

**Life on Life: Personal Ministry 201**  
**January-May, 2021**

- ~~1. January 3      ***Why is Personal Ministry Needed in the Church?***~~
- ~~2. January 10    ***Biblical Sufficiency and the Medical Model***~~
- ~~3. January 17    ***Six Steps to Personal Ministry***~~
4. January 24    ***Step One: Building Involvement***
5. January 31    ***Step Two: Giving Hope***
6. February 7    ***Step Three: Gather Data***
7. February 14   ***Step Four: Interpret Data Biblically***
8. February 21   ***Step Five: Teach Biblically Applied to the Problem***
9. February 28   ***Step Six: Give Applicable Biblical Homework***

## Life on Life: The Art of Personal Ministry (201)

Class Four – January 24, 2021

### Step One: Building Involvement

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)*

#### I. Warm-Up

- A. 2 Peter 1:2 memory – share it with your group partners
- B. You read a two page summary of the method we are going to teach. What do you remember of those six steps?
- C. You were asked to notice someone this week who could maybe benefit from a life-on-life relationship, to think of them for this semester like an imaginary person you are helping, to write down enough of their situation that you'd be able to remember them. I'd like you to give them an imaginary name and identity, but make sure others can't guess who you are thinking about. Do you all have someone? If you don't have someone by Tuesday, let one of the teachers know and we'll give you an imaginary someone.

#### II. Establishing Involvement

'Involvement' is *"building a relationship where you put yourself in a position to help."* (Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling, p. 330) This is where you show a willingness to be involved. It comes as you review their intake, call them, and meet with them. It comes about as you have your first meeting in person, hear them out and then make an offer to - for example - meet weekly for 10-12 weeks after which time you'll re-evaluate. It comes as you offer a specific study you may be doing together.

You could refer to "building or establishing involvement" as the **"contractual phase"** of the relationship in this sense: ***I offer what I can and am willing to do and the conditions. You indicate whether you desire my help with those conditions.***

This is where you offer to build a relationship that inclines them to trust you interpersonally and biblically. *Interpersonal trust* comes from the way you listen to, value and connect with them. (The less you care or understand, the less they trust.) *Biblical trust* comes from your confidence in the scriptures, your personal peace when you don't know an answer, your ability to give them homework that applies to their situation and your ability to discuss the biblical truth in a way that applies to their situation. (1 Thess. 2:7-12)

- A. Building involvement successfully requires combining elements that are part of the character and heart of Christ. If His people will become like Him, folks will come to us. As a group, read **Isaiah 32:2, John 1:14, John 12:24, Acts 20:31, 1 Thess. 2:7-12, 1 Thess. 5:14, 2 Tim. 2:24-26**, and do letter "B" at the same time).

- B. Take a moment to jot down some of these qualities we are to reflect as we build involvement with them. These are qualities they need and want, even if they can't articulate them. Put an \* by any of them that you think God wants to build in you, and that may take some work.
- C. Demonstrate compassion
- ⇒ Can you identify with them? In what way?
  - ⇒ How would you feel if this was you or someone you loved?
  - ⇒ Be practical in showing care (Jesus feeding 5000 in Mark 6:33-44)
- D. Show respect
- ⇒ Style of verbal communication:
  - ⇒ Style of non-verbal communication:
  - ⇒ Maintain confidentiality (within biblical and legal limits)
- E. Be sincere, available, and sensitive.
- F. Hold off advice until you have heard the whole of the matter (**Prov. 18:13**)
- G. Don't let their hurt, anger or fear manipulate you off the mark of truth.
- H. Counselee/Friend
- a. Have a learner spirit – give permission to speak truth into their life
  - b. Committed to doing homework – the meeting is not the “magic hour”
  - c. Patient with process – not a quick fix
  - d. Willing to change – not going through the motions or complaining change is too difficult
- I. Spiritual Assessment
- a. Clear Testimony
  - b. Maturity – Determines how far, how fast
  - c. Growth commitment
  - d. Grasp of need for community & commitment to local church

- III. Case Study: *Travis Merrill is 36 and his wife Regina is 35. They've been married 15 years. Regina spends lots of time working with their daughter Briana who is 12 and shows horses. Travis spends a lot of his time coaching their 14 year old son Brett's baseball team. They report that they argue quite a bit – usually over money and disappointed expectations. He thinks she needs to chill out and quit being so picky about everything. She thinks he needs to take better care of their things at home, not watch so much TV and not spend so much money on travel team and hobbies like hunting. They come to church 2/month and say they don't have time for CG or BTC.*

**A. They have asked you and your spouse to meet with them. Now, fill out this box the way you see it. (5-7 min)**

Presenting Problems	Components to Problem	Spiritual Issues You Think You See	What do you think they will need from your involvement? What parts of that will come easily? What parts will be a challenge?

