generation, and that writing down your own memories can be a source of strength and vision to someone you may never meet? What would you want to say to the next generation? What cautions, counsel, or hope would you pass on to them?

C. Though no one likes to dwell on the possibility of dying, it is helpful to those who want to make the arrangements if they know what you would like, as far as an order of service is concerned, favorite hymns, cremation, or burial place. If you can make a few notes as to whom should receive your crystal vase or your railroad watch, that could save a lot of heartache someday for family and friends. A will is an important gift you can give your children. It removes fear and guesswork.

On the next page is a special type of letter/will that was published by Beulah Collins, syndicate columnist, copyright 1980. Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

TO MY CHILDREN

I hereby bequeath, in equal shares, the following assets:

I leave them my memories of Italy and Spain, left over from two beautiful trips when their mother and I were younger and realized some of our dreams of travel abroad.

I leave them my good name. I have no jail record, no bad debts. I have never, thank the Lord, been unable to provide for myself and my family. I served in the Army in World War II, honorably discharged.

I leave them my memories of four decades of happiness with their mother. And I could wish no greater happiness for my children than the blessings of a good marriage.

I leave them a heritage of good health. Family members on their mother's side as well as mine have been sturdy, prey to few diseases, and long-lived. I can take no credit for this, but it is one of the gifts I pass on.

I leave them each other, in the hope that these, our children, will stick together, maintain the family circle, and help each other where needed after we are gone.

I leave and bequeath the old home movies, showing the first step, the first birthday party, the high-school graduation of each son or daughter. And with these, I leave boxes of snapshots and color slides, all labeled, all in order, to help preserve and revive the good times the family had together.

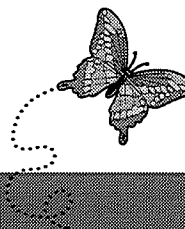
I leave some family mementos, which I hope will be kept for the future generations: a cherry wood table, which my great-grandmother brought with her in a covered wagon across the plains; a hand-woven coverlet, woven on the Pennsylvania farm of our ancestors in 1860; my grandfather's Civil War diary, written and carried with him on the battlefield.

I bequeath them my love.



ASSIGNMENT

- Choose your final postcards and especially consider sending one to the next generation, sharing the hope you carry for them.
- Wherever there is need for transformation in your attitude toward your children, go over the steps to transformation with trust that God can do the impossible if our heart is turned toward Him in humility and repentance.
- Be sure and print your own name and current address, as well as the address of a family member in your “Inheritance of the Heart” folder, especially if it is to be kept in a care facility.



STEPS TO TRANSFORMATION

1. **REPENT**—“Lord, I made the wrong choice. Please forgive me and help those I’ve injured to forgive me.”
2. **BELIEVE**—“Thank you, God, for forgiving me through Christ’s sacrifice for my sins.”
3. **RESTITUTION**—“Lord, please show me what I can do to help change the effects of my sin” by:
 - a. Asking injured people’s forgiveness.
 - b. Sharing with them the choice I should have made, and
 - c. Sharing with them the principle that I’ve seen that has made this truth clear to me.
 - d. Dropping them a “Please Forgive Me” card or making a follow-up phone call or visit. We’re not responsible for results; only for obedience.

“INHERITANCE OF THE HEART” RECORD

- Go through this *SYSY* chapter, starting on page 79, to draw out questions for your record that will describe those first days of your baby's life; the first Christmas together; the gifts and talents you saw in your children as they grew and began school and took on responsibilities; the special memories of each particular child—your own or another.
- What were some of your child rearing ideas. Give examples of what worked well, what didn't work, and what you learned in the process. Did you have a way of helping them to see someone else's viewpoint? How did you handle praise for good behavior and discipline for poor behavior?
- How did you help your children gain an understanding of God, His love for them, how to pray, or how to read the Bible?
- Share the vision, dreams, and destiny you see for your children, grandchildren, neighbor children, nieces or nephews. Share scripture you believe reveals part of their purpose and destiny, and who God has called them to be.
- Close your record book with your love for each one that might end up receiving a copy.

SCRIPTURES RELATED TO SENIORS

HONOR FROM CHILDREN

Gen. 48:11; Ex. 20:8, 12, 31:13; Lev. 11:44, 19:3; Deut. 5:16, 33, 6:2, 27:16; Prov. 1:8, 4:1, 6:20; 13:22; 15:20, 30:17; Jer. 35:7; Mal. 1:6; Matt. 15:1-9, 19:19; Mark 7:10, 10:19; Luke 18:20; Eph. 6:1, 2; , 11:8, 9

- “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”
- “Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise.”
- “Everyone of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.”
- “Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.”
- “Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.”
- “Grandchildren are the crown of old men, and the glory of sons is their fathers.”
- “Whoever shall say to his father or mother, ‘Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given to the Lord,’ he is not to honor his father or his mother. And thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.”

