



# Caring for God's People

SAMPLE: NOT TO BE REPRODUCED

Timothy Leadership Training Institute  
[www.tlti.org](http://www.tlti.org)

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## Introduction

Welcome to TLT! As you begin training with this first in a series of 7 manuals, you join a network of trainees and trainers from around the world. (Learn more at [www.tlti.org](http://www.tlti.org))

Through the manual *Caring for God's People* you will develop your ability to interact with others on issues related to Christian faith and life.

Throughout Church history, personal conversations on matters related to faith were regularly initiated and conducted by pastors and other designated church leaders. These conversations often took place in the homes of those visited. Today *home visitation* is still a common worldwide practice.

At the same time, Scripture teaches that *all* mature Christians are called by God to care for others. Care for others begins by showing interest in them, taking the time to listen and understand them and then responding with respect and in Christ's love. These conversations can take place during a home visit, but also in a variety of other contexts like in a coffee shop or during a walk in the park.

Whether you are a pastor, someone mandated by your church to visit others or just an "ordinary Christian", this manual will provide encouragement and guidance as you respond to God's call to care for others.

Working through the manual, you will:

- Interact with Scripture and your co-trainees to better appreciate how God cares for us and our calling to do the same.
- Write, review and begin to accomplish Kingdom oriented action plans.
- Facilitate a TLT lesson and receive feedback about this experience.
- Evaluate and enhance your active listening skills.
- Consider ways to engage in a ministry of *comfort, guidance, healing and reconciliation* with those around you, including your family.
- Identify those in your church who you could train for this same ministry.

As you work through the manual you may find that many of the ideas presented are already familiar. If this is the case, think of others who you may train using the same manual in your own local church or elsewhere. Whether you are a pastor, evangelist or lay leader, this manual will provide you with a tool to train others on many different levels: parents, Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders, elders and deacons. In your group, discuss how God may be preparing you to train others, even those from other churches or from outside your area.

