

how to use this Journal

Note: This summary page has been designed for the man who will use this material apart from a Focused Living SALT semester.

The purpose of all of our discipleship volumes is to facilitate a **3-4 month** season of discipleship between **two or more** brothers in Christ. Because this volume was originally published for use in Focused Living's SALT discipleship semester, you will see references throughout the material to an extended program that includes small groups (i.e., crews) and large gatherings. However, the backbone of the discipleship is one Christ follower sliding alongside another Christ follower for a season to walk the spiritual journey together. In this journal, that fellow disciple is referred to as your SALT partner.

For the maximum benefit, we strongly encourage you to **recruit a committed partner** to go through this material at the same pace you are. Typically, you will see seven journaling days for each section. We recommend taking 14 days to complete those 7 days. On average, each day's journaling will take 30-45 minutes. Agree to **meet as partners at least every other week** for the next three months to challenge and encourage each other. No contact, no impact. Having another man to whom you can **express** what God is **impressing** on your heart is invaluable.

Most often our discipleship volumes reference a secondary book that complements your personal Bible study. The secondary book used in conjunction with this journal is:

In His Steps by Charles Sheldon. A Timeless Classic Updated in Today's Language by editor James S. Bell Jr. Honor Books, Tulsa, OK. 1998. (Original copyright 1897)

You can obtain this book at your local bookstore or favorite online bookseller or from www.focusedliving.com.

God bless you as you put yourself in a position to let God do His thing in your life!

JOURNALING OVERVIEW



The great need among men who want to grow spiritually is not simply more **contentment** to learn about Christ but **conviction** to **BELIEVE** and **courage** to **OBEY** Him! The pressing need among men who claim to be followers of Christ is the surrender of every area of life to the authority of His Lordship (relationships, work, motivations, goals, ambitions, actions, speech, thought life, priorities, positions, possessions, future, pleasures, etc). Getting serious about Jesus' call to "**FOLLOW ME**" is the starting point. To help us love Christ more, we will be walking each other through the Gospel of Mark. Together we will learn that the Christian faith is not a spiritual self-improvement course by doing things **FOR** Jesus in order to earn His love. Rather, it is a life transformation of learning how to do life **WITH** Jesus in response to His love!

SECTION 1

Life Assignment: *'In His Steps'* by Sheldon (Part 1)

Day 1 Roll Out The Red Carpet (Mark 1:1-13)

Day 2 Significant Firsts (Mark 1:14-20)

Day 3 People, People, People (Mark 1:21-45)

Day 4 Roof Rippers (Mark 2:1-22)

Day 5 Picking A Fight (Mark 2:23-3:12)

Day 6 Team Building (Mark 3:13-35)

Day 7 Getting The Most Out Of SALT (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Section Summary

SECTION 2

Life Assignment: *'In His Steps'* by Sheldon (Part 2)

Day 1 Crowds or Kingdom? (Mark 4:1-20)

Day 2 Reveal & Conceal (Mark 4:21-34)

Day 3 When Jesus Sets You Up (Mark 4:35-41)

Day 4 Kingdom Authority (Mark 5:1-20)

Day 5 Just A Number? (Mark 5:21-43)

Day 6 Reflection On Rejection (Mark 6:1-29)

Day 7 When Little Is Much (Mark 6:30-44)

Section Summary

SECTION 3

Day 1 Back To The Basics (Mark 6:45-56)

Day 2 Moral Man or Master's Man (Mark 7:1-23)

Day 3 Planting Seeds 'n' Meeting Needs (Mark 7:24-8:10)

Day 4 20/20 (Mark 8:11-26)

Section Summary

SECTION 4

Life Assignment: Legacy Letters or Equivalent

Day 1 What's A Jesus Nut? (Mark 8:27-38)

Day 2 A Glimpse Of His Glory (Mark 9:1-29)

Day 3 Driven, Drifting or Directed? (Mark 9:30-50)

Day 4 Powerful Paradoxes. Part 1 (Mark 10:1-16)

Day 5 Powerful Paradoxes. Part 2 (Mark 10:17-45)

Day 6 Powerful Paradoxes. Part 3 (Mark 10:46-52)

Day 7 Bearing Fruit, Not Just Foliage (Mark 11:1-26)

Section Summary

SECTION 5

Life Assignment: Personal Good Friday Focus

Day 1 The Kind Of Man God Wants (Mark 11:27-12:17)

Day 2 God In A Box (Mark 12:18-34)

Day 3 Pride and Prejudice (12:35-44)

Day 4 Whatever!

