

Spiritual Growth Assessment Pack



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This Assessment Pack from BuildingChurchLeaders.com is a collection of tools to use with your leadership team. Each tool has been designed to help you and your team measure some dimension of ministry.

Here's how to use your Building Church Leaders assessments with your board, committees, or staff:

- 1) Print and photocopy the assessment tool you'd like to use (you have permission to photocopy for church or educational use)
- 2) Hand it to your team to complete
- 3) Lead a discussion based on the team's answers.

For more assessment packs, complete training themes, or other training tools for church leadership, see our website at www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com.



Guidelines for Effective Prayer

9 principles for including God in church decisions.

Ephesians 4:16; Philippians 4:6–7

For each guideline, mark how you think we're doing as a board or committee:

How are we doing?

1. Prayer must be dynamic and flowing. That simply means the leader must be sensitive to the uniqueness of each meeting. Some nights we pray for forty-five minutes; other nights only two.

Need Work Pretty Good Great

2. God is looking only for simple, sincere prayers. God desires conversation that honestly expresses the hearts of his people.

3. It is corporate prayer. Little happens if everyone prays silently. We encourage people to jump in with conversational prayers.

4. Focus on attitudes and perspectives. The point of prayer is to make us more sensitive to God's will. We're not looking for a "word from the Lord" on whether to buy a specific brand of copier. We'll decide that later out of the change he works in us through prayer.

5. Everyone must want God's will. This is too often assumed, but it's easy in the routine of meetings to think that my first inclination is also God's desire.

6. No one person has a monopoly on God's wisdom. As we pray, we look for God to lead us "by every supporting ligament" (Eph. 4:16). Wisdom in the body of Christ is always manifested corporately. If people aren't responsive to the insights of others, they can't be part of a team.

7. Everyone agrees not to use prayer to manipulate others. Nothing kills prayer faster than prayers aimed at the people in the room rather than at God. As the angel reminded Joshua, God is not on anyone's side but rather wants to know if we are on his.

8. We trust each other. Whenever our leadership teams had trouble praying together, mistrust was at the heart of it. Prayer flourishes only in an atmosphere of trust.

9. Don't fear mistakes. Learning to pray has its ups and downs, but enduring them together is what being the body of Christ is all about. When struggling, we can simply say, "Lord, teach us to pray."

—WAYNE JACOBSEN

Discuss

1. How did you evaluate how we're doing?
2. What strategic decision that we're currently facing needs focused prayer?
3. Other than at the beginning or close of meetings, how can we include prayer as a core feature of our discussions?



Winsome Faith

5 qualities that reflect God's image.

Galatians 5:1; 22–26

When the Spirit of Christ enters us, his character begins to flow in us, and we bear fruit. Here are 5 qualities of Christ-like followers that reflect the image of God. Put a star beside the one you feel is most present in your life.

1. Joy. Christian writer and professor Eugene Peterson observed in *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*: “There are Christians who never crack a smile and who can’t abide a joke. But I don’t meet very many of them. The stereotype is a big lie created, presumably, by the Devil. One of the delightful discoveries along the way of Christian discipleship is how much enjoyment there is, how much laughter you hear, how much sheer fun you find.”

2. Gratitude. God’s Word makes clear that we aren’t just to be thankful but also to say we’re thankful, to sing it, to demonstrate it. There are times to weep. But authentic Christians model a thankful spirit in the day-in, day-out routine of life. Every sunrise, every meal (even in coffee shops), every car ride, every encounter with another human being is an occasion for gratitude.

3. Enthusiasm. I greatly admired this trait in my father. Almost every morning, he’d clench his fist and say, “Boy, am I enthused!” It may not be a bona fide fruit of the Spirit, but I think enthusiasm is an important graft into the orchard. For vital Christians, enthusiastic applies to their faith.

4. Wonder. British writer G. K. Chesterton said, “The world will never starve for want of wonders, but only a want of wonder.” The alive Christians I love take little for granted. They’ve erased from life’s curriculum the lesson of boredom over God’s masterpiece. God, to them, inspires wonder.

5. Kindness. In “Edification/Demolition,” an essay in *Ragman*, Walter Wangerin recalls his encounter with two people who helped him at a time of need and reminds us how far just one drop of kindness goes: “Every time you meet another human being you have the opportunity. It’s a chance at holiness. For you will do one of two things, then. Either you will build him up, or you will tear him down.”

—SONNY SALSBUARY

Discuss

1. Name some individuals in our church who manifest the above characteristics.
2. What specific things demonstrate to visitors that our church reflects the image of God?
3. To you, which of the above qualities is most important? Which is the most difficult to display?



