

Sierra Leadership Network Curriculum: Month 2, Year 1

Participation in the Sierra Leadership Network (SLN) is a process of adult learning. It is the responsibility of the participant to do their assignments and seek out the necessary accountability. It is the responsibility of the participant to schedule time with their mentor, not the other way around. Here is a checklist of this month's exercises and space for comments. All useful generated materials should be placed in your Sierra Leadership Network binder. The mentor will look over the exercises and be given opportunity to add their own comments. Be sure you take your binder to the quarterly meetings at Granite Springs Church to also be available to the SLN directors.

Month 2, Year 1

Date Completed

____/____/____ Former Prophets Reading Exercise:
Mentor Comments:

____/____/____ Former Prophets Biblical Interpretation Exercise:
Mentor Comments

____/____/____ Self-Leadership Exercise
Mentor Comments

Participant Signature

Mentor Signature

Biblical Interpretation: Understanding the Former Prophets

Reading instructions:

- Read as much of the book as possible in each sitting. You will gain greater understanding of the book by reading larger sections rather than smaller ones.
 - Find a different Bible translation from what you normally use to do these readings. Select a translation rather than a paraphrase (consult your mentor if you want some guidance about the difference.) If you personally use the NIV, try reading in an RSV. You can likely find an old copy for nothing somewhere.
 - Note word repetitions, thematic structures, etc. as you read. If something seems “out of place”, spend a few moments reflecting on what might be going on. Many people find it helpful to keep a journal while they read to jot down notes and comments for later reflection.
 - Answer as many of the following questions without the aid of study bibles or commentaries. Once you are satisfied that you have thought through the answer, check some of your findings with a study bible or commentary. Review these answers with your mentor and discuss them.
1. In one sentence, state the theme of the book (or at least the part you read). State two or three other themes that compete in your mind for the main theme and defend your first choice.
 2. Write a thematic outline of the book on one side of a sheet of paper. Keep your outline to one side of a sheet. Each point should express the theme of the passage delineated, not just a description of what happens.
 3. What is the genre of this book? If the book uses multiple genres, delineate what is where.
 4. How does this book fit into God’s plan of redemption? What does the kingdom of God look like in this book? Do you see Jesus in this book? How and where?
 5. Describe two or three new insights you gained after reading/studying this book that you could use to create a sermon or a Bible study.

Read the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. I realize this is a lot of reading. You will find some sections (like in the second half of Joshua) that you can skim. The important thing is to get a sense of the book and a feel for the redemptive flow of the history of Israel.

Former Prophets Biblical Interpretation: Interpreting a Passage

This exercise will help you learn how to faithfully interpret a particular Biblical passage for purposes of teaching and preaching. Write a report on this process and share it with your mentor.

1. Select a passage from the Former Prophets (Joshua through Esther) that you imagine would be particularly good for a sermon or Bible Study. Try to discern a literary unit (a group of chapters or verses that seem to be a complete story and can stand on its own for a sermon or study.)
2. Within this passage are there any verses that seem to articulate its central message? Write a brief explanation, defense of your choice.
3. Make a structural outline of the passage you have selected. Note the role each particular area plays in the thematic development of the entire passage. Write down a grammatical structure for the central verse (s) of the passage. Note the subject, verb, predicate, participial phrases, etc. Notice how this clarifies important thematic aspects of the passage answering questions such as “Who is the primary actor, mover in this narrative? What is he/she trying to accomplish? What does this say about the characters involved?”
4. Write down in one sentence the theme of the passage you have selected. What is its goal? What need it is addressing? “Goal” and “need” are derived from the original context of the passage. Do some background research into what these may have been?
5. Take some time to figure out how that literary unit works towards the larger theme of the book. How does this passage advance the theme of the entire story? How does this passage play into the larger history of redemption? Write down these observations and discuss them with your mentor.

Self-Leadership:

Read in Bill Hybel's book Courageous Leadership:(distributed at the November retreat) the chapter on: "The Art of Self-Leadership". (There is also a defining moments tape on this which is excellent available on the willow creek web site.)

1. Draw the circle that Bill Hybels suggests on "The Art of Self Leadership" and identify who you are leading up to, down towards, and laterally. Put this in writing and share it with your mentor.
2. Self Leadership Health Maintenance:
 - a. Do you know what feeds regularly, spiritually in order to have the stuff you need for leading ministry? Explore that in all honesty. With as much specificity as possible, describe in written detail what regular activities God uses to replenish your soul.
 - b. Do you have a person or a trusted group where you can speak honesty about the health of your moral life? Do you have a place where you can confess your private sins?
 - c. What activities can you pursue to take ownership of the temperature of your ministry passion?
3. Run through some of Bill Hybel's self examination questions. Share some of these with your mentor.
 - a. Is my character fully submitted to Christ?
 - b. Is my pride subdued?
 - c. Are my fears at bay or do I let my own worries and anxieties creep into the ministry picture?
 - d. Is my psychological baggage affecting current decisions?
 - e. Are my ears open to the whispers of the Spirit? Do I live in a way that affords God the opportunity to prompt me about something?
 - f. Is my pace sustainable?
 - g. Is my heart for God increasing or decreasing?
 - h. Are you harboring escapist fantasies? What escapist fantasies are you prone towards?
 - i. Do you have a sense and a comfort of the appropriate proportion of your calling? (Not indulging in a Messiah complex, failure to be satisfied low visibilities, humble ministry?)
 - j. How quickly do I respond to alarm bells going off in my mind about my internal health?
4. Speak with your mentor, and/or a pastor and get them to talk in candid, practical terms about what they need to stay spiritually healthy.