HONOR TO GRAY-HEADED, TO WIDOWS, AND OLDER MEN

Ex. 22: 21-24; Lev. 19:3; Deut. 24: 17-18; Ruth 1: 16-17, 2:11-12; Ps: 71:9, 18, 92:14, 22:31, 78:4,6; Prov. 3:1-2, 11:30, 16:31, 20:29, 23:10-11, 22;; Is. 37:31, 41:4, 43:13, 46:4, 48:12, 65:20; Jer. 5:28, 7:11-12; Lam. 5:12; Luke 2:37; Acts 6:1, 9:39, 41; Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 7:34; 1 Tim. 2:1, 5:1, 3, 4, 10, 16; 2 Tim. 1:3, 2 Tim. Titus 2:2, 6; 1 Peter 3:5;

- “You shall rise up before the gray-headed, and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.”
- “Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails.”
- “The widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.”
- “Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity. Honor widows who are widows indeed.”
- “Now she who is a widow indeed, and who has been left alone has fixed her hope on God, and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.”
- “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. Let a widow be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man...”

continued on next page

- “If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, let her assist them, and let not the church be burdened so that it may assist those who are widows indeed. Let elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”
- “You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry, and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword...”
- “A gray head is a crown of glory; it is found in the way of righteousness.”
- “Even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me until I declare Thy strength to this generation.”
- “All the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make...”
- “You shall not take a widow’s garment in pledge.”
- “Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age.”
- “They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green.”

THE INQUIRY METHOD TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN ALL CLASSES

It is suggested that attendees be encouraged to discuss the idea that the effectiveness of each class depends upon their involvement and willingness to share the important events of their lives with each other and with the teacher. Therefore, an abbreviated version of the “Inquiry Method” is suggested here as a way to begin and maintain participation in the course.

This inquiry is in two parts:

- the first part discusses the effectiveness of the class *without* student involvement;
- the second discusses the effectiveness of a class *with* student involvement.

Demonstration (see illustration on next page):

Write the word “Teacher” on one cardboard circle (or paper plate) and the word “Students” on the other.

(Practice before using it in class. Use your finger as a fulcrum in the top part of the hanger.)

Say

These objects represent things with which we are all familiar. Try to discover what they represent, and what they have to do with the lesson.

Problem

Display hanger with the teacher circle hanging at one end

Ask

What does the circle represent?

What could the hanger represent?

Is there a reason why the hanger is unbalanced?

What happens to a class if the teacher has to carry the whole load?

What happens to the students when a teacher carries the whole load?

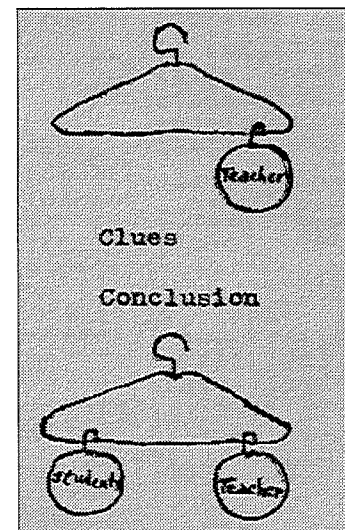
How much success can we anticipate in a class with this situation?

If the hanger represents the class, what could we do to stabilize the hanger and bring it into balance?

What would happen if we added the “students” circle?

Does adding the last element help everybody to share and make a success of the class?

That’s what I hope will happen as each of you takes part in our first lesson, and in fact, all the lessons.



PRE-PROJECT SCHEDULE (start three months prior to project):
PHASE I—DISCOVER

THE NEED

- Discover what is being done for seniors in your area, and by whom.
- Discover the resources that you have available (volunteers and materials).
- Discover what the biblical mandate is for helping seniors.
- Discover in prayer specifically how God wants you to teach and present this T-Group material (pray in groups as much as possible)

Questions to help you succeed in this phase are:

- Which group of seniors is God calling you to serve?
(In a retirement complex, a rest home, your neighborhood, your church)
- What needs do they have that God wants you to meet?
- How will you know that you succeeded in meeting these specific needs in these specific people?

THE PROJECT

- Discover how the service resources and skills you have available can be best used to meet the specific needs you have targeted.
- Discover the parameters of your service (specific date(s) and time, and criteria for receiving your service).
- Confirm that the project fits specifically within the mission statement that governs your endeavors. Create a specific mission statement for your project (the terminology may need to be based upon the ideals or vision of those whose support you are seeking, i.e., a pastor, leader).

Question to help you succeed in this phase are:

- Do you have any experience in meeting this need, and if not, who can help?