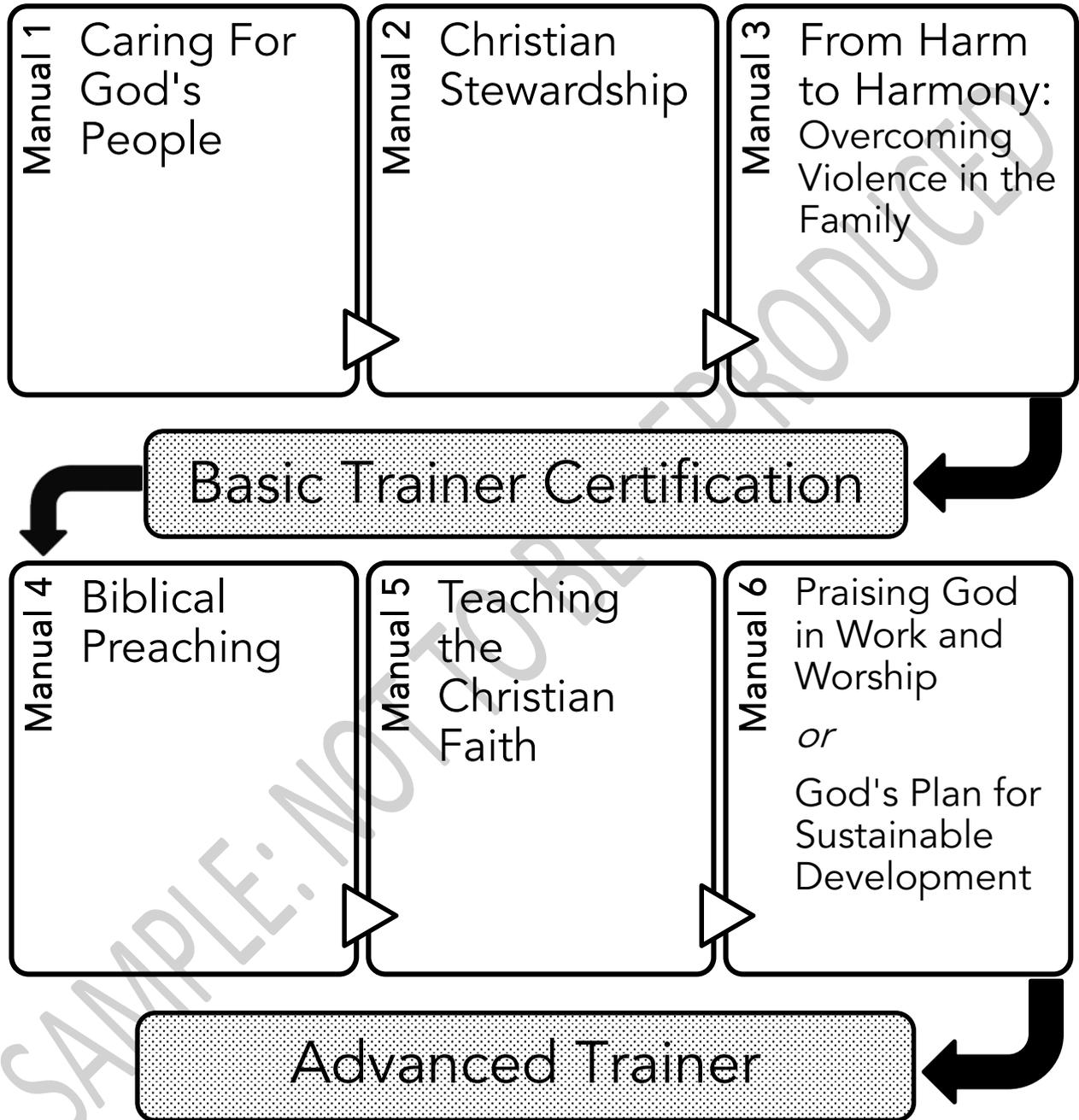
As you engage in this training, we pray that it will open doors for growth and renewal—for you personally and for those you serve.

We welcome you on the journey.



## Timothy Leadership Training Certification

This is the path for Basic and Advanced Trainer certification by Timothy Leadership Training Institute.



\*Note: to receive an official TLTI certificate you must be trained by a TLTI certified trainer following standard guidelines. Trainers report trainings and request certificates through [reporting@tlti.org](mailto:reporting@tlti.org).



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## Participant Testimonies

The following testimonies come from participants around the world. More such testimonies are available on the Timothy Leadership Training website.

### ASIA

#### Philippines

After visiting an outlying tribal area, eighteen people began to worship together. They say, “We are so glad that Christians visited us and brought us the Word of God.”

#### Bangladesh

I visited four young people and talked to them about the dangers of drinking. One of them has given up alcohol and is now actively involved in the Church.

### AFRICA

#### Congo

Through the training, we learned to show generosity to the needy, particularly to widows, including those who are not members of our church.

#### Cameroon

The students in our Bible school learned to listen attentively to those they visited. During their field work, they taught church members what they had learned. As a result, many churches experienced reconciliation and growth.

#### Guinea

In our church, we learned to share our food, our clothes and our money with those in need. And we are learning to be more generous and tolerant of those who don't always share our opinions.

### AMERICAS

#### Dominican Republic

One person visited was a prostitute who received Christ during the visit. Her testimony and new life have made a great impact on our town.

#### El Salvador

Since regular visitation started through TLT, our church membership has grown by 30% and many new church members are engaged in significant ministry in the church.

#### United States

I enlisted 9 retirees to train for visitation through my adult education class. I told my trainees to not just visit socially but to leave those they visited with something to think about and give them purpose. Over 3 months my trainees have made over 50 calls, sometimes alone, sometimes with grandkids or in pairs.