- B. Discuss what you and everyone else in your group got on this grid.  
What new ideas did you pick up?

Presenting Problems	Components of the Problem	Spiritual Issues	What do you think they will need from your involvement? What parts of that will come easily? What parts will be a challenge?

#### IV. Homework

- A. Memorize Hebrews 11:6 – One clause at a time. For example:
- ⇒ *Without faith it is impossible to please God* (Monday-Tuesday) Practice 8x
  - ⇒ *For he who comes to God must believe that He is* (Wed-Thur) Practice 8x +
  - ⇒ *And that He is a rewarder of them who seek Him* (Fri-Sat) Practice 8x + +
- B. Please read following edited article written to pastors and lay church leaders. Where it says “leaders” or “pastors,” you could almost always put “parent” or friend. Please underline or highlight those sentences you think are really good and be prepared to share two-three of them next week.
- C. Be sure you have your “*Imaginary Counselee*” by name firmly in your mind now or by Wednesday of this week. If you don’t, email John and he will give you someone who will be your imaginary client for the rest of this semester. Remember it will be important to have a “picture in your mind” of what kind of person they are and what kinds of things they might be able to use counseling for. You will be applying the “Six Steps” we are teaching this semester.
- D. Write down a chart like the one on the next page on a piece of paper in your notebook. Fill it out for your imaginary counselee and be ready to do a one minute review next Sunday at group.

Presenting Problem	Components of the Problem	Spiritual Issues You Think You See

## Approachability and Passport

By Ken Sande © 2009 Peacemaker Ministries

*I have edited the following article to make it more to the point for lay ministers. The full version is found at the URL posted below. John Morrison, Pastor of Biblical Counseling, FBC*

<http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIPH/b.1172255/apps/s/content.asp?ct=6869375>

Craig was well-equipped for teaching God's Word. He was committed to Christ, thoroughly educated, solid in his doctrine, well read, loved to study Scripture, and could preach outstanding sermons Sunday after Sunday. The trouble was that as time went by, fewer and fewer people were coming to him for pastoral advice. While most of the people in his church respected him as a preacher, many lost confidence that they could approach him safely with questions, personal problems, and especially criticism, no matter how graciously it was offered.

Jeff, another pastor, was flourishing in both preaching and shepherding ministries. He loved to dig into God's Word and prepare sermons, but was equally passionate about coming alongside people, understanding their struggles, and helping them live out the gospel in the issues of daily life. His people loved him, shared their struggles, ideas, and even their criticisms freely, and together they were growing in their love for God and their passion to build his church.

Craig and Jeff shared many characteristics. But there was one major difference.... Jeff's flock found him to be consistently approachable, while Craig's congregation saw him as distant and above them. Countless leaders in other settings, whether the home, ministry, or workplace, fall into this same habit, which destroys their ability to lead and minister to other people.

### Without a Passport, You Cannot Enter

A passport is an authorization to go somewhere. There is no more difficult place to enter than the inner life and deep struggles of another person. If you want people to welcome you into their world—their real, messy world—you must earn a relational passport. In order to gain a passport into the lives and struggles of other people, you must relate to them in such a way that **they would answer "yes" to three key questions**, each of which contains sub-questions that roll around in the back of people's minds:

1. **Can I trust you?** Will you maintain confidentiality? Will you lose respect for me or judge me if I allow you to see how badly I've blown it? Will you be gentle and patient even when I'm exasperating? Will you reject me if I don't do everything right? Will you assume the best about me or will you jump to conclusions and blame me for all my problems? Can I trust you with the "fine china" of my life?
2. **Do you really care about me?** Are you just politely tolerating me or fulfilling an obligation? Or do you really want to help me? Why? How could anyone love a person with such problems? Will you take time to listen to me? Do you care enough to push past my outer defenses and take time to help me sort out the tangled mess in my heart? Will you love me like Jesus does, even when I'm not very loveable?
3. **Can you actually help me?** Are you competent to deal with my issues? How are you doing with your own challenges and struggles? Do you have a track record of successfully solving these kinds of problems? What kind of training or experience do you have? If this problem is beyond the two of us, do you have the humility and wisdom to help me find another person who has the experience I need?

