

Study Guide – Outline | Men in the Word | Fundamentals of the Faith | Lesson 3

Topic: Leading by Understanding Fundamentals and Spiritual Growth

Introduction

Objective:

To help men in leadership (home, work, and church) discern the spiritual maturity of others and lead them effectively through foundational doctrines—beginning with the gospel, identity in Christ, and moving toward godly living and discernment in secondary matters.

Leadership in God’s design isn’t merely about knowing truth—it’s about applying it wisely and charitably toward others. Paul’s pattern teaches that spiritual leaders must discern *where people are* before teaching *what they need next*. This lesson explores how to build others up in sound doctrine without causing them to stumble, and how to model grace and gentleness as “servants of the Lord.”

Opening Questions

1. Why is it important to discern someone’s level of spiritual maturity before teaching them?
 2. How can truth be misused when taught without patience or charity?
 3. What is the difference between *living in the Spirit* and *walking in the Spirit* (Gal. 5:25)?
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Scripture Focus

- **1 Corinthians 3:2** – “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it...”
 - **Romans 14:13–15** – “Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.”
 - **Galatians 5:25** – “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”
 - **Colossians 2:11–12** – “Buried with him in baptism... through the faith of the operation of God.”
 - **2 Timothy 2:24–25** – “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient...”
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Body Outline

I. Leadership and Fundamentals

- Leadership is inherent in manhood—home, work, and church.
 - Sound leadership depends on understanding *fundamental doctrines*:
 - The **Deity, Death, and Resurrection** of Christ.
 - **Salvation by grace through faith.**
 - Leaders must avoid presuming others know these truths—teach at the level of the hearer (milk before meat).
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II. Discernment in Teaching

- **1 Corinthians 3:1–2** shows that believers differ in spiritual capacity.
 - The mature leader exercises restraint, teaching “as they are able to bear.”
 - The danger of giving “meat” too early: it can choke rather than edify.
 - Leaders must *listen, ask questions, and feed appropriately*.
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III. Dealing with Weaker Brethren

- **Romans 14** warns against stumbling others over doubtful issues.
 - Example: The eating of meats was not the issue itself but the *impact* on conscience.
 - Do not elevate secondary issues (food, days, rituals) to the level of salvation or fellowship.
 - Principle: Truth without love destroys; love in truth edifies.
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IV. The Foundation of Spiritual Life

- **“If we live in the Spirit...” (Gal. 5:25)** – the believer’s position.
 - **“Let us also walk in the Spirit”** – the believer’s practice.
 - Understanding how we *live in the Spirit*:
 - The **operation of God** (Col. 2:11–12):
 - Spiritual circumcision (without hands).
 - Spiritual baptism (by the Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:13).
 - **Identity in Christ**: new creation, righteousness, true holiness (Eph. 4:22–24).
 - The foundation of identity leads naturally to the practice of godly works (Eph. 2:10).
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V. The Walk in the Spirit

- The walk flows from understanding who we are in Christ.
 - The old man is put off; the new man is created in righteousness and true holiness.
 - *Application*: our conduct should reflect our new identity—truth-telling, charity, patience, gentleness.
 - Leadership involves modeling this transformation, not just teaching it.
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VI. The Servant's Manner

- **2 Timothy 2:24–25** outlines the servant's posture:
 - *Not striving*, but *gentle to all*.
 - *Apt to teach*—knowing what to teach and when.
 - *Patient and meek*, guiding others to recover themselves through truth.
 - Leadership effectiveness depends as much on *spirit* as on *content*.
 - True teaching involves both **clarity** and **charity**—truth conveyed with grace.
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VII. The Outcome of Spiritual Leadership

- Leadership aims to build others up to stand and walk in truth.
 - Mature leaders:
 - Reflect the love of Christ in word and action.
 - Refuse to make non-essentials primary.
 - Model patience and long-suffering toward those still learning.
 - The mature believer's life validates the gospel message they preach—*living epistles, known and read of all men*.
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Conclusion

Summary:

Leadership in Christ's body means guiding others from milk to meat with discernment and grace. Leaders must know both **what** to teach and **how** to teach it—grounding others first in identity and the gospel, then leading them into godly conduct. Our tone, patience, and charity are as vital as the truth we teach.

Challenge / Assignment:

1. **Personal Reflection:** Identify one person you influence (home, work, or church). Discern whether they need milk or meat. How can you adjust your teaching or example accordingly?
2. **Scripture Meditation:** Read Galatians 5:16–26 and note every contrast between “flesh” and “Spirit.”
3. **Practical Exercise:** Practice one “good work” this week that reflects your new identity in Christ—do it quietly, as unto the Lord.
4. **Leadership Development:** Memorize 2 Timothy 2:24–25 and evaluate your tone and approach when teaching or correcting others.