

BIBLICAL CONVICTIONS
PART 2: MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY
LEADERSHIP CULTURE

DNA





MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY

LESSON 1 - Glory to God, Doing all for the Sake of His Name

LESSON 2 - Gospel Centrality, Keeping the Gospel First

LESSON 3 - Intentional Discipleship, Making, Maturing, and Multiplying Followers of Christ

LESSON 4 - Every-Day Mission, Reaching your World

LESSON 5 - Biblical Community, Living out the “One Anothers”

LESSON 6 - Team Leadership, Serving Together in Plurality

LESSON 7 - Expositional Preaching, Proclaiming the Word of God

LESSON 8 - Vibrant Worship, Stirring our Affection for God

In the previous lessons, Crossway’s Biblical Convictions represent essential theological positions that guide us for life and ministry. Next we turn to our Ministry Philosophy that represents the specific ways we seek to function as churches on mission for the glory of God. While there is great diversity among the churches within Crossway Network, there are specific points of focus in the way we go about our mission that are shared by all of the churches. These shared elements create a common ministry culture among all the churches. These are designed to help Christians discover and embrace this common ministry philosophy firsthand as well as sustain and advance the heart of it as the network and individual churches grow and multiply by God’s grace.

For each of the eight lessons, please study the listed passages in context and answer the questions as you go. Always feel free to bring other passages into the discussion as you discover more. List specific principles that you glean from your study of these passages and note where your discoveries are coming from in God’s word. Finish the lesson by summarizing what you have learned into a short principle statement and write it in the space provided at the end of the lesson.

LESSON 1

GLORY TO GOD – Doing all for the Sake of His Name

God is supreme. He is our entire focus. He alone is worthy of all praise and honor. He is the reason the church exists. We seek to lift up the greatness and glory of God in all that we do without compromise.

PASSAGES TO STUDY

Genesis 1:1	Isaiah 40:6-8, 12-17, 21-26	Isaiah 46:9-10
Isaiah 51:6-7	Psalms 8	Romans 11:33-36
1 Corinthians 3:18-23	1 Corinthians 10:31	

1. What do these verses tell us about the *glory of God* in contrast to the glory of man?
2. What difference should this contrast make in how we do ministry?
3. How should churches evaluate “success” in ministry?
4. What difference should a commitment to the glory of God have on worship in music and song?
5. What difference will a commitment to the glory of God make in deciding to teach or not to teach on unpopular subjects that will offend some who may hear?

6. What is one example where you have seen ministry conducted (even subtly) in a more man-centered way?

7. Give two examples of how a commitment to the glory of God will impact our specific methods in ministry? Consider discussing this in the context of areas of ministry where you serve or would like to serve.

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 2

GOSPEL CENTRALITY – Keeping the Gospel First

There is only one gospel and it is central to all of life and ministry. It is *the* matter of first importance. The message of the gospel is timeless and unchanging. It is the focus of our daily lives and is the only message of hope for the world.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	Romans 1:16-17	Romans 5:1-2, 6-11	Romans 8:28-38
	1 Corinthians 1:18-30	1 Corinthians 15:1-5	Galatians 1:8
	Ephesians 1:13-14	Colossians 3:1-17	2 Timothy 1:14
	2 Timothy 2:1	Titus 2:11-14.	

1. What do you see as the primary or vital elements of the gospel message and why?
2. Why must the gospel be central to all ministries, for both the believer and the unbeliever?
3. How would you respond to the question, “Why is it so important to preach the gospel continually and clearly when our churches are filled with people who are already saved?”
4. According to Titus 2:11-14, what does the grace of God (the gospel) accomplish beyond salvation? What are some ways this work of grace will show up in a church body?
5. How does the gospel constantly remind us of our identity in Christ? Why is this so vital to life and ministry?

6. According to Ephesians 1:13-14, what is the connection between the gospel and the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?

7. What attitudes and actions will show up in people who have been transformed by the gospel and are passionate about keeping it central (see Colossians 3 especially)?