### **The Characteristics of an Approachable Leader**

One of the most effective ways to build rapport is to deliberately and persistently cultivate the image of being an “approachable leader.” An approachable leader makes people feel safe; they know they are welcome to come to you with questions, concerns, or even criticism. In order to gain this image and reputation, a leader needs to deliberately put off “rapport killers” and cultivate attitudes and relational habits that encourage people to open up and draw near.

### **Maintain a “gentle authority slope.”**

The Bible teaches that God has established authority arrangements in the family, church, workplace, and in civil government to maintain peace and order. As Jesus warned in Mark 10:42-45, however, sin often tempts leaders to “lord it over” others by over-emphasizing their own authority and others' responsibility to be submissive. As Jesus teaches, the best way to guard against this tendency is to cultivate the attitude of a servant, seeing oneself as being below rather than above others (vv. 43-45). As servant-leaders cultivate the Christ-like attitude described in passages like Phil. 2:1-11, they can replace the “steep slope” of authoritarianism with a “gentle authority slope” that is easy for people to climb and invites them to bring questions, concerns, and correction rather than letting something fester.

### **Fight pride and cultivate true humility**

Leaders often have more training and experience than other people. This strength can easily become a weakness if a leader allows pride to produce a superior attitude that thoughtlessly rejects ideas, advice, or correction. As Andrew Murray writes, *“All want of love, all indifference to the needs, the feelings, the weakness of others; all sharp and hasty judgments and utterances, so often excused under the plea of being outright and honest; all manifestations of temper and touchiness and irritation; all feelings of bitterness and estrangement, have their root in nothing but pride, that ever seeks itself.”*<sup>[1]</sup>

Many leaders conceal a proud attitude under a *demeanor of humility*, which is not the same as *actual humility*. One of the many evidences of actual humility is the inclination to “consider others better than yourself,” which results in valuing their thoughts and interests as highly as your own (Phil. 2:3-4). A closely related evidence of humility is to sincerely welcome critique and correction, no matter who brings the “observation” (Prov. 13:10, 17:10).

Wise leaders regularly meditate and pray about the “pride and humility” passages in Scripture (see Prov. 11:2, 19:20; Isa. 66:3; 1 Pet. 5:5-6), asking God to help them put off self-confidence, pride, and every hint of arrogance, and to put on a humility that genuinely welcomes questions, suggestions, criticism, and anything else that might aid us in the process of presenting ourselves before God as empty vessels, so that we might be utterly dependent on and fulfilled in him, which is the essence of true humility.<sup>[2]</sup>

**Cultivate a Shepherd’s Heart.** The sheer busyness of church or ministry work can easily cause leaders to become distracted or aloof, which will send the signal that troubled people should keep their distance. Therefore, spiritual leaders must constantly pray for God to give them the heart of a shepherd, which is beautifully described in passages like Isaiah 40:11: “He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young” (see also Matt. 18:12-14). This kind of demeanor builds trust, promises safety, and invites people to draw near with their questions and concerns, rather than hiding them or broadcasting complaints to others. One way that I seek to apply this concept when engaging people under my care is to pray, “Lord, help me to serve so-and-so in such a way, that when she reads Isaiah 40:11 a month from now, she can say, ‘I felt that concern from you by the way Ken treated me when I went to him with my concern.’”<sup>[3]</sup>



**See God's people as he does.** One of the most effective antidotes to personal or institutional attitudes that undermine approachability is to cultivate the habit of viewing the members of your church as God does: as people made "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27), as "God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved," (Col. 3:12), as "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Pet. 2:9), as people who have been "lavished with all wisdom and understanding" (Eph. 1:8), who are filled with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and are "competent to instruct one another" and "to judge ... the things of this life" (Rom. 15:14; 1 Cor. 6:3). When leaders remember that these types of descriptive phrases apply to all of the saints, not just to ordained leaders, they will be more inclined to humbly welcome questions, suggestions, and even correction from anyone in whom Jesus' Spirit dwells.