Am I Too Tired?

How to determine whether your fatigue is normal or serious.

1 Kings 19:1–9; Matthew 11:28–30

How serious is your fatigue? Enter a score before each question according to the following scale:

- 0—I seldom feel this way.
- 1—I sometimes (once every month or so) feel this way.
- 2—I often (more than once a month) feel this way.
- 3—I almost always feel this way.

Add up your total score and use the guidelines at the end to interpret the results.

Fatigue Symptom Checklist

- ___ 1. Do you feel moody and have difficulty getting up in the morning?
- ___ 2. Do you experience slight fevers, signs of flu, sore throat, or tender lymph nodes?
- ___ 3. Is the morning your worst time of the day, with the evening being better?
- ___ 4. Do you fall asleep easily but wake early without being able to fall asleep again?
- ___ 5. Have you ever found yourself staring at a computer monitor, keyboard, or book, barely able to keep your head from dropping (“microsleeps”)?
- ___ 6. Do you feel mentally sluggish, confused, and unresponsive?
- ___ 7. Has your short-term memory declined, and do you have trouble concentrating?
- ___ 8. Has your daily activity dropped below 50 percent of what it was before?
- ___ 9. Are your emotions relatively blunted and apathetic?
- ___ 10. Does your body ache all over and feel as if it is weaker than it used to be?
- ___ 11. Whenever you exercise, do you feel debilitated for more than 12 hours afterward?
- ___ 12. Does your work stress you to the point that you want to escape from it?
- ___ 13. Do you experience headaches?
- ___ 14. Do you find yourself desperately wanting to avoid being with people?
- ___ 15. Are you more impatient, irritable, nervous, angry, or anxious than before?
- ___ **TOTAL SCORE**

Scoring

0-12: Fatigue is within normal limits.

12-22: Fatigue is temporary. You can reverse it by lowering your stress level, taking a vacation, a sabbatical, or increasing your rest and sleep time.

23-32: Fatigue is serious. A break won’t relieve it. You are suffering from chronic stress, depletion of adrenaline, immune system deficiency. You can relieve this form of fatigue only by making major lifestyle changes, including possibly finding a new work situation. You could possibly benefit from professional help.

33 or above: Fatigue is in a “disease state.” It requires urgent diagnostic evaluation from a physician or psychiatrist to exclude endogenous depression, hormonal imbalances, and physical disease.

—ARCHIBALD D. HART, PH.D., FPPR

Discuss

1. How long have you felt fatigued? What is causing it?
2. What is fatigue signaling about your life and relationships and priorities?
3. What steps are you going to take to address your fatigue?
4. What is Matthew 11:28–30 saying to you now?



Signs of Hurry Sickness

How to know if you're moving too fast.

Luke 10:38–42; Proverbs 14:29

| | <i>Often</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> | <i>Rarely</i> | <i>Never</i> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>1. Speeding up. You are haunted by the fear that you don't have enough time to do what needs to be done. You chafe whenever you have to wait. At a stoplight, if there are two lanes and each contains one car, you read the year, make, and model of each car to guess which will pull away most quickly.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>2. Multi-tasking. Psychologists call this polyphasic activity (it could be called doing-more-than-one-thing-at-a-time, but that would take too long). The car is a favorite place for this. Hurry-sick people may drive, eat, drink coffee, listen to tapes, shave or apply make-up, direct business on the car phone—all at the same time.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>3. Clutter. Take a look at your desk. One researcher noted that the average desk-worker has 36 hours worth of work on the desk, and spends three hours a week just sorting through it. The hurry-sick often carry around a time organizer the size of Montana.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>4. Sunset fatigue. We come home after work, and those who need our love most end up getting the leftovers. This is part of what author Lewis Grant calls “sunset fatigue”—all those end-of-the-day behaviors that signal hurry-sickness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ You rush around at home even when there's no reason to. ◆ You speak sharp words to your spouse and children, even when they've done nothing to deserve them. ◆ You hurry your children along. You set up mock races (“Okay kids, let's see who can take a bath fastest”), which are really about your own need to get through it. ◆ You tell your family that everything will be okay in just a week or two. ◆ You indulge in self-destructive escapes: watching too much TV, abusing alcohol, or scanning pornographic websites. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>5. Love impairment. The most serious sign of hurry sickness, though, is a diminished capacity for love. Love and hurry are fundamentally incompatible. Love always takes time, and time is the one thing hurried people don't have.</p> <p>When I get hurried, I begin to resent the very people I'm supposed to minister to. I also start thinking about people in strictly utilitarian terms: how can I get work out of them? I use them instead of love them.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

—JOHN ORTBERG

Discuss

1. What fears may lie beneath our busyness?
2. What is the “one thing” Jesus refers to in Luke 10?
3. How can we keep busyness from stifling our ministry and our ability to love others?