8. What are some practical steps you can take to keep the gospel central in your own life?

9. What are some practical steps and ministry practices that churches can take to keep the gospel central in all they do? Think through this question in a variety of different ministry contexts.

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 3

INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

Making, Maturing, and Multiplying Followers of Christ

The church is only truly growing when people are becoming Christians. Seeing people enter the kingdom of God, leading them, and helping them follow Jesus is the heart of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). As a result, our focus is on reaching people with the good news of the gospel and seeing them grow into maturity in Jesus. We desire “conversion” growth more than “transfer” growth. We realize that God, in his sovereignty, may move other Christians to serve in a Crossway Network church. We welcome these people if their hearts resonate with our vision and if they have sought to preserve the unity of the church they have come from.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	Matthew 4:19	Matthew 20:18-20	Luke 19:10
	John 17:18	Acts 2:38-47	1 Corinthians 9:19-23
	2 Corinthians 5:18-21	Colossians 1:3-6	1 Thessalonians 2:8

1. When Christians use the word “discipleship,” they often refer to taking those who are already Christians and helping them grow in their faith. According to the commission given to us in Matthew 28 to “make disciples...”
 - Why is this understanding of discipleship incomplete?
 - Where does discipleship (the process of making disciples) begin?
 - Before a person comes to faith in Jesus (i.e. is baptized), what are the steps in the discipleship process?
2. How does Acts 2:38-47 illustrate this full picture of making disciples? Why are vs. 38-41 (*baptize them*) critical in setting up the picture we see in vs. 42-47 (*teach them to observe*)?

3. Why is it important for a LOCAL church to remember that the UNIVERSAL church of Jesus only grows in one way – and that is when people come to saving faith in Jesus Christ? How does this simple idea impact the way a church defines its ministry?

4. Why is it important that every person sees the mission of Jesus (Luke 19:10) as their own personal mission (John 17:18)? What are the ways you might see leaders foster this kind of discipleship in a church?

5. What factors do you believe lead to conversions within a church? Why? What are some steps that a church can take that is not seeing conversions through their ministry?

6. For those in church leadership, what keeps you from intentionally investing time in relationships with those who don't know Jesus? Why is it important, not only for you but for the church you serve, that your life reflects the full picture of making disciples?

7. Why might a church plant see more conversion growth than more established churches? What might the leadership of more established churches do to make sure they don't stop pursuing conversion growth?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 4

EVERYDAY MISSION – Reaching Your World

Without changing the message of the gospel, we seek to bring it with clarity and power into the world around us. This requires understanding the cultures in which we live and seeking to communicate the gospel in a way that connects with the people around us. We believe every follower of Jesus should be equipped and actively living out the mission of sharing the gospel and leading people to Christ. This is often best accomplished when small groups of believers work together, praying for and engaging with those in their spheres of influence.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	Matthew 4:19	Matthew 5:16	Matthew 9:37-10:42
	Matthew 28:18-20	Luke 10:1-24	Colossians 4:2-6
	1 Peter 1:13-16		

1. What do these passages indicate about how God wants Christians to view the people and communities in which they live (our “world”)?

2. Why are believers called to engage the world around them with the gospel message? What part does goal play in their lives?

3. What are some practical ways Christians can engage their world with the love and message of Jesus?

4. What are some cautions we should consider as we engage our culture? What are some of the practical ways we can be wise and vigilant about these concerns?

5. What are some threats or hindrances to a church developing and maintaining a strong and healthy missional approach in the way they function?