**Be transparent.** People are usually reluctant to share their problems with leaders who seem to have their lives so figured out that they would not be able to relate to someone who is struggling with uncertainty, failure, or sin. But when a leader imitates people like the apostle Paul (see Rom. 7:7-25; 1 Tim. 1:15-17), and talks openly about his own weaknesses and struggles, and God's redeeming grace, his flock can approach him as a brother who will understand and have compassion on those who are walking a similar road.

**Pick up on hints.** Troubled people often hesitate to lay all of their concerns out at once. Instead, they drop hints of an issue to see how you respond. If you brush past their words, they will pull back into themselves and look elsewhere for a caring ear. But if you show concern for even the hint of distress ("*How are you today?*" "*Oh, I've been better,*" "*What's going on?*" "*Oh, it's no big deal, just some problems with the kids*" "*Can I buy you a cup of coffee so you can tell me about it?*"), people may let you in on the pivotal issues of their lives. Picking up on a small hint can lead to life-changing ministry.

**Listen deeply before jumping to problem-solving.** People often know what they should do to solve a problem, but sometimes they still need to lay the situation out before someone who will listen compassionately and make them feel that they have been heard and understood. Therefore, people are much more likely to open up to a leader who has developed the discipline of listening patiently and deeply, and offering solutions only after others have shared all they want to reveal and are ready to explore solutions (see Prov. 18:13).

**Be quick to confess sins, whether large or small.** When people confront a leader with a mistake or sin that is embarrassing or seems insignificant, natural defensiveness will often tempt the leader to minimize the wrong or explain it away. An insecure leader may even shift the focus to an improper attitude or perception in the accuser ("What is going on in your heart that would cause you to find fault with me?"). This type of response will either provoke a debate or stifle discussion, both of which will confirm that it is a waste of time to approach that leader. A wise leader will listen patiently to complaints, pray for God's help in discerning any truth in them, and then model humility by sincerely confessing that wrong and thanking the brother or sister for drawing it to his attention (see Matt. 7:3-4; Prov. 15:32, 17:10; see the article "[The Cross and Criticism](#)," which is also available in [booklet form](#)).

**Be slow to confront sin in others.** When people are confused, suffering, dissatisfied, or feeling they have been wronged, they have often contributed to their problem in some way; it is equally likely that they may speak sinfully as they unload their complaints to others. Unless there is a clear danger of irreparable harm, it is usually helpful to give people uninterrupted time to get their thoughts and feelings out in the open, even if they are tainted with sin, so that you can accurately discern the issues that are burdening them. Once you have demonstrated your concern and compassion through patient listening, people will generally be more open to hearing words of counsel or correction (see Jn. 4:1-30).

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[1] *Humility*, Andrew Murray (Wilder Publications, Radford, VA, 2008), p. 13

[2] Two books I recommend on cultivating humility are: *Humility*, Andrew Murray (Wilder Publications, Radford, VA, 2008), and *Humility: True Greatness*, CJ Mahaney (Multnomah, Sisters, OR, 2005).

[3] For superb insights into the biblical concept of shepherd leadership, I highly recommend *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks*, Tim Laniak (ShepherdLeader Publications, 2007).

[4] As Ed Clowney wisely wrote, "Better by far are imperfect structures in the hands of devoted servants of Christ than the most biblical form of church government practiced in pride or in a loveless and vindictive spirit." (*The Church*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1995, p. 202)

[5] You can begin this process with an email like this: "Dear \_\_\_, I would like your assistance in gaining an accurate assessment of how "approachable" I am to other people. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you would do me the great favor of reading the attached article and giving me your candid feedback on how approachable I am in your eyes. You may do this in any way that is comfortable for you, whether offering some general observations, or evaluating me in light of any or all of the characteristics described in the attached article. It would be especially helpful if you could provide specific examples that illustrate my strengths or weaknesses in any of these areas. I sincerely want to become more approachable to others, so the more candid and specific your feedback, the better. Thank you!"

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### Building Involvement Verses

- **Isaiah 32:2** Each will be like a refuge from the wind  
And a shelter from the storm,  
Like streams of water in a dry country,  
Like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land.
- **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- **John 12:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
- **Act 20:31** Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.
- **I Thess 2:7-12** 7 But we proved to be [b]gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. 8 Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own [e]lives, because you had become very dear to us. 9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; 11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, 12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.
- **I Thess 5:14** 14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.
- **2 Tim 2:24-26** 24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.