The Way of Contentment

What makes the difference between a Christian who is frustrated and one who is content?

Philippians 4:11–13; Proverbs 30:8; Psalm 131

Contentment doesn't mean a problem-free life. Paul was in prison when he wrote, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Phil. 4:11). Contentment is a state of mind. As Abraham Lincoln said, "Every man is just as happy as he makes up his mind to be."

Contentment is something not easily or quickly learned. The late Dr. Noel Smith told an old friend from his hospital bed, "Just about the time a man learns how to live, it's time to die." Sadly, for some people, they never learn how to live.

What makes the difference between a servant who is frustrated and one who is content? Here's what I've learned.

1. Contentment comes in exercising your spiritual gifts.

Discontentment sets in when people want to minister, but their gifts don't coincide with their duties. Many Christians are performing tasks that they don't enjoy and are not spiritually equipped to perform.

I am exercising my spiritual gifts: True of me Somewhat true of me Not true of me

2. Contentment comes in enjoying your ministry right now where you are. If you cannot enjoy your week-by-week Christian service, it's a cinch you won't enjoy the accomplished goal. If you don't have satisfaction in the journey, you won't be satisfied when you reach the destination.

I am enjoying my ministry right now: True of me Somewhat true of me Not true of me

3. Contentment comes in financial stability, not financial security.

The number-one killer of contentment is financial instability. Many people never settle into their ministry of Christ because they are married to their credit cards. Financial stability does not come with an increase of money supply. Blessed is the person who learns the art of money management. Regardless of annual income, he or she will know contentment.

I have financial stability: True of me Somewhat true of me Not true of me

4. Contentment comes in knowing the true value of things. Lack of self-control is a sign of instability, especially in the area of possessions. Perhaps it was necessary for me to move to Kenya and work with destitute tribes before I could understand the meaning of Agur's prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion" (Prov. 30:8). Happy is the one who can say with Paul, "If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content" (1 Tim. 6:8).

I don't hunger for more or better possessions: True of me Somewhat true of me Not true of me

—RICHARD LEWIS

Discuss

1. What are your gifts? How could they be better used?
2. Specifically, what wars against your ability to be content?
3. What might you need to offer God as part of your journey toward contentment?



What's Your Orphan Quotient?

Seeing yourself as God's child.

Romans 8:13–17; Galatians 3:26–4:7

Because of our fallen nature and the negative patterns we may have learned from human relationships, we often relate to God as though we were orphan children instead of who we really are: his beloved sons and daughters. This attitude has repercussions in the way we behave toward God and those around us. Recognizing the ways we fail to see our identity in Christ can be the first step toward a relationship with Jesus that is hopeful, refreshing, and intimate.

The following exercise is adapted with permission from Sonship, a discipleship course of World Harvest Mission (www.whm.org). Sonship is designed to renew the hearts of believers by applying the gospel of God's grace to their lives and ministries. Read through each description. Put a check beside any tendency you see in yourself.

Orphan

- I feel alone, lack a vital, daily intimacy with God, sense “a vacuum of self concern.”
- I live on a success/fail basis, need to look good to others, am performance-oriented.
- I labor under a sense of unlimited obligation, try hard to please, am likely to burn out.
- I yearn to be right, safe, secure. I am unwilling to fail, unable to tolerate criticism, can only handle praise.
- I feel like I must always try harder. I rely on self-effort and my “gift package” to get by in ministry.
- I feel powerless to defeat the flesh. I have no real heart victory over pet sins, yet I have lost a sense of being a big sinner.

Son/Daughter

- I have a growing assurance that “God is really my loving Heavenly Father.” (1 John 4:16)
- I am learning to live in daily self-conscious partnership with God; I am not fearful.
- Prayer is the first resort. I say, “I’m going to ask my Daddy, Father, first.”
- I am able to take risks, even fail. Because my righteousness is in Christ, I need no record to boast in, protect, or defend.
- I am trusting less in self and in the Holy Spirit more (with a self-conscious, daily reliance).
- As I rest in Christ, I am seeing more and more victory over the flesh (Romans 8:1–9). Yet I see myself as a big sinner.

Discuss

1. When you feel alone, condemned, or afraid, what false view of God are you likely to believe?
2. In what areas of your life are you most likely to behave as an orphan? In which areas do you most trust in God's goodness, and what gives you that confidence in God?
3. How might seeing God as a good father change how you interact with him?

