

The Teacher and Core Values

“A good reputation is more valuable than costly perfume” (Ecclesiastes 7:1, *NLT*).

“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold”
(Proverbs 22:1, *NIV*).

“Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold” (Proverbs 8:10, *NLT*).

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Define core values.
2. Discover core values (by outlining the process).
3. Divide sub-values into major categories of core values.
4. Describe ways of distributing (spreading and reinforcing) core values.
5. Develop a biblical/spiritual culture through implementing values.
6. Defend the selection of core values. (What questions can be asked to test core values?)
7. Discuss the validity of universal core values for any spiritual organization.

Introduction

You and your team have been dropped into a jungle of opportunities. You have limited time to make an impact and leave a legacy. Your final destination is heaven. You are determined to please your Maker. You are destined to make a difference. But, you must first discern what is important, your mode of operation, and your route on the expedition. What tools are given? Your charter (mission) is to evangelize the world. You are tasked with transforming and training next generation leaders. A set of binoculars will establish vision. Your map is the Word of God. Last but not least, carefully accept and protect a compass demarcating your core values. Our prayer is that you will finish the voyage and hear, “Well done!” Welcome to the journey called Ministry!

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This lesson focuses on core values. “Core” speaks of something essential, fundamental or central. “Value” speaks of what is significant, useful, or important. What is valuable to one person may not be so to another. An elderly missionary lady I worked with once bought me a tiny crystal globe. It is hidden away. Her message was as valuable as the gift. She said, “I bought you this globe because your vision is as big as the world.” That little globe is priceless and precious. However, someone ransacking my room probably would toss it aside, looking for greater treasures. I also have a little box of papers colored, created, or crafted by my children and loved ones. Perhaps, to others, these have minimal worth. Yet, there *are* things in life and ministry that we *all* could—and should—value. We can’t succeed without them. They are core values; existing at the heart of all we do, think, and speak. If removed, the context of everything that surrounds them is destroyed. There can be no solid system or structure without a set of core values.

Let’s pause for a minute for some tech-talk. A compass is a direction finder used for navigational purposes. It is a proven life saver and instrument of survival. A compass is always used in connection with a map. It contains a magnetic needle that points to the true north. There are four cardinal points on the compass. In our study we propose four core values. They are like the points on the compass. Core values help determine what is important in our lives. Ray Disney, the nephew of Walt Disney, once said, “It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.”

Defining Core Values

Core Values:

1. Create the organization and church culture/community.
2. Guide organizational and personal behavior.
3. Assist in making decisions.
4. Anchor all that is central to life, mission, and vision.
5. Are rooted in principles that do not change based on circumstances, culture or time.
6. Outline the never-changing definition of what we stand for.
7. Declare what we are willing to live and die for.
8. Are pivotal to the organization’s success or failure.
9. Provide a lens through which we accomplish our goals.
10. Advise us what we need to be and do every day, in every action.
11. Are clear. You don’t have to wait around for someone else in order to know what to do.
12. Identify the common core of understanding.

Describing Core Values

Core values describe:

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1. What matters most and how we go about our lives and responsibilities.
2. A common language and culture for all to understand.
3. The soul of the leader and the organization.
4. The organization’s DNA; its life’s blood.
5. The heart or foundation by which we conduct ourselves.
6. The values and ideals we embrace.
7. Our reason for existence.

Discovering Core Values

Andrew Seidel in *Charting a New Course* revealed, “We all have values that we live by, whether we are conscious of them or not. Our values energize the motives that drive our actions. The important thing is that we consciously choose the values we live by.”

Before proceeding further, complete the “Discovering Core Values” worksheet. Core values are most effective when discovered rather than merely forced upon us. People are more likely to commit to a list of values when they helped discover them.

Welcome back from discovery time. Now, let’s see how close you came to our thinking. We propose that every spiritual organization—church and theological school—shares at least these four values:

- ❖ We value truth.
- ❖ We value spiritual growth.
- ❖ We value evangelism.
- ❖ We value relationships.

The following chart gives a deeper overview of the personal and organizational values/habits we stand for.

We value <i>truth</i> .	This includes: (a) doctrinal correctness; (b) telling the truth; (c) willingness to take a stand for what is right; (d) possessing integrity; (e) being sincere; (f) having a blameless character; (g) practicing financial accountability; and (h) refusing to be captivated by compromise and pressured into tolerance.
We value <i>spiritual growth</i> .	This consists of: (a) setting a standard of excellence; (b) being involved in lifelong learning and continuous improvement; (c) possessing a servant’s heart; (d) providing stewardship in every aspect of life; (e) being faithful, reliable, and dependable; (f) being committed; (g) staying obedient to God’s Word, commandments, and principles; (h) being responsible; (i)

