

Straight Street for Church Planters

Unit 4 – Core Values

Scripture Helps:

Genesis 1:31; 3:4
Revelation 3

Reflection and Thoughts

“All values are either sacred or secular.”

Desired outcome from this unit: For participants to identify the values behind the functions of the early church and to identify their own personal core values.

Desired outcome from the Basic Training unit on Core Values: For individual team members to understand the importance of core values, to begin a list of personal core values, and to dialogue about what will become the new church’s core values.

I. What is God saying to me in His Word?

Behavioral modeling is one of the most effective means for communicating a concept to people. Luke records that the early church “devoted themselves to” their values—an obvious reference to how they lived and went about their ministry (Aubrey Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership*).

In Unit 4 of *Basic Training* you will discover what values **are**, what values **do**, and how values are **determined**. For the purpose of this study, you will discover what the Bible has to say about values by examining Scriptures related to Paul and the early church. You will also be given an opportunity to begin to identify your own core values, those that you had before coming to know Christ, and those that you have developed since knowing Christ. You will also be given opportunity to identify the core values of the early church. Having this information will help you answer the question in Unit 4 of *Basic Training*, “*What should the church really be doing?*”

Values are biblical—All values are either sacred or secular. However, not everything that takes place in the church is good and sacred; nor is everything that takes place outside of the church bad and secular. When God created the world, no sacred or secular dichotomy existed—all of God’s creation was sacred. “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day” (Gen. 1:31, NASB). The secular existence came into being in Genesis chapter 3 when Satan spoke the lie. “The serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely will not die!’” (Gen. 3:4, NASB).

Values are foundational to everything we do whether or not we know what they are. Personal values underlie our word and actions all the time. *Values are more about deeds than words*. Core values should have the capacity of being expressed in terms of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. “Values help us determine what to do

Scripture Helps:

and what not to do. They are deep-seated, pervasive standards that influence every aspect of our lives: our moral judgments, our responses to others, and our commitments to personal and organizational goals. Values set the parameters for the hundreds of decisions that we make every day” (*Leadership Challenge*, p. 212).

A look at Saul’s values and behaviors before his encounter with Christ.

Read the account of Saul on the road to Damascus in Acts 9:2. Identify the behaviors that he was modeling before his encounter with Jesus Christ.

Reflection and Thoughts

“For, I the Lord, do not change”
(*Mal. 3:6, NASB*).

**The test of a value system
for the Christian**
“Is it biblical?”

Saul was operating out of the context of protecting and defending his religious heritage. Were his behaviors biblical? Why or why not?

List some behaviors that you modeled before your encounter with Christ. Were they biblical? Why or why not?

Biblical (sacred) values are sourced in God.

Read the following Scriptures and you will discover that:

1. God is true (Romans 3:4).
2. Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6).

3. God will always remain true (James 1:17; Malachi 3:6).

What is the implication of these Scriptures for your life?

A look at Saul's values and behaviors after his encounter with Christ.

Read the account of Saul's conversion in Acts 9:3-9, 18-22. Identify the behaviors that he modeled soon after his encounter with Jesus Christ.

List some behaviors that you modeled soon after your encounter with Christ. Were they biblical? Why or why not?

List some behaviors that you are currently modeling and answer these questions. Are they biblical? Why or why not? What are the values behind those behaviors? What values drive these behaviors? Are the behaviors that you are currently modeling consistent with the behaviors that you modeled soon after your conversion or are they a mixture of behaviors that represent both your life before your conversion and your life after your conversion?

A look at the functions of the early church.

Read the following Scriptures and note the underlined word that demonstrates a function of the Jerusalem church. An example is given. *Note:* There may be more than one function for each Scripture.

Acts 2:42, 43—They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ *teaching* and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

Acts 2:42—They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to *fellowship*, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:42—They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to *prayer*.

Acts 2:44, 46—And all those who had believed were *together* and had *all things in common*; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with *one mind* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart

Acts 2:47—*Praising God* and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:47—Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were *being saved*.

The functions of the Jerusalem Church might look something like this.

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|-----------------------|
| 1. Teaching |
| 2. Fellowship |
| 3. Prayer |
| 4. Biblical Community |
| 5. Worship |
| 6. Evangelism |

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------|
| 1. Education | } | Formal |
| 2. Adoration | | Fellowship |
| 3. Service | } | In |
| | | Out |
| 4. Proclamation | } | Preaching |
| | | Evangelism |
| | | Missions |

Look at each of the functions of the early church and discover why they did them. Ask the question why did they do what they did?

The reason WHY you do something helps to identify the value behind the behavior or activity.

Look for the reason why you do something. Why identifies the value.

Why did the early church **teach**?

Why was this important to the early church?

Why did the early church **fellowship**?

Why was this important to the early church?

Why did the early church **pray**?

Why was this important to the early church?

Why did the early church practice **biblical community**?

Why was this important to the early church?

Why did the early church **worship**?

Why was this important to the early church?

Why did the early church **evangelize**?

Why was this important to the early church?

Note: These functions are not doctrinal statements. However, each of them could be supported with Scripture. Remember the test of a value system for a Christian: *“Is it biblical?”*

You will now have an opportunity to discover and list your own values. You might be wondering, “How does one discover his or her core values?” You start by answering this one question, “What values do you hold, not what values should you hold?” You must discover your own values and not borrow them from someone else or take them from a list or recently read book. However, there is value in reviewing a list of values and noting the ones that stand out and grab you. You will then need to determine if these are clear, felt values. Some of these will be; others will not.

A look at the specific behaviors of Saul after his conversion.

Reread the account of Saul's conversion in Acts 9:1-31. Years later Paul reflected on that conversion experience and the values he held in the BC (before his encounter with Christ) of life and those he came to hold in the AD (after his encounter with Christ on road to Damascus) of his life. Read Phil. 3:4-11. What does he tell were some of the BC values and what behaviors did they produce in Acts 9:1-2? What does he tell you became of some of the AD values and what behaviors did they produce in Acts 9:17-31?

Use this chart to record your findings.

| BC Behavior | BC Value |
|-------------|----------|
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| AD Behavior | AD Value |
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II. What is God saying to me through others?

Identify two or three leaders in your life; one could be your mentor. Can you identify their core values and how they behaviorally demonstrate those core values toward you? Use the chart below.

| Person's Name | Core Value | Behavior |
|---------------|------------|----------|
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Has God recently used someone in your life to question or challenge you in the area of one or more of your core values? If so, what was your response?

What is God saying to you through others concerning your core values and how you demonstrate them behaviorally?

III. What is it that I am supposed to be doing?

Ask several people to share with you what they think you stand for and list below their responses.

Determine what the bottom line is for you. What are you most passionate about? What are you willing to fight over? What battle scars do you have? What are you not willing to give up?

List below what your ministry represents.
