

# **Discovery Learning Process**

## **Starting Well:**

### **Building a Strong Foundation for a Lifetime of Ministry**

**By Dr. Richard Clinton and Dr. Paul Leavenworth**

**Instructions:** Read the Introduction and each chapter, complete the Evaluation and Application (E & A) questions, and discuss each chapter with a small group of folks who have read and completed the E & A questions using the Introduction and chapter DISCUSSION questions provided below. Page numbers listed for the DISCUSSION questions are based on the hard copy of Starting Well.

### **Introduction: A Time of Crisis or Opportunity?**

#### **Evaluation and Application**

1. List what you believe to be the five dominant values of our culture and describe how they affect individuals, families, and churches.
2. Look up these values in the Bible and see what the Bible has to say about them.
3. Evaluate the affect of these values on your own life and life-style.
4. List changes that you need to make after examining your life in the context of what the Bible has to say.
5. Develop a plan to make these changes.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is “this present crisis” and what are its ramifications for the Christian witness? (p. xiii-xv)
2. What is meant by “the dynamic and life-changing power of love and truth”? (p.xv)

3. What is meant by “crisis for a Christian is an opportunity...”? (p. xvi) Give an example of this in your life.
4. What do you think of the Memo to Jesus from Jordan Management Consultants? (p. xviii-xix)
5. What does it mean to be “changed from the inside out”? (p. xxi)
6. What do you think of Sander’s statement that, “Spiritual leadership is a thing of the Spirit and is conferred by God alone”? (p. xxii)
7. What one insight have you gained from the Introduction and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 1: Few Leaders Finish Well**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. Spend some time reflecting on the end of your life. What do you want to be remembered for? Here is an exercise you can use: Imagine that you are attending your own funeral. What would you want to be said about you? What would you want to be remembered for? What would you want to be written on your tombstone?
2. Take time to study the Biblical leaders. How would you rate their finish? Spend some time reflecting on their stories. What lessons can we learn from them?
3. Look at the admonition in Proverbs 22: 3. Answer the question: if one of these barriers were going to hinder you from finishing well, which barrier is the most likely one? Share your answer with a friend. Get some accountability in avoiding the potential trap.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What do you think about the statement that, “only 30% of Biblical leaders finished well”? (p. 4)
2. What is your basic definition of finishing well? (p. 3)
3. Which of the leaders listed under “Finishing Well” on p. 3 would you like to study? Why?
4. What are the characteristics of those who finished well? (p. 6-7)
5. What are the eight barriers to finishing well? (p. 8-11)
6. What are the five enhancements for finishing well? (p. 12-15)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 1 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 2: The Goal**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. Look up the Biblical passages cited in this chapter and prayerfully review them.
2. Prayerfully evaluate yourself in terms of the specific characteristics of love mentioned in this chapter (from I Corinthians 13).
3. Identify strengths and weaknesses in your own “love” life.
4. Prayerfully celebrate God’s progress in your transformation process and invite God into those areas of weakness for his further work of grace and transformation in your life.
5. Develop an action plan and accountability without a trusted friend or small group to pray for you, support, encourage, and exhort you as you allow God to transform you into a more loving person.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. According to I Timothy 1:5, what is the “goal of our instruction”? (p. 22)
2. What does the Bible say about Godly love? (p. 23)
3. What are the characteristics of Godly love in I Corinthians 13? (p. 24)
4. What are the three “means” to Godly love and how would you define each of them? (p. 25-27)
5. How does I Timothy 1:5 relate to discipleship? (p. 27-28, see I Timothy 1:5 Diagram on p. 29)
6. Why is establishing the right foundation important for starting, staying, and finishing well as a disciple and emerging leader? (p. 30-31)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 2 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 3: Knowing Where You Are Going**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. Look up the Biblical passages mentioned in the section on God's plan in this chapter.
2. Prayerfully evaluate yourself on the basis of these passages. Are you realizing your inheritance as a Christian to its fullest?
3. If not, why not? Prayerfully ask God to reveal to you what areas of your life/life-style need to be changed in order for you to realize your inheritance.
4. Develop a plan to make these changes.

5. Evaluate these plans periodically.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What do you think of the statement, “What God wanted was me, not just my actions or accomplishments”? (p. 34)
2. What is your definition of sanctification? (p. 34-36)
3. What are the six stages that Christian leaders pass through as they mature and move toward finishing well in life and leadership? (p. 37)
4. What is the process that leaders go through as they move from one stage to the next? (p. 37)
5. Why is a devotional lifestyle important in this process of growth and maturation? (p. 41-42)
6. What are Integrity, Obedience, and Word Checks and why are they important? (p. 42)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 3 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 4: Beginnings - The Early Formation of a Leader**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. Prayerfully ask God to lead you to the relational aspect or integrity check that He would like you to focus on.
2. Reread that section or sections and look up all of the supporting passages while asking God to reveal Himself and his purposes to you.
3. Write down your insights and ask God how he wants you to apply these insights.