## Reminder to TLT Trainers

### Lesson Procedure

TLT lessons follow 4 steps:

- 1) **Report** - At the beginning of each lesson (except for the 1<sup>st</sup> lesson) each participant presents the report of what was accomplished since the last lesson.
- 2) **Reflect, discover, and discuss** - Then, participants read Scripture and discuss together the related questions. It is often helpful to read the Bible texts in their context. Group discussion trains participants to listen carefully to each other and to present their ideas clearly.
- 3) **Plan** - Participants write a plan to put into practice what they have learned. They report on that plan at the beginning of the following lesson.
- 4) **Pray** - At the end of each lesson, participants commit their plans to God.

*TLT training is for those who are prepared to make plans, to put their plans into action between the lessons, and then report on them during the next lesson. Most TLT learning takes place between the lessons as participants work their plans.*

### Inductive training

TLT training is not like classroom teaching when the teacher stands up in front of the class and talks while students listen and take notes. TLT training is interactive and *inductive*. *Inductive* means that during a lesson participants talk more than the trainer. An inductive trainer asks good questions and then gives participants time to reflect and discuss. A TLT trainer is like a good mathematics teacher who gives the class a problem to solve ... and then leaves the students **time to reflect** to find the answer instead of just giving them the solution!

Participants in TLT training discover new ideas and practices through their **own** reflection and discussion. And then they use what is learned to formulate and accomplish their **own** action plans for Kingdom change.

When you begin TLT training, you may find it difficult to teach in an inductive way. You may be talking more than other participants during a lesson. In that case, you must work to develop a more *inductive* style. It is often helpful to break into smaller groups so that each participant can reflect and discuss what is being learned.

A good trainer has already put into practice what is taught in the manuals and can tell how TLT brings change in the church and community. Good trainers also show that each participant is a valued member of the group and provide individual encouragement and assistance, even between training sessions.

**Reminder:** The last two lessons, the 4-6 Month Action Plan and its Report, are very important and should not be skipped!



## LESSON 1

### Great Things with God

#### 1. Psalm 68:35, Acts 1:8

*What are God's people given?*

When God shows power through believers, **change** happens.

*Think of the changes that took place:*

- *when Moses led Israel out of Egypt. Exodus 19:4-6*
- *when David conquered Goliath. 1 Samuel 17:50-51*
- *because Rahab hid the spies. Joshua 2:6, James 2:25*
- *in Zacchaeus' life and in the city of Jericho. Luke 19:8-9*

#### 2. John 1:11-12

*What happened when Jesus was sent into the world through God's power?*

Sometimes people resist God's change because they are comfortable the way they are and with the way things are. Others may simply be apprehensive of change.

*Give examples of people who resisted change because they were too comfortable with the way things already were or were fearful of change for some other reason.*

*Can someone share an experience of learning something difficult? Was it sometimes discouraging?*

#### 3. God will bring *Kingdom Change* in our churches and communities as we continually **learn** to honor and serve our Lord. Kingdom changes are those that promote the coming of the Kingdom, as we pray in **Matthew 6:10**.

Learning for *Kingdom Change* takes four steps:

##### 1) **Reflect and discuss**

TLT teaches how the Bible relates to our life and work. But it is not like learning in a classroom where the teacher does most of the talking! In each lesson, we need to engage in careful **reflection** and **discussion** in order to answer the main question:

*“How can this Bible teaching bring change in my church or neighborhood through the Holy Spirit?”*

##### 2) **Plan and pray for change - Luke 14:28, Ephesians 1:11**

*Does God want us to make plans?*

At the end of each lesson, we discuss and answer these two questions:

1) *“What have I learned from this lesson about Kingdom changes that God wants for my family, my church or my neighborhood?”*

2) *“What will I do through God's Spirit before the next lesson to make that happen?”*

These two questions make up what is called a “TLT Action Plan.” Your group leader will assist you in learning to make good Action Plans.



### 3) **Work your plan - Matthew 7:26, James 1:22-25**

*What did Jesus say about those who do not practice what they learn?*

*What did James say?*

During the period between each teaching session we put our plans into practice.