6. How can the church more readily equip believers to live their lives genuinely and boldly on mission?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 5

BIBLICAL COMMUNITY – Living out the “One Anothers”

We were created for relationship with both God and one another. We believe that every Christian is to be experiencing genuine relationships with others in the body of Christ. These relationships are the primary context in which the “one-anothers” of scripture are experienced. Through these relationships, we learn to become more like Christ through serving others and being served in times of need. This is the true outworking of the New Commandment of Jesus in John 13:34-35. As we love one another, we show the world we are Jesus’ disciples. This is an import aspect of being effective as we seek to reach those around us for Christ. The world should be attracted to the love and joy that God’s people have among themselves. We are committed to fostering this kind of relationship through small group communities.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	Matthew 22:36-40	John 13:34-35	John 17:13-21
	Acts 2:41-47	1 Corinthians 5:5-6	1 Corinthians 12:12-31
	Ephesians 2:19	Ephesians 4:25-32	James 5:16
	Hebrews 3:13-14	Hebrews 10:19-25	

1. How does the Bible describe relationships within the body of Christ? Summarize as many things as you can from the passages listed.
2. Generally speaking, how does biblical community compare with our culture’s concept of community?
3. Why do so few experience genuine connection and true fellowship in the church?
4. What are some specific ways to foster true community at different stages in the life of a church?
 - As a church plant?
 - As a growing established church?
 - As a larger church?

5. What are some things that might help more people experience the kind of community togetherness, support and care that we see in the word of God?

6. What are some real obstacles or hindrances to true love, unity, and grace in relationships within the church?

7. What should pastors and deacons focus on to help facilitate healthy community connection in the church?

8. What are some specific examples of loving community in the church that have impacted you the most through life?

9. Consider some of the different perspectives you might hear regarding this question: Can a believer ever genuinely experience biblical community apart from mission (Review the previous Lesson #3 - Intentional Discipleship, and #4 - Everyday Mission)? What is your perspective on this question and why?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 6

TEAM LEADERSHIP – Serving Together in Plurality

We believe in the independent authority of the local church. We believe each church is to be led by a plurality of godly men who function as pastors together. We believe the role of pastor to be one and the same with the biblical terms overseer, elder, and bishop. Acts 20:28-29 and 1 Peter 5:1-4 use these terms interchangeably. Among the plurality of pastors, there is recognition of differing giftedness and abilities in leadership that may set some apart from others in function, but not in authority. As leaders of a local church, the pastors are “under-shepherds” to Jesus Christ together as a team.

Note: The character of leaders and how they function together practically is also more thoroughly developed in Part 3 of Crossway’s DNA Lessons, Leadership Culture.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	Acts 1:15	Acts 14:23	Acts 15:13-22
	Acts 20:28-29	Galatians 2:9	Ephesians 4:11-13
	1 Thessalonians 5:12-13	1 Timothy 3	1 Timothy 1:5-9
	Hebrews 13:17	1 Peter 5:1-4	

1. What are some of the different models of pastoral leadership you have experienced in the church so far in your Christian life?
2. Do you think most churches are committed to a true biblical plurality? Why or why not?
3. How do you think our culture impacts our commitment to and application of plurality in leadership in a church?
4. How will the humility and maturity of emerging leaders in a young church plant influence a long term foundational commitment to plurality in that church’s leadership?

5. What is the importance of Paul's exhortation, "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands...(1 Timothy 5:22)" to cultivating a strong biblical plurality?

6. How does the truth that Jesus is the Chief Shepherd (that is, "highest pastor," 1 Peter 5:4) impact how each pastor should view himself in his role on the team?

7. Describe your own personal commitment to biblical plurality and how you believe leaders should live it out practically.

8. Why is it be important for the team of pastors to be mutually accountable to one another in love, while functioning freely within their given areas of leadership, giftedness, and focus?