THE COVERING

- Present the vision for this project to the leaders of your church or the group that you are representing and seek their blessing, covering, and counsel.
- Confirm with those covering the project what resources and relationships will be available to draw upon in accomplishing the project.
- Confirm with those covering the project how you will keep them informed of the progress of the project and get further input from them.

Questions to help you succeed in this phase are:

- Can we effectively present the vision of this project? Have we done enough “homework” to be able to present a clear strategy for how we plan on fulfilling that vision?

- Are we prepared to follow the counsel of the covering we are seeking in regard to this project?

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM (two months prior to project) (see following pages)

- Determine whom you believe should be part of the leadership team, and what role they should play.
- Discover the jurisdictional, gifting, and ministry needs for successfully engaging this project.
- Communicate the vision to potential leadership team members and confirm their involvement.
- Delineate responsibilities of the leadership team (be specific: meeting times, lines of communication, method, and frequency of reporting).

PRE-PROJECT: PHASE II (two months prior to project)—**DEVELOP**

- The budget
- A specific critical path for implementing the project
- Set-up and clean-up teams
- Other volunteers needed (parking, transportation, etc.)
- Project identification and promotional materials (letterhead, flyers, etc.)
- Cover letters and other communication for sharing the vision and securing appropriate resources
- The funding base to finance the project
- Schedule
- Purchasing or producing materials that will be needed for the project
- Keeping a record of the project (testimony, tape, photos, etc.)

PROJECT: PHASE III (current)—**SERVE!**

- Execute the project.
- Give leadership and address what develops.
- Provide specific input to those serving.
- Solicit specific input from those serving and those being served.

POST PROJECT: (following project) **PHASE IV—FOLLOW UP AND BUILD RELATIONSHIP**

- Send thank you notes, gifts, or acknowledgments.
- Solicit feedback.
- Provide a report for your covering and resource providers
- Determine what follow-up work you are willing and able to undertake and communicate that to those whom you are serving and to those with whom you are working.
- Develop a record of the project for the purpose of passing on the vision.

LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR STUDY GROUPS (VOLUNTEERS OF ALL AGES)

Name:

Name:

Name:

Name:

General responsibilities:

- ☐ Coordinate Transformation Study Groups of "In the Senior Years" in a Sunday School setting, Bible study at a retirement center, etc.
- ☐ Take minutes of leadership meetings and document how actual class sessions work for future leaders (possible taping of class sessions)
- ☐ Determine the extent of development of each lesson, and set up a schedule for the time and place of sessions (with twelve lessons, would you do a two hour session each week for twelve weeks or would you do a one hour session and extend the class into 24 weeks)
- ☐ Set a budget for refreshments and props
- ☐ Borrow or purchase props, games, or craft materials or running off copies of questions, etc. Purchase or make refreshments if desired.
- ☐ Arrange publicity in church bulletins, senior-care newsletters
- ☐ Set aside time to pray for the study groups and engage intercessors to cover the project in prayer.

TEACHER OR TEACHING TEAM

Name:

Name:

PRAYER TEAM

Name:

Name:

Name:

General responsibilities:

- ☐ Ideally, all leaders should pray together before any plans are discussed or any

leadership responsibilities are taken. Though a plan is given in this book, God may have some exciting opinions about the particular study you will be doing in your area. Plan at least one hour to discuss the general ideas of this study and then pray together one hour, submitting yourselves and all the ideas to Him in worship and thanksgiving, waiting on a response from Him, and then entrusting the project to His care.

- ☐ Weekly prayer, perhaps individually at home, for all aspects of the study—room and equipment, refreshments, leaders, and students with instruction to make leaders aware of any concerns that might come up in prayer and also any specific encouragement.

VENUE TEAM

Name:

Name:

General responsibilities include:

- ☐ Securing a venue for the project
- ☐ Setting up and cleaning up before and after each session

HOSPITALITY TEAM

Name:

Name:

General responsibilities include:

- ☐ Prepare name tags, if used, and be at door to greet students
- ☐ Bake or purchase food or drink items as well as cups, plates, napkins, plastic cutlery or stirrers, sugar, cream, etc.
- ☐ Set up coffee, tea, water, and arrange table for serving

CRAFT AND PROPS TEAM

Name:

Name:

General responsibilities include:

- ☐ Arrange for special craft materials and tools, musical instruments, costumes, puppets, copies of questions, etc.
- ☐ Assist students as needed with any projects

LEADERSHIP

FOLLOW-UP TEAM

Name:

Name:

General responsibilities include:

- ☐ Continue with on-going need for social contact and completion of individual heritage projects or individual resolution of the past and preparation for eternity
- ☐ See that invitations to future studies are forthcoming
- ☐ If health issues are involved, follow through with encouragement in physical exercises, diet, cards, etc.