Day 5 Back To The Future. Part 1 (Mark 13:1-37)

Day 6 Back To The Future. Part 2 (Mark 13:1-37)

Day 7 Broken and Poured Out (Mark 14:1-25)

Section Summary

SECTION 6

Day 1 Busted And Broken! (Pt 1) (Mark 14:26-72)

Day 2 Busted And Broken! (Pt 2) (Mark 14:26-72)

Day 3 The Crowd Or The Christ? (Mark 15:1-20)

Day 4 Emptied Himself To Make Me Full (Mark 15:21-47)

Day 5 From Tragedy To Triumph (Mark 16:1-20)

Day 6 Looking Back

Day 7 Your Presentation



WHAT IS SALT?

Spiritually **A**uthentic **L**eadership **T**raining is a tool developed by Focused Living to help men make Christ's last command of discipleship our first concern (Mt 28:16-20). It is one way to be intentional about your own spiritual life while sliding alongside one other man for encouragement and accountability. There are individual, one-on-one, small group and large group components of SALT. The format is offered two times per year, Spring (Feb-May) and Fall (Sep-Dec).

The distinctives of SALT include:

- “Tracks” for unhurried times alone with God
- Face-to-face time between disciples
- Small group to express what God has been impressing
- Exhortations to press on
- Reminders of the basics: gospel and our dependence on God
- Practical life assignments that help us grow in Him
- Expectation of “passing on” biblical principles to family
- A commitment that is entered into formally with an application
- Evaluation: Do I love Christ more now than when I began?

Why SALT? After years of refining, we have found that many men find the SALT structure helpful for their own spiritual growth and a doable way to reproduce themselves in the life of one other man. Additionally, many churches have found SALT a helpful discipleship track for their men without having to recreate the wheel.

Why an application? SALT is a commitment that will take time and is not something to be casually added to an already full schedule. We want your family (wife/children) and your church family (pastor/elders) to know what you are doing, so we ask that they sign off on your involvement.

Why the building motif? We want to join God in the process of building our lives to look more and more like Jesus. In keeping with that theme, we use the following terms:

- **Crew Chief** = Small Group leader. He shepherds between meetings and facilitates small group time.
- **Contractor** = Man responsible for the SALT pairing (i.e., takes the initiative for face to face meetings, models authentic relationship with God, etc.) Though the contractor is responsible for the pairing, we generally view the relationship as mutual (Rom 1:12).
- **Sub-Contractor** = Man going through SALT for the first time who is paired with another man called the Contractor.

FILLING IN EVERY BLANK?

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
Colossians 3:17

Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things...
I Timothy 4:14,15a

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed...
II Timothy 2:15

This notebook is a tool. **Our goal is not to get you through this book, but to get His Book through you! J** As you work your way through the journal pages in each section, you will be presented with many questions to consider and scripture references on which to reflect. These are provided to stimulate and not overwhelm.

If you come to a question that does not apply, skip it. If you don't resonate with a question after you consider it, then leave it blank and move on. We'd rather you carefully ponder a few questions than fill in every blank without any true reflection.

If you fall behind, focus solely on the "Personal Discovery" section of the journal days and ignore the "Digging Deeper" questions until you get back into a rhythm.

Frequently, you will see several scripture references listed at the beginning of a question. For instance,

(Mark 1:15; 10:23-27; Matt 6:10; 27:11; I Tim 1:17; 6:15-16)
Why was the 'kingdom' the focus of His first words?

The first reference will be the verse(s) from the chapter of Mark that you have just read on which the question is focused.. In this case, Mark 1:15. The remaining scriptures referenced shed further light on the core of the question. We encourage you to turn to these other scriptures since they pertain to the question. However, don't let a long list of scriptures take the wind out of your sails. If there is not time to look them all up, just look up one and keep rolling.

Again, **Our goal is not to get you through this book, but to get His Book through you! J**

PASS IT ON

“Let the word of Christ **richly dwell within you**, with all wisdom **teaching** and **admonishing** one another....” Colossians 3:16



IMPRESSION without **EXPRESSION** leaves **DEPRESSION!**

This timeless biblical truth highlights our real need to give away that which God has given us during our unhurried times face to face with Him. Over the course of this semester, we want you to become more intentional and deliberate each week in communicating several of the truths which the Father has been impressing on your heart. Not only will you grow deeper in the Lord by owning these truths, but your family and friends will reap the benefits as well.