	utilizing spiritual wisdom; (j) being willing to sacrifice for the sake of others and God’s kingdom; (k) developing Christian leadership; (l) mentoring; (m) discipling; and, last but certainly not least; (n) being an avid reader and student of God’s Word.
We value <i>evangelism</i> .	This entails: (a) having a God-directed vision, purpose, and mission; (b) being involved in evangelism—the priority of the church; (c) participating in world missions; (d) focusing on church growth; (e) promoting revival; (f) preparing saints for ministry; and (g) equipping the next generation of leaders.
We value <i>relationships</i> .	This includes relationships with: (a) God; (b) spouse; (c) family; (d) others; and (e) society. It involves: (a) unity; (b) love; (c) fellowship/sense of community; (d) caring for others; (e) humility; (f) ability to work with a team; (g) proper communications; (h) respect; (i) openness; (j) compassion; (k) moral purity; and (l) embodying proper ethics.

Developing Core Values

Values are planned, proclaimed and practiced. They don’t just appear. They must be planned. This requires work. You’ve experienced some of that with the “Discovering Core Values” worksheet. Doug Fields in *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* says planned values reveal what is important to our ministry. They are our keys to success because they influence all we do. Proclaimed values are those we say we hold. Practiced values are the ones we actually live by. The difference between the two is sometimes referred to as hypocrisy.

Your personal and organizational values need not be limited to four. One can have many values, but only a few values can legitimately be considered as core. We have selected what we feel are evident in every church, theological institution, and Christian ministry. These are made up of any number of sub-points capable of standing on their own as values. Additionally, using four core values will enable everyone to be able to remember them. Some organizations use as few as two. Other ministries have ten or twenty. Some distinguish between: (a) biblical; (b) cultural; (c) personal; and (d) family core values. We want to make our study as easy, as practical, and as applicable as possible.

Core values, in order to be relevant and have cross-cultural acceptance, should be deeply connected with principles. Principles are consistent. They do not change. They are applicable in any culture, anywhere in the world, and at any time. Core values are lived out through the application of principles and in obedience to God’s Word. Core values and principles operate hand-in-hand. Our values need to be rooted in principles so they do not change based on the situation.

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Lately, I have been captivated by the potential of core values in our churches and Bible schools. This subject, in the past, has been one that has confused me. It is usually tackled from a secular point of view. Organizational values tend to change based on the type of product or service rendered. The church is universal so has a set of core values that do not change based on location. They are worldwide, timeless, and we simply cannot survive without them. They serve as the compass for all we do. If handled properly and consistently they can not only impact, but transform, the cultures we work in. There is no need for us to testify, “We will never be able to change the culture!” Take a look at history. Such statements do not hold true with someone whose distant ancestor was a cannibal, slave trader, or headhunter.

Admittedly, I do not see all of these values often displayed in my cultural context. There is a drought of commitment to integrity, honesty, accountability, and faithfulness. The church operates in maintenance mode instead of evangelistic enthusiasm. It is not time to declare defeat but to take action. Graffiti on the Berlin Wall read, “When you change points of view you can change the world.” We can change the world for Jesus Christ. One helpful way is to institute core values in our organization. Great leaders are agents of positive, progressive change. We can create a biblical and spiritual culture.

H. B. London, Jr. and Neil Wiseman in *The Shepherd's Covenant for Pastors* said, “One social scientist recently expressed...the quality of a whole culture can be changed if just two percent of the population has a new vision of what needs to be done and starts doing it.” What better place to start the revolutionary process than with Bible school teachers; those that mold the hearts and minds of the next generation of Apostolic/Pentecostal preachers.

Our values not only define (organizational) culture but create it. Culture in its simplest terms is the way we do things around here. It includes values shared by old members, and taught to new ones. Plato said that a society cultivates whatever is honored there. Make no mistake about what we honor. We honor truth. We honor spiritual growth. We honor evangelism. We honor relationships. We pass along values to the new, and reaffirm them to the old. A prerequisite for exemplifying and embodying core values is that people in our organization need to understand them.

Stephen Covey in *Principle Centered Leadership* stated, “The people who are transforming education today are doing it by building consensus around a common set of principles, values, and priorities.” Our aim exceeds transforming education. We transform lives. Our curriculum with the Global Association of Theological Studies is value-driven. It is organized around core values. It is also an objective-based, criterion-referenced, transformation-oriented delivery system.

Distributing Core Values

Richard L. Daft in *Leadership Theory and Practice* stated that culture is made up of assumed values, understandings, and way of thinking shared by members of the organization and taught to new members as correct. We pass on values to new members and reaffirm and reconfirm them to the old

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ones. It is important to build an organization that preserves core ideology in tangible ways. We can shape our Bible school culture through core values; by utilizing ceremonies, stories, symbols, songs, quotations, and examples.