***If you do not make Action Plans and work your plans between teaching sessions, it is better not to follow TLT training. You will become discouraged by not seeing change and you will discourage the others in your TLT learning group.***

### 4) **Report - Acts 14:26-27**

*What did Paul and Barnabas do at the end of their first missionary journey?*

At the start of the lesson, everyone in the training group will take a turn sharing whether their plan was accomplished since the last lesson. They should also share the changes it brought in their church, community, or neighborhood. Sometimes a plan will not be accomplished. In that case, the group together identifies the obstacles which prevented it from being achieved. The group can then discuss ways to overcome those obstacles during the next week.

### 4. **Philippians 1:6, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

We are confident that God will bring wonderful changes to your church and to your community or neighborhood through this training. Like Jesus and all leaders in history, we face obstacles. But in spite of all these obstacles, God's power, made perfect in weakness, is even greater.

### 5. **MY PLAN**

**Goal for Kingdom Change:** Write down something that should be changed in your family, church, or neighborhood in the next months.

For example:

- We will show more consideration and respect for each other in our family, *or*
- Three people will volunteer for service in our church, *or*
- Seven homes in our neighborhood will begin garbage segregation.

**Activity:** Write down something specific that you will do before the next lesson to help bring about that change.

For example, in relation to the three Kingdom Changes noted above:

- I will express my respect and appreciation for a member of my family in a special way, *or*
- I will speak with one of my church leaders about this vision for change, *or*
- I will buy three garbage receptacles for each of the seven homes and offer them to each family for half price.

Finally, write down **when** you will accomplish this activity (before the next lesson).

### 6. At the end of the lesson, share your plan with another person and pray together.



## LESSON 2

### The Person Who Cares

1. **MY PLAN Reports** (can be done in small groups or in the larger group)
  - Did you accomplish the activity planned during Lesson 1?
  - Did you encounter any obstacles which prevented you from accomplishing it? If so, how can you overcome those obstacles, by God's grace, before Lesson 3?
  - Did the change you expected and prayed for happen? How do you know?
  - Did anything unexpected happen?
2. Pastors and other church leaders, men and women, are called to care for God's people. The Bible teaches that they are to be shepherds, like God. **1 Peter 5:2**

**God, our shepherd - Psalm 23:1, Isaiah 40:11** (see also: Psalm 79:13, Ezekiel 34:11-16)  
*What is the work of a shepherd?*

3. **Jesus, the good shepherd - John 10:14-15**

The word *pastor* means *shepherd*. Pastors and other church leaders do *God's* work. Through them the Holy Spirit comforts and guides God's people. Being a church leader is not a small task.

*Why is Jesus called the **good** shepherd in these verses?*

4. **Knowing and being known - John 10:2-4, 14, 16**

**Knowing the sheep by name.** This means that the shepherd shows *real* interest in the sheep. Good shepherds know the joys and the problems of those they comfort and guide. Getting to know someone takes time!

*Do you know a pastor or another church leader who really knows his/her church members?*

**"They know his voice."** The sheep must know the shepherd. They must know what kind of person their shepherd is in order to follow him/her with confidence.

*Why do the sheep have confidence in their shepherd (John 10:11-13)?*

**"He enters through the gate."** Good shepherds do not sneak into the sheep pen. This means that both God and the church have called them to be a pastor or leader. They do not just declare themselves pastor or leader! The church calls them and trains them. After that, they can care for God's people.

*How does a pastor get to know God's people?*

*How do God's people get to know their pastor or leader?*

*Do Christians stay in a church where they don't know their pastor?*

5. **Loving – 1 Corinthians 13:13**

**A good leader loves the flock.** Christians experience God's love when their leader loves them. If not, the leader's ministry will be empty.