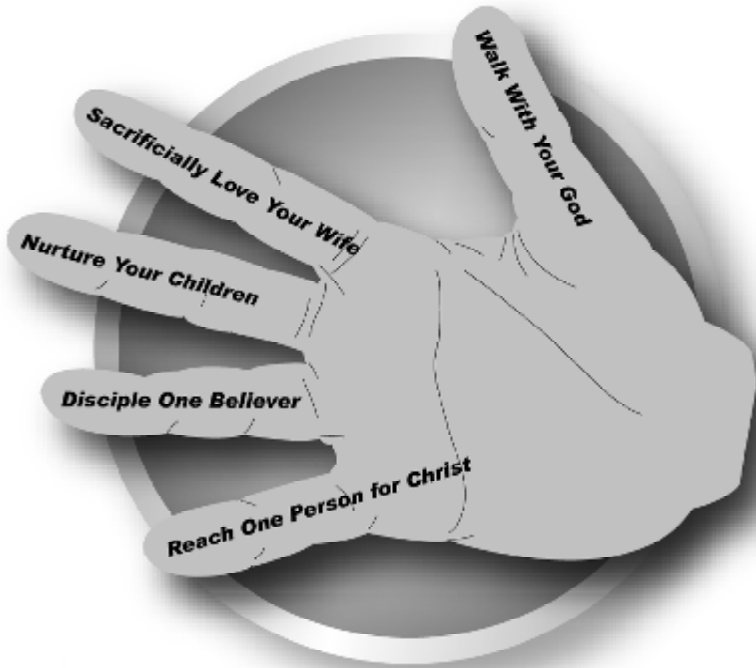
As you come across this *‘passing the baton’* icon, let it be a reminder to pass on what God is doing in you or through you as a result of being with Him. To help make this vital part of SALT a reality, **we are asking you to record at least one of your handoffs at the end of each section.**

A MAN IN THE HAND OF GOD

**When my heart is gripped
by God's hand,**

"Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit!"

Luke 23:46



**then my hands will do what is on God's
heart.**

"I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." John 8:29

My Action Steps

Walk with God:

Sacrificially Love Your Wife:

Nurture Your Children:

Disciple One Believer:

Reach One Unbeliever:



LIFE ASSIGNMENT

In His Steps

*“...when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to **follow in His steps.**”*

1 Peter 2:20-21

What does the Lordship of Jesus Christ look like in everyday life? This question is at the core of our “*Follow Me*” theme for SALT this semester. It’s also the central question of the novel, *In His Steps*.

This novel has been regarded as the best-selling novel of all time, with over 15 million copies having been read over the last 100 years. Written by Charles Sheldon, a pastor in Topeka, Kansas, the book was originally a series of stories told during the Sunday evening services at the Central Congregational Church in Topeka. In 1897 it was published in book form for the first time and immediately found a wide reception.

Perry, David and Peter have both been challenged and helped by this book, in years past, to consider what following Jesus might look like “between Sundays.” We’d like to introduce you to this novel this semester, or highlight it again for those who have read it before.

Life Assignment: Over the next month, read through this novel. As you meet a variety of characters grappling with following Jesus in their particular life situation, let their examples stimulate your own mind and heart. Our goal with this life assignment, as with this semester, is to follow Jesus more closely. We’ve provided some questions and journal pages to assist you in processing the ideas of this book. We recommend reviewing these questions before reading a section of the novel. A brief biography of the author appears after the journal pages.

Disclaimer – Putting forth a fiction book as a life assignment may seem a bit risky. Fictional writing as a source for spiritual truth certainly has limitations. However, this novel is not meant to be a comprehensive picture of the spiritual life. The author is choosing to emphasize, for his local congregation and for us, the question of obedience to Jesus’ call to “Follow Me.” Theologically, we know that this comes from a heart that is in love with Jesus and seeks a closer and closer relationship with Him. The measuring stick put forth by Sheldon is the question, What would

Jesus do? You may or may not agree with how each character answers this question in their own life. That's fine with us. The point is to personalize the question for yourself. Ask yourself, What does Jesus want me to do? If I lived a whole week with Jesus' heart transplanted for mine, what would change in my life? We trust that God can use this tool to draw you into a closer walk with Him. Enjoy!