John W. Gardner in *On Leadership* said, “Every healthy society celebrates its values. They are expressed in art, in song, in ritual. They are stated explicitly in historical documents, in ceremonial speeches, in textbooks. They are reflected in stories told around the campfire, in legends kept alive by old folks, in the fables told to children.”

Max DePree in *Leadership is an Art* tells of a friend, Dr. Carl Frost, who had an interesting experience in Nigeria during the sixties. Electricity had newly been introduced to the village where Dr. Frost and his family were living. Each family received one light bulb in its home. This was progress. Problems came at night. Families would sit in their little houses and stare at the lonely light bulb. Light-bulb watching replaced gathering around the fire, where storytellers would pass along history. The people “were losing its history in the light of a few electric bulbs.” DePree concludes that every family, college, and institution needs storytellers. “The penalty for refusing to listen is to lose one’s history, one’s historical context, one’s binding values. Like the Nigerian tribe, without the continuity brought by custom, any group of people will begin to forget who they are.” It has been said, “We teach what we know. We reproduce what we are.” I would like to rephrase that. “We teach what we know. We reproduce what we value.”

Leaders, Bible school administrators and teachers should:

1. Confirm shared values.
2. Retain, refine and redefine core values.
3. Stress them.
4. Reject values not appropriate to the organization.
5. Celebrate value-victories.
6. Embody the values; walk the talk. We lead others based on the values we embrace as leaders.
7. Reflect on and review values regularly.
8. Align actions with values.
9. Evaluate students based on core values.
10. Teach values.
11. Become men and women of value—valuable.
12. Define acceptable and unacceptable behavior based on core values.

The *Little Blue Book* of the USAF encourages the “Schoolhouse Weave.” This means (in our context) that core values need to be a major, recurring topic in education, training, and woven into existing Bible school courses. This can be done by: (a) creating a short lesson defining core values; (b) building opportunities within courses to discuss core values in the context of the subject-matter one is teaching; (c) weaving core value discussions into lesson plans and interaction with students; (d) taking advantage

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of unexpected opportunities that arise during instruction; (e) incorporating core values into all education and training; (f) designing and teaching a core values series within the curriculum; and (g) as you teach a lesson indicate which core value is highlighted.

Defending Core Values

Each (core) value should be put to the test. Ask the following questions:

1. Is it biblical?
2. Does it engender passion? Am I willing to fight for it?
3. Is it shared?
4. Is it constant?
5. Will it pass the test of time?
6. Is it clearly expressed?
7. Is it harmonious with other values?
8. Can it be implemented? (Above points adapted from a list by Aubrey Malphurs.)

Discussing Core Values

- A. Can you think of ways to remember core values?
- B. Provide examples from song, proverbs, history, speeches, or the Bible that reveal cultural, biblical, and family values in your context.
- C. List several courses in the Bible school curriculum and suggest which core value is quickly revealed?
- D. Go over the list of lessons recently taught in faculty education seminars and assign core values to each.
- E. Reflect over the past month of your preaching, teaching, and writing. What were your messages? What core values are attached to each?
- F. Mention a lesson taught or message preached that touched your life in a special way. Which core value would be associated with it?
- G. What can be done to ensure that teachers and other leaders have a clear understanding of core values?
- H. What can be done to ensure that students have a clear understanding of core values?

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- I. What can be done to ensure that core values are clearly understood in our curriculum?
- J. What can be done to measure, identify or highlight students (or team members) behaving or acting out the core values?
- K. What can be done to secure an understanding of core values taking a top-down approach within the church organization? This would be from national leadership, moving to regional or district leadership, to the local pastors, local church lay leaders, all the way down to membership in the local church.
- L. How can we prevent corrosion of core values?

Conclusion

Jane Fleming in her book *Staying Found: The Complete Map and Compass Handbook* provides different methods of route-finding. She said, “When searchers eventually locate lost hikers, alive or dead, they sometimes have with them compasses they never learned to use.” It is imperative that each learn how to use our *core value’s compass*. Otherwise we risk wandering lost; unmindful of what should guide us in life and ministry. We lose focus of what is truly important and fail to have a guiding compass pointing us in the right direction when making key decisions.

Lesson in Review

1. Using your own words, define core values. _____

2. Why is a compass a good metaphor in studying core values? _____

3. Why is it important to select only a few core values? _____

4. What are four types of core values mentioned in this lesson? _____

5. List several ways one can share core values within the organization. _____

6. What are the four core values proposed to be applicable and/or shared by every spiritual organization? _____

7. According to Stephen Covey, how is education being transformed today? _____

8. What process can one follow when determining/discovering core values? _____

9. What percentage of the population does it supposedly take to change a whole culture? _____

10. Once core values are determined, what are some things leaders and/or Bible school administrators can do to implement them? _____

11. What is meant by the "Schoolhouse Weave"? _____