*What happens when a leader really loves God's people? Does anyone have a personal story about this?*



**A good shepherd loves the weak sheep – Isaiah 40:11**

*How do good leaders show that they love those who are weak?*

**A good shepherd shows compassion to those who are sad, sick and who have sinned - Matthew 20:29-34, Luke 7:11-15, 36-50**

To have compassion is to feel something strongly. It means we care so much about someone that we feel it in our insides. We say that our stomach is tied up into knots.

*Can you remember when someone showed compassion to you?*

An elder once told me, “I have a *good* pastor.” I asked him, “How do you know?” He answered, “Because he is not a big man. He cares for us.” *What did he mean?*

**6. Taking initiative – Luke 15:1-7, 1 John 4:10** (see also: Psalm 23, 1 John 4:19)

Good shepherds do not wait for the sheep to come to them. They go to them even before they are called. A good shepherd shows love for them even when they don't want his or her love.

*Why is it important for the shepherd not to wait for the sheep to come to him or her when they are in need?*

*Why is it sometimes difficult for a pastor to be a good shepherd?*

**7. The pastor's family.** Pastors and other leaders may not neglect their own families because of their ministry. God calls everyone to respect the commandment, “Do all of your work in six days” (Exodus 20:9). Leaders don't love their family if they don't have time for their husband or wife and children.

*What happens when pastors or other church leaders do not spend time with their family?*

**8. MY PLAN**

**Activity:** Write the name of one person in your church or community who is like a lost sheep with whom you will visit before the next lesson. When will you make that visit? How will you show this person Christ-like compassion?

**Goal for Kingdom Change:** Write one change that you expect to happen, by God's grace, before the next lesson, because of what you will do.

**9.** At the end of the lesson, share your plan with another person and pray together.



## LESSON 3

### Visiting in Christ's Name

#### 1. MY PLAN Reports

- Did you accomplish the activity planned during Lesson 2?
- Did you encounter any obstacles which prevented you from accomplishing it? If so, how can you overcome those obstacles, by God's grace, before Lesson 4?
- Did the change you expected and prayed for happen? How do you know?
- Did anything unexpected happen?

#### 2. God visits - Genesis 1:28-30

God visited Adam and Eve and spoke with them in their home, the Garden of Eden. God knew their needs and entrusted them with important responsibilities.

*Do you know of important people or those in authority that regularly take time to visit ordinary people in their homes?*

**Genesis 3:8-9** After their sin, Adam and Eve didn't want to meet God.

*What did God do?*

**Genesis 3:14-15** God's visit was not very joyful. But, even in judgment, God spoke words of hope.

*What words of hope can you speak to those who don't even want your visit?*

Even though God drove them out of the garden, Adam and Eve were given a place to live, to work, and to multiply.

*What needs of Adam and Eve were met by God during this visit?*

Throughout the Old Testament, God:

- visited Israel
- met with them
- listened to them
- provided for their needs
- gave them a mission
- made them promises.

*Who was visited by God in the Old Testament? Give some examples.*

#### **God visited us in Jesus Christ - John 14:16-18**

Jesus promised never to leave us alone. *How does God visit us today?*

#### **God is our great Visitor. Like a good shepherd, God:**

- comes looking for us
- listens to us
- speaks with us and
- cares for us where we are.

*Think about the gods of other religions. What efforts do they make to visit human beings?*



### 3. Jesus' visits

**Luke 19:1-10** *What happened in the family because of Jesus' visit?*

**Matthew 25:31-36** *How will Jesus divide everyone on the judgment day?*

Our visits honor Jesus because he is **present** with the sick, the hungry and the prisoners. He is concerned with their needs.

*Sometimes, after a visit, the visitor will say, "I was certainly blessed just as much as the family I visited." Why is this so?*

**Matthew 10:40, 2 Corinthians 5:20** *How does the visitor represent Christ?*

### 4. A visitor is like Jesus: *bold to go and meet others*

- Like Jesus, we should **not wait** for others to come to us.
- Like Jesus, we show the **value** of those with whom we visit by going to them, not to be served, but to serve.
- Like Jesus, we **share** their joys and sorrows.