Processing the content of the novel, *In His Steps*

Men read novels at different paces. Some will read it in one or two sittings. Others will read it one or two chapters at a time. Whatever your approach, here are some pages to journal some of your thoughts. Three questions to constantly ask yourself as you read are:

- What **encourages** me?
- What **convicts** me?
- What **action** do I need to take to follow Christ more closely?

Some other prime the pump questions for you to consider each time you read are:

- 1) **Changes** - As I watch this character evolve through the story, what changes happen as his/her life comes more under the lordship of Christ? (i.e. values, stewardship of money or time or abilities, attitudes, etc.) **What changes are happening in my life?**
- 2) **Internal struggles** - As I watch this character evolve through the story, what internal personal struggles are happening? **What internal struggles am I going through?**
- 3) **Hardships** - As I watch this character evolve through the story, what hardships or costs does each character face in light of their commitment to follow Christ? (financial loss, misunderstood or rejected by family, persecution, etc.) **What hardships am I facing because of my walk with God?**
- 4) **Affect on others** - How does one character's pursuit of God affect other characters around them? (i.e., inspired, challenged, convicted, etc.) **How is my walk with Jesus affecting others around me?**
- 5) **Community impact** - What impact on the broader community does this band of Christ followers have? **Is my fellowship (family, small group, church family) making a broader impact?**

DAY 1

Rolling Out The Red Carpet Mark 1:1-13

Date _____

The Gospel of Mark is a book of action. It is a powerful record, not of what men did for God, but of what God, through Christ, did for men. Whereas



Matthew was written to the religious Jews, Luke to the philosophical Greeks and John to everyday “Joe Six-Pack,” Mark was written to the action oriented Romans who were not impressed with words but with works. It is no wonder, then, that Mark mentions more miracles than the other Gospels and records none of Jesus’ word-filled sermons. In addition, Mark is the shortest and most chronological of the Gospels. The author uses the business term “*immediately*” [*para*/with + *chrema*/business = lit. get down to business!] 41 times as a fast-paced adverb* to keep the action flowing. (*An adverb is a word that modifies a verb for you Clemson guys. Sorry, couldn’t resist J)

Most scholars agree that Mark was an eye witness of Christ and received much of his information about Jesus directly from Peter, who very likely led him to Christ (I Pt 5:13) and disciplined him through a couple of SALT semesters (Acts 12:11-12). It is believed that Mark was with Christ the night He went to the cross (Mk 14:51). Mark was the cousin of the early church leader Barnabas (Col 4:10) and accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 12:25).

PERSONAL DISCOVERY

Read and reflect on **Mark 1:1-13** writing down any observations, insights, principles or challenges.

DIGGING DEEPER

(Mark 1:1) Mark wastes no time cutting through all the religiosity in order to get down to the core and theme of what God wanted the action oriented Romans (and Americans) to experience. What was the theme, and why is it so important for you to keep central?

(Mark 1:2-3) Mark quotes Malachi 3 and Isaiah 41 as a direct shot at Roman authority. These verses describe a herald crying out in a town square that the true King (not Caesar) is coming. Every time a king would travel, he would send out messengers announcing his purpose, plans and arrival. These messengers would always be accompanied by a strong contingent of soldiers who would organize the men of the city to “*make ready the way*” and “*make his paths straight.*” This would be done by preparing the roads the king would be taking to their city, making them as smooth as possible for his chariot. They would get rid of all the pot holes, fill in any steep ravines with dirt and level off any treacherous hills. In other words, they would roll out the red carpet! Mark is in effect saying, “*Hey! Our King, the Lord Jesus is coming! Get your hearts ready to receive Him as Lord. Roll out the red carpet. Repent of the pot holes of sin. Fill in the missing areas of your thinking with His truth. Get rid of the prideful hills and mountains of self-centeredness. Get ready, the King is coming!*” What specifically must you do to prepare your heart for all that Jesus wants to do in and through you this semester?

(Mark 1:4-8) Following Mark's challenge to roll out the red carpet by preparing for the King, he introduces King Jesus' chief herald, John the Baptist. As John stood in the town square announcing the coming of the King, what was...

§ the core command to prepare our hearts for the King (4)?

§ the critical attitude in preparation to receive the King (7)?

