

## **LIFE Group Leader Handout**

January 10, 2021--75th Anniversary

### **75th Anniversary Remarks**

Pastors Michael O'Connor and Christopher Coats

#### ***Scripture--Various, 2 Timothy 2:1-2 shown***

*You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

#### ***Main Idea--Build on the Legacy of the Past, but Trust in the Promises of God***

#### **Ingredients of the ICC Legacy--**

- Unapologetic preaching of the Word of God and worship in both spirit and truth.
- A groundbreaking church: see a need and fill it, even if no one else is doing it - whatever it takes to reach the lost
- Worldwide vision and generous giving
- Developing and Equipping God's People for Ministry
- Integrity of the pastoral staff - strong marriages, honesty in all dealings, a true understanding that they answer to the Almighty God.

#### **Looking to the Future--**

The chain that was forged in past generations was done so as those who were reached with the gospel reached others. Continue that process!

#### ***Application--***

- What was your main "take away" from the 75th Anniversary Service?
- Which of the legacy ingredients would you say you are most grateful for at this point in your life and the church's history?
- How did Pastor Chris's remarks challenge and encourage you for your future and that of this ministry?

# Growing Spiritually as a Leader

It's all about the questions

By Dr. Bill Donahue

Here are seven questions to get us praying, listening, and learning what God is doing within us:

**1. The Heart Question: Have I felt a rising sense of urgency, or deeper joy, or renewed passion, or fresh insight, in response to any of the following: a book, article, activity, ministry, conversation, film, music, or piece of art?**

In times of fear or trial, I have found my heart increasingly receptive to the inner voice of God. When he speaks— in Scripture, through his church, and by the Spirit— I listen. And I divert some time from other pursuits to prayer, reading, listening and reflection on what he is saying. God may stir my heart with artwork, music, reading, a conversation, a group prayer, a new friendship, or a marriage moment. Are you attentive to his voice and willing to echo Samuel the Prophet saying, “Speak Lord, your servant is listening?”

*Pray: God, what are you stirring deep in me? Which doors are you opening; which ones are you closing? Where do you want my attention?*

**2. The Opportunity Question: What is not being done in my world that should be done, or might never be done, unless I take the first faith-filled step?** When your heart is open, you see the hurting people, injustice and neglect in this world. Pray that you see the whole world, not just beautiful places, but places filled with trouble, loss, need, sorrow, and pain. What do you see and hear?

*Pray: God, open these blind eyes and unclog these deaf ears that I may recognize places that need my compassion, prayer, and working hands.*

**3. The Focus Question: Am I willing to embrace a specific, compelling God-revealed dream or vision, one that might redefine the direction of my life in the near future?** This is a bolder, more demanding question. Every leader needs focus. It may emerge slowly after engaging the Opportunity Question, or you will have an “Aha!” moment, the sudden attention-grabbing awareness that something new is breaking through... a fresh idea, a creative ministry shift, a clarifying decision, a picture of a glorious future. A leader senses something new is coming and the old is passing away. A new WHAT has arrived.

*Pray: God awaken me and point me in the direction of your will, so I may give my attention to what you want me to do, and where you want me to be.*

**4. The Surrender Question: Am I willing to put it all on the table again, and sacrifice whatever I must to do whatever God asks?**

For many of us, this is the question. As your compelling “what and where” crystalize, it will become painfully obvious there’s much to release to embrace what lies ahead. As a leader, we first surrender ourselves to God again. Then we may need to let go: of income, status, housing, friends, hobbies, desires (healthy and unhealthy), distractions (sinful and innocent), tired habits, old ways of thinking, or even personal preferences and routines. To put it all on the table means to put it ALL on the table.

*Pray: O Lord, by your mercy and grace, grant me the faith and courage to let go, turn away, look ahead and reach forward, to firmly grasp the new thing you are putting before.*

**5. The Barrier Question: What obstacles must I courageously face that stand in my way, whether internal or external, real or perceived, small or large?**

A friend observed, “Without resistance, there is no need for leadership.” Whenever you respond to a new vision or dream and commit to surrender what you must, you start hitting walls. I like

challenges but I know two things about me and walls. 1) Hitting walls wears me down and, 2) there are walls...and then there are WALLS! Some are self-constructed, the results of our attitudes, choices, actions, or fear-based mental models we use. Other walls, much larger, are erected by outside forces, circumstances or people (even well-intentioned friends!). Some we see; some are invisible!

With God's help, review your "construction projects." Are you putting up walls of fear, insecurity, pride, or foolishness? Then assess the external wall-building forces around you: enemies, nay-sayers, critics, financial constraints, competitors, or unforeseen tragedies. Breaking through requires faith, persistence, the help of others, and God's power.

*Pray: O God, grant me grace to confront these barriers, to wisely assess the lesser and greater obstacles I see, and to use your resources to break through!*

#### **6. The Impact Question: As I am aware of my gifts, energy level and experience, how can I bring the most value to the most people for the greatest Kingdom impact?**

The Focus Question dealt with "what" God is doing and "where" he wants your attention. The Impact Question discerns HOW to achieve the new focus, in a way that acknowledges your strengths and limitations. This is a strategic and tactical question. Without it, your passions, dreams, and good intentions remain just intentions.

*Pray: Lord, keep my feet on earth, even as I look heavenward for vision and focus. Grant me the wisdom, discernment, and insight to use my energy and gifts to complete this work.*

#### **7. The Personal Question (maybe the most important): What kind of person or leader am I willing to become to do what God calls me to do?**

I must consider my willingness to change, receive feedback, embrace humility, lead boldly, and name reality without prejudice. I must learn from my past without being held captive to it. I must sharpen my skills, adopt new ones, and build new relationships.

*Pray: Spirit, transform me into the person you need to do the work you desire.*

#### **A Final Prayer**

Father, as we await answers to the challenges facing the world around us, help us ponder the deep questions that shape the world within us, for the sake of others, in the name of Jesus.

AMEN.