### 5. MY PLAN

**Activity:** Write the names of two people in your church or community who are in need: malnourished, sick, depressed, unemployed, or in prison. Which one will you visit before the next lesson? When? How will this person or family know that you are coming in Christ's name?

**Goal for Kingdom Change:** Write one change that you expect to happen, by God's grace, before the next lesson, because of what you will do.

### 6. At the end of the lesson, share your plan with another person and pray together.



## LESSON 4

### Action Planning for Change

#### 1. MY PLAN Reports

- Did you accomplish the activity planned during Lesson 3?
- Did you encounter any obstacles which prevented you from accomplishing it? If so, how can you overcome those obstacles, by God's grace, before Lesson 5?
- Did the change you expected and prayed for happen? How do you know?
- Did anything unexpected happen?

#### 2. Throughout this manual, we make plans at the end of each lesson.

**Matthew 25:1-13** *Is it important to make plans for the future? Give examples of foolish people who do not make plans and wise people who do.*

#### 3. Good intentions are important. For example, I may have the good intention to visit my church members regularly. *Give examples of other good intentions. What happens to many of our good intentions?*

Action Plans are more than good intentions. They describe:

- 1) *specific* **Goals for Kingdom Change**
- 2) *specific* **Activities** we plan to accomplish to achieve those goals

Action Plans help us achieve a goal through what we accomplish. Formulating the **Goal for Kingdom Change** before the **Activities** helps us to be more intentional in ministry planning. We first identify the positive change we would like to see happen in a person, family, church, or community. This becomes our Goal for Kingdom Change. Then we plan the activities we need to do to bring about the change. Of course, both our goal and activities are accomplished by God's grace.

Action Plans can also be developed by identifying **Activities** before **Goals for Kingdom Change**. This is often a helpful approach with Action Plans that have a short time frame. We first identify what activities we are doing or are capable of doing, and then we state what positive change we expect to happen because of these activities. This becomes our Goal for Kingdom Change.

Action planning is a challenge and a discipline! Through this lesson you will develop those skills.

This lesson first presents action plan **activities**, then action plan **goals** and finally **examples** of action plans.

### ACTIVITIES

#### 4. Specific Activities

Good Action Plans answer five questions:

- 1) **What** exactly will I do?



- 2) **When** will I do it?
- 3) **How** will I do it?  
For example: I will initiate a personal visit or a meeting with three people next week (**what**). I will meet with one on Wednesday evening and two on Sunday afternoon and evening (**when**). I will listen carefully during each conversation (**how**).
- 4) Is this plan **realistic**? Do I have the time and energy to do this with all the other things I have to do? (Luke 14:28-30)
- 5) Is it **faithful** to God's will? Will I make these visits just to be with my friends or to serve those in need even if they are not my friends? (Luke 14:12-14)

## 5. SMART Activities

A good Action Plan *activity* is described using the acronym **SMART**.

**Specific:** It describes specifically what I plan to do.

**Measurable:** I will be able to tell whether it was done or not.

**Appropriate:** It is in line with God's will.

**Realistic:** It takes into account my limitations and availability.

**Time-bound:** It mentions an exact period of time.

*Think about the activity you reported on at the beginning of this lesson. Was it SMART?*

## GOALS FOR KINGDOM CHANGE

### 6. Specific Goals for Kingdom Change

Action Plans also include goals for specific Kingdom Change. Specific goals answer the question: "**Why** am I planning to do this activity?"

We can answer this "*Why?*" question in several general ways. For example:

- "I am doing this so that the faith of the people I visit will be strengthened."
- "I am doing this so that our church will grow."
- "I am doing this in order to train someone else in visitation ministry."

These are all good **general** responses to the "Why?" question.