§ the encouraging promise that will accompany our surrender to the King (8)?

Repentance, humility, and reliance on the Holy Spirit. As you begin this SALT semester, do these three characterize you? How?

(Mark 1:9-12; Philippians 2:1-10) In this beautiful picture of the Trinity we see Jesus surrendering to the Father just as the Father is asking us to surrender to His Son in the power and provision of the Holy Spirit. Note that the Father is not expressing His pleasure with Christ for what He had done on earth for He hadn't really done anything yet. The Father was simply pleased that His Son, who was fully God in the flesh, was willing to surrender Himself to the Lordship of the Father. So it is with you. The Father is not pleased with you primarily for what you do. He is deeply pleased with and delighted in you simply because you are one of His sons. Since you are His son, He longs that you follow the lead of Christ and surrender ever more of your life to His gracious and sovereign authority. To what extent do you feel that the Father is pleased with you as one of His sons?

How does the fact that Jesus surrendered every area of His life to the Father encourage you to do the same?

(Mark 1:12-13; I Peter 5:8-10) What can you expect more of as you follow Christ?

Are you aware of any attacks of Satan on your life at present?

PRAYER OF SURRENDER & CELEBRATION

Father, in response to Christ's command, "*Follow Me,*" I pray...

PASSING IT ON

What truth will you pass on? To whom will you pass it? When?



DAY 2

Significant 'Firsts' Mark 1:14-20

Date _____

Mark is the earliest written of the four Gospels. Today you will discover a number of very significant “**firsts**” as the Lord begins His public ministry to others and His personal ministry to you!

PERSONAL DISCOVERY

Read and reflect on Mark 1:14-20 writing down any observations, insights, principles or challenges.

DIGGING DEEPER

(**Mark 1:14**) What was the first topic Jesus chose to preach about?

What topic is most on your heart these days?

(Mark 1:15; 10:23-27; Matt 6:10; 27:11; I Tim 1:17; 6:15-16) Why was the *kingdom* the focus of His first words?

(Mark 1:15) What were Christ's first two recorded commands in Mark? How high of a priority are they in your life?

(Mark 1:16-17) Why do you think Christ's first recorded ministry was inviting a couple of guys to walk through a few SALT semesters? How important do you think your faithfulness to your SALT partner is to the Lord this semester?

(Mark 1:17) (also see Mark 2:14, 8:34, 10:21; Matt 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 10:38, 16:24, 19:21; Luke 9:23, 59, 18:22; John 1:43, 10:27, 12:26) The phrase *follow Me* is *akoloutheo* (*a*/same + *koloutheo*/road or path = accompany Me on the same path). When Jesus commands the disciples (and us) to follow Him, He is inviting us to join Him on His clear path set forth by the Father. The natural desire for a man who truly repents and believes (v. 15) is to hotly pursue Jesus. And to follow Him is to recognize and surrender to His Lordship in every area of life. Jesus NEVER separated His role as Savior from His role as Lord. When a man comes to Christ as Savior, it is with the understanding that He IS Lord. When Jesus called the first disciples to follow Him he was calling them to come and die, to join Him in **dying** to themselves (ambitions, desires, lifestyles, goals, possessions, etc) so they could **live** for Him and with Him for eternity (Mark 8:34-37). In effect, Jesus is saying, "*Either I am Lord of all in your life or I am not really Lord at all in your life.*"

Briefly describe the first time you really understood what it meant to follow Christ.

When John MacArthur, lead pastor of 10,000 member Grace Community Church in Panorama City, CA, looks for a man who is hungry for discipleship, he uses the biblical concept of *'follow Me'* and searches for a man who is on the right PATH with God. What does your PATH look like right now?

P= passionate

A= available

T= teachable

H= hungry for God and His truth

Discuss these character qualities with your SALT partner today!

(Mark 1:17) *"I will make you become fishers of men"* begs the question, have you caught any "fish" lately? Jesus never separated evangelism from discipleship. A growing disciple will look for every opportunity (Col 4:2-6) to share the hope within him (1 Pt 3:15). Following Christ in discipleship will result in opportunities to share the Gospel with a compassionate boldness and love for others. Who has God sovereignly put in your life with whom you will share your testimony? When? Where?

(Mark 1:18-20) How did Simon, Andrew, James and John respond to Jesus' invitation and command to follow Him? What has been your response as of late when you sense Jesus challenging you to surrender an area of your life to His authority?

“Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.” Remember the word “*immediately*” means getting down to business. Where do you sense Jesus is asking you to stop dinkin’ around and get down to business?

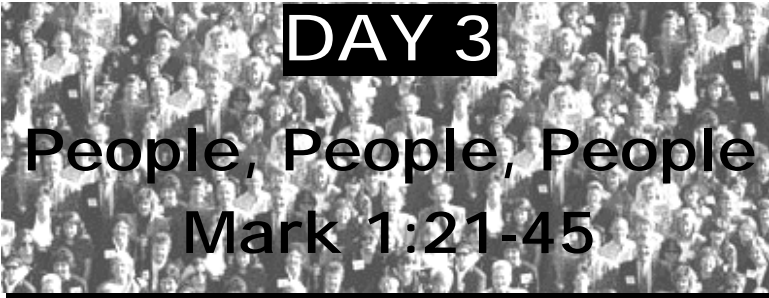
(Mark 1:14, 18, 20) What did it cost John the Baptist and the four fishermen to follow Jesus?

PRAYER OF SURRENDER & CELEBRATION

Father, in response to Christ’s command, “*Follow Me,*” I pray...

PASSING IT ON

What truth will you pass on? To whom will you pass it? When?



www.cc.gatech.edu

Date _____

As Jesus begins His public ministry, He is inundated with people. All kinds of people. Rich, poor, healthy, hopeless, prideful, prejudiced, Jews, gentiles, religious, demon possessed. He moved toward them, ministered to them, and modeled authentic manhood which is *“not to be served, but to serve and give”* our lives away to others (Mark 10:45) in response to the Father’s amazing grace which He has *“lavished upon us”* (Eph 1:3-8). As you study this passage, put yourself in the loincloth of the people whom Jesus touched. Feel their circumstances, fears, hurts, pains, headaches, heartaches, helplessness, hopelessness and lostness. Then walk a few miles in the sandals of the disciples who just 24 hours earlier were content, comfortable and in control of their little fishing world. Imagine the rotting smell of the leper’s flesh, the animal-like screams of the demon possessed man, and the press of humanity as they mobbed the Savior.

PERSONAL DISCOVERY

Read and reflect on Mark 1:21-45 writing down any observations, insights, principles or challenges.

DIGGING DEEPER

(Mark 1:21-45) What kinds of people did Jesus love and serve? Did He have a pick and choose love, or did He have compassion for whomever got in His way? Explain.

To what kind of people do you gravitate? Has God put any seemingly unlovable person in your life whom He has called you to reach out to and love? Who? What has been your response?

(Mark 1:40-41) We may not be able to heal someone, but we can in some way touch them deeply in the name of Christ so that He may heal them. Note the comment of the leper and Jesus' heartfelt response. Are you open to being "moved with compassion"?

(Mark 1:14, 36-38, 45) Even in the midst of the ever growing crush of people, Jesus never lost sight of the big picture. His marching orders from the Father were clear, and He was obedient to them. What big picture has God clearly called you to give your life to in order to advance His Kingdom for His glory? What is distracting you from giving yourself wholeheartedly to this at present?

(Mark 1:21-22, 27, 35) Jesus taught with such authority that the people were “amazed” (*ek/out + plessa/flatten = to make flat*), literally hammered flat by the truth which He taught. What was the real source of His authority, according to verse 35?

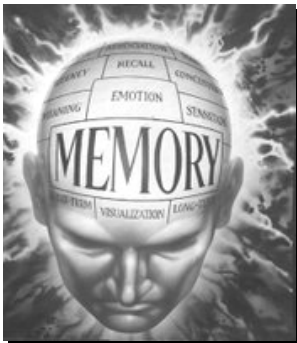
As a man, you have been strategically placed by God as the servant leader of your home and/or a key leader in the workplace or at your church. A leader is not one who always has the upfront role. Rather, A true and effective leader is one who leverages his influence for the glory of God. In your life, have you seen the connection between your unhurried times alone with the Father in prayer and your ability to lead? Explain.

PRAYER OF SURRENDER & CELEBRATION

Father, in response to Christ's command, "*Follow Me,*" I pray...

PASSING IT ON

What truth will you pass on? To whom will you pass it? When?



Scripture Memory

"In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went away to a secluded place and was praying there." Mark 1:35