FROM KNOWING GOD TRAINING THEME



The 4 Religious Types

How personality influences our perception of God.

Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12

Like a car's steering wheel, the will influences a person's choices to move life in a new direction. Most people find a spiritual experience devoid of meaning if it does not sufficiently touch their will so that it moves them in a new direction.

Four kinds of people define as meaningful various types of spiritual experiences. They report that a spiritual experience is most likely to touch their will if it primarily involves one of the following: thinking, feeling, meditation, action.

When people say they did not find a church or a particular religious experience within a congregation meaningful, they mean that the type of spiritual food the church provided lacked the power to touch their wills and influence their lives. Closer examination often reveals that the spiritual food served was for other types of people. It met someone else's needs, but not theirs.

Which of the following types are most like you?

Which does our church's worship most likely appeal to?

The Thinking Type: These individuals find spiritual guidance in the words of Scripture, sermons, and position papers on ethical issues. They are likely, for example, to examine the words of hymns to see if we are singing what we believe.

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| | <i>Most Like Me</i> | <i>Our Worship Appeals To</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The Feeling Type: These individuals find spiritual enrichment in music, heartfelt testimonials by persons whose lives God has touched, and engagement in personal evangelism. For example, they are likely to judge hymns by how the style and tempo make them feel rather than by word context and definition.

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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The Meditation Type: These individuals find spiritual enrichment in contemplation and introspection. Sometimes called mystics, their prayer is largely an experience of hearing God speak to them rather than vice-versa.

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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The Action Type: These individuals find spiritual enrichment in service and idealistic crusading designed to transform society. For them, action is authentic theology and prayer. People of this type find little spiritual nurture in organized religions, which they may accuse of "talking the talk but not walking the walk."

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|

—Adapted from *Leadership Is the Key*, by Herb Miller © 1997 by Abingdon Press. Used by permission.

Discuss

1. What type best describes you? Explain.
2. Share an event that influenced the course of your life. What role did your personality play in that event?
3. What are the main components of worship in our church, and which type of person is each component likely to reach?
4. Which groups of people do you think are less fed by what our church provides? How can we improve on our ability to appeal to these religious types?



4 Threats to Quiet Time

Overcoming invasions of intimacy with God.

1 Kings 18:42; John 15:4

We all have problems in our quiet times. Of all the problems of meeting with God, there are four big ones that loom like giants:

Giant 1: Loss of Concentration

“How do I increase concentration and keep my mind from wandering?” Before you go any further, answer this question on a separate sheet of paper. What are four causes of concentration loss for you?

Prayer is our most effective giant killer for all kinds of concentration breakers. After that, preparation, planning, and the pad and pencil can serve as weapons to spring us from the trap of confusion and small accomplishments brought on by the confinements of concentration loss.

Giant 2: Loss of Feeling

Do these statements sound familiar to you?

- ◆ “Sometimes I just don’t sense God’s presence and I don’t know why.”
- ◆ “How do I worship when I really don’t want to?”

We tend to live by our feelings. Yet as Christians, our responsibility, according to the Bible, is to be in control of our feelings. God doesn’t want us to dismiss our feelings. We must learn, however, to acknowledge them and then express them in a way that honors God.

I discovered this for myself when I wanted to have more personal worship in my devotional time. I began to take portions of the Psalms as if they were my own words. At first, this felt very awkward and unnatural. But the more I acted on my desire to worship God, the more I began to enjoy it.

Giant 3: Lack of Discipline

The thorniest problem in discipline is keeping priorities. When we properly view faith as our responsibility but still struggle with discipline, we may have a problem with priorities. The Devil is no fool. He wants to keep us bottled up. Encouraging fuzzy or faulty priorities is his favorite trick.

When you think of priorities, ask these questions:

- ◆ “What do I want in life—do I really want to know God?”
- ◆ “How can I get there—what steps do I have to take?”
- ◆ “How much am I willing to pay?” It’s going to cost something.

Giant 4: Lack of Practice

Once we understand time with God as an expression of a love friendship, we understand how crucial practice is. We learn to do God’s Word and continue its work over the long haul. That is what makes permanent changes in our lives and the lives of others.

—Taken from *The Priority of Knowing God* by Peter V. Deison. Copyright © 1990, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI. Used with permission.

Discuss

1. What is the biggest giant preventing your time alone with God?
2. What one goal can you make (and measure) to improve your fellowship with God? What steps can you take to help achieve your goal?
3. What might God want to do for and in you through prayer and reading Scripture?