Throughout the centuries, good church leaders have also answered the "*Why?*" question in **specific** ways. They have set **specific goals for Kingdom Change** through their ministries. These goals have helped them set priorities and be focused in their prayer and activities.

**Mark 3:13-15** *What was one of Jesus' goals when he went up on the mountain?*

**Acts 20:27** *What was Paul's goal for the Ephesian Christians? That they understand and practice the whole\_\_\_\_\_.*

**Acts 20:20** *What were two activities Paul used to meet that goal?*



Jesus and the apostle Paul had **intentional** ministries. They did not do what they did just to get things done, but because they wanted to bring **specific Kingdom Change**. They thought about the future. They imagined how God's Kingdom could advance in the future. Then, with God's power, they acted to make it happen.

## 7. SMART Goals for Kingdom Change

A good Action Plan *goal* is also **SMART**.

**Specific:** It describes specifically the change I expect to happen because of what I do.

**Measurable:** I will be able to tell whether it happened or not.

**Appropriate:** It is in line with God's will.

**Realistic:** It takes into account the limitations and possibilities of God's people.

**Time-bound:** It mentions an exact period of time.

In an Action Plan, the **activity** refers to what **you** will do. The **goal for Kingdom Change** is what you expect to happen in the **church** or **community**. Both need to be **SMART**. You will find it a rewarding challenge to formulate concise action plans that will enable you, by God's grace, to accomplish an intentional ministry like that of Jesus and the apostle Paul.

Of course, we know that we will never be able to see all the results of our work. Only God knows that!

## 8. Learning to Make Good Action Plans: EXAMPLES

### Example 1

Imagine that your church wants to better comfort those who are suffering.

This is a poorly written activity: "Next year I intend to serve more in my church."

*Why is this a poorly written activity? Why is it not SMART?*

This is a well written activity: "During the next six months, I will initiate a Saturday afternoon personal meeting with one "shut-in" from our church.

*Is this a SMART activity? Could it become even more SMART?*

### Example 2

**Activity:** By the end of next week, I will personally meet with two people who are experiencing difficulty in their lives, one on Wednesday evening and one on Sunday afternoon. During our meeting, I will show God's love by listening to them carefully and patiently and responding appropriately.

**Goal for Kingdom Change:** The people I visit will express their faith in God in some way during our meeting. (For example: they will join in prayer, or they will express gratitude for God's goodness, or the expression on their face will change....)

*Is this a well written action plan? Is it SMART? Give other examples of how those you meet may express their trust and confidence in God in some way during your meeting.*

### Example 3

This is a poorly written goal for kingdom change: "After 6 months of regular visits and meetings with those who occasionally visit our church, our church will grow."

This is a better written goal for kingdom change: "After 6 months of regular visits and meetings with those who occasionally visit our church, two adults will become members."



#### Example 4

**Goal for Kingdom Change:** Within the next six months, eight more church members or regular visitors will engage in specific church ministries.

**Activity:** With the elders in our church, we will contact all the members and regular visitors in our church by telephone. When appropriate, we will follow up by face-to-face visit or meeting. We will identify the abilities of those we visit and show how they can be used through specific church ministry.

*Is this a SMART action plan? How could it become even more SMART?*

#### Example 5

**Goal for Kingdom change:**

Within the next 6 weeks, a couple in our church experiencing marital conflict will (1) openly acknowledge their problems and (2) plan to meet regularly with a pastor or experienced counselor to overcome their difficulties.

**Activity:**

Before the end of the week, I will meet with the couple to express my love and concern for them and my hope for their marriage. I will listen to them attentively, pray with them and ask if I may return for a follow-up visit.

#### 9. MY PLAN

**Activity:** Write the name of a person with whom you will visit before the next lesson.

When will you make that visit? How will you show this person Christ-like compassion?

**Goal for Kingdom Change:** Write one change that you expect to happen, by God's grace, before the next lesson, because of what you will do.

10. At the end of the lesson, share your plan with another person and pray together.