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LESSON 7

EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING – Proclaiming the Word of God

We believe that God’s word is the best and highest that we have to offer people. We also believe that the best way we can be “the pillar and support of truth” is to unfold God’s word in our preaching and teaching in the same way in which it was given by him. For this reason, Crossway Network churches will primarily preach sermons through books of the Bible from beginning to end. At times, local church pastors will take different seasons to address the needs of their church body through topic-based messages but the main focus of delivering God’s word weekly will be expository. In our preaching, we believe the Word of God is for the work of *transformation* and not simply meant to be *information*. With this focus in mind, we will always prioritize and strive for clear application and life-change in our communication of God’s word.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	Ezra 7:9-10	Luke 24:27	John 5:36-47
	John 17:7	1 Thessalonians 2:13	1 Timothy 3:15
	2 Timothy 3:16-17	2 Timothy 4:1-6	Hebrews 4:12
	1 Peter 1:23-25	1 Peter 2:1-2	

1. What do the above passages tell us about the power and impact of the Word of God? List as many specific observations as you can.

2. Within Crossway Network, we understand expository preaching to be the communication of God’s intended meaning of every passage in his word in context and the clear and practical application of that truth in life. What are the benefits of this approach to the Bible compared to perhaps the more common topic-based approach?

3. What might be some of the greatest challenges in the practice of expository preaching and teaching as a primary pattern in our churches?

4. How would you describe the relationship between the bible as *information* and the Bible for *transformation*? What might be some of the results of becoming imbalanced one way or the other?

5. Can someone preach a topic-based series with an expository approach? If so, how? What are the various reasons this focus would be important?

6. Why might an expositional approach to God's word be the best possible pathway for steady growth in the life of the believer over the long term?

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LESSON 8

VIBRANT WORSHIP – Stirring our Affection for God

We were created to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:23), which means worship is a way of life for the Christian and involves everything about us (Romans 12:1). As a significant part of this life of worship, our churches are committed to providing gathered worship settings and congregational singing where God's people worship him in spirit and in truth together. We believe we do this “*in spirit*” – in part by cultivating a freedom of expression as God’s Spirit engages the hearts of His people and empowers them to use their gifts and voices to worship him with excellence. We do it “*in truth*” by singing songs that celebrate and speak gospel truths and declare a high view of God and His glory.

PASSAGES TO STUDY

Psalm 7:17	Psalm 9:2, 11	Psalm 13:5-6
Psalm 30:4, 11, 12	Psalm 33:1-5	Psalm 57:9-10
Psalm 92:1-4	Psalm 95:1-11	Psalm 100:1-2
Psalm 150:1-6	John 4:23-24	Romans 12:1
Romans 15:9	1 Corinthians 9:19-23	1 Corinthians 14:15`
1 Corinthians 15:1-5	Ephesians 5:18-20	Colossians 3:16-17
Hebrews 2:12	Revelation 5:6-10	

1. Consider the two phrases “gathered worship” and “a life of worship.” How would you describe the relationship between the two?

2. What does the word of God indicate about the importance of singing together in our gatherings as churches? What does it do in and for us? Why should it be a priority in the lives of God’s people?

3. How would you contrast God-centered worship with man-centered worship in our gatherings? Answer with respect to content in songs as well as the environment we seek to create as we gather.

4. How big of a role should culture and style play in what we do in our gatherings? Refer to specific ways God instructs his people to worship him as they gather. Which elements of our worship gatherings are negotiable and which are not?

5. What place do our emotions (passion, affection, honor, reverence, thankfulness, etc.) have in our gathered worship experience? How do the Psalms model singing to God in every season of life (joy, repentance, lamenting, confusion, etc.) and how can we model this in our gatherings?

6. Why might it be important for the church to sing a variety of song types in worship music during our gatherings? How would you help both the worship team and your congregation appreciate the importance of variety?

7. In addition to preaching God's word powerfully and faithfully, how can we clearly communicate the gospel through song and various other elements in our services?

8. Those we are leading to Jesus are not yet true worshippers of God but many of them will gather in our churches with us. How might God want to use our worship gatherings to lead them closer to a heart truly surrendered to him (consider 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 especially)?

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CROSSWAY NETWORK

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© Crossway Church Planting Network, October, 2020
700 Automation Dr. Suite D, Windsor, CO 80550, (970) 674-5018

[CrosswayNetwork.org](https://www.CrosswayNetwork.org)