4. Write down a strategy for applying these insights, act on them, and evaluate.
5. If you discover that you need to make restitution or seek reconciliation, ask God for a specific approach and prayerfully follow through.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How do the negative experiences in your life and leadership affect your image of God? (p. 54-55)
2. Why is learning “to see your past in light of God’s sovereign activity” important? (p. 55-56)
3. According to II Corinthians 1:3-5, what are the three steps involved in gaining Godly perspective on our painful past? (p. 56)
4. What is the role of trust in gaining Godly perspective and faithfulness? (p. 56)
5. Which of the three case studies did you gain the most from? What insights did you gain? (p. 57-62)
6. How can a “Sovereign Perspective” help us persevere through difficult times? (p. 64-65)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 4 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 5: Integrity - The Foundation of Character**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. Prayerfully ask God to lead you to the relational aspect or integrity check that He would like you to focus on.

2. Reread that section or sections and look up all of the supporting passages while asking God to reveal Himself and his purposes to you.
3. Write down your insights and ask God how he wants you to apply these insights.
4. Write down a strategy for applying these insights, act on them, and evaluate.
5. If you discover that you need to make restitution or seek reconciliation, ask God for a specific approach and prayerfully follow through.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why is character formation important and how does learning to trust God relate to intimacy with God and character formation? (p. 71-74)
2. How do the “Disciplines of Faith” help us develop intimacy with God and access to “his loving grace”? (p. 74-78)
3. What is integrity and why is it important for the leader’s life and effectiveness? (p. 78)
4. According to James 1:2-4, how does God develop integrity in his leaders? (p. 79)
5. According to James 1:13, what are the stages of temptation? (p. 80-82)
6. What are the uses and benefits of Integrity Checks (situations 1-8 on p. 80-88)? (p. 89)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 5 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 6: Hearing and Obeying the Voice of God**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. Prayerfully ask God to lead you to the hearing and obedience aspect of this chapter that he would like you to focus on.
2. Reread that section or sections and look up all the supporting passages while asking God to reveal himself and his purposes to you.
3. Write down your insights and ask God how he wants you to apply these insights.
4. Write down a strategy for applying these insights, act on them, and evaluate.
5. If you discover that you need to make restitution or seek reconciliation, ask God for a specific approach and prayerfully follow through.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is your understanding and experience of “hearing God’s voices” and why do you think it is important for leadership? (p. 91-93)
2. How did Jesus model “being about the father’s business” and what can we learn about hearing God’s voice and obedience? (p. 93-94)
3. What are your definitions of general and special revelation? What are the roles of the Bible, the life of Christ, and the Holy Spirit in Special Revelation and in discerning the “Voice of God”? (p. 94-99)
4. What are Eastman’s Biblical guidelines for divine guidance and what dangers are there in “hearing God’s voice”? (p. 100-101, 106)
5. What are the “basic steps” in learning how to hear “God’s Voice”? (p. 102-107)
6. What is the role of obedience in learning how to hear “God’s Voice”? (p. 108-113)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 6 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?



## **Chapter 7: Early Challenges in Ministry**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. When you think about success in the ministry, what kinds of things come to mind?
2. Take just a minute to think about your own social base situation. Ask yourself the following questions: how are these needs being met? Am I just ignoring the potential problems or am I really dealing with the issues? What needs represent the ones that I am most vulnerable in? What can I do to strengthen my social base?
3. Think for a moment about the issue of authority. Ask yourself the following questions: When I think of authority and people in authority, do my thoughts tend to be negative or positive? In what ways have I learned to operate under authority or submit to authority? What do I do in a conflict situation where I disagree with the person in authority over me? How do I treat people under me when they disagree with me? Who are the best leaders that I have seen in terms of operating in authority with integrity? What can I learn from their example?
4. Take a moment to think about relationship issues. Ask yourself the following questions: What are my biggest problems when it comes to building relationships with others? How do I handle conflict with others? In what ways have I seen healthy relationships impact a leader's effectiveness to influence people? How do I build bridges in relationship with people who are very different from myself?

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is meant by social base? (p. 118)
2. What is your social base? (p. 118-122)
  - Emotional Support –
  - Economic Support –
  - Strategic Support –
  - Social Support –

3. What is the relationship between submission and authority? (p. 124-125)
4. What are the five arenas for learning leadership lessons about authority? (124-128)
5. What is meant by “relationships provide the context for leader’s to operate in”? (p. 128)
6. What are the three areas of leadership lessons about relationships? (p. 129-130)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 7 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 8: Discovering and Developing in Your Giftedness**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. How do you respond to the issue of stewardship and accountability? Look at the two parables mentioned on this issue. How do you react to the teaching of Jesus? How do the implications of these texts impact you? Share your thoughts with a close friend.
2. What was your initial experience with spiritual gifts like? Have you ever tried to identify your spiritual gifts? See *Appendix B* for “Spiritual Gifts Inventory”.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is meant by “Gift Mix”? (p. 144)
2. How does stewardship and accountability relate to discovering and developing your gift mix? (p. 136-144)
3. What are the nine stages in the “Giftedness Development Pattern”? (p. 144-145)
4. What do you think your spiritual gifts are? (Appendix B: Spiritual Gifts Inventory)

5. What do you think your gift mix is?
  - Spiritual Gifts –
  - Natural Abilities –
  - Acquired Skills –
6. What are the three aspects involved in giftedness development? (p. 149-150)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 8 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 9: Responding to God**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. Can you think of a situation in your life where the power of perspective was evident? Your perspective of the situation allowed you to "see the bigger picture" and respond accordingly. On the other hand, have there been situations in your life where you lacked perspective? What were these situations like?
2. How has God tested your faithfulness in the little things? How have you responded when you were asked to serve in ways that were not recognized or valued as highly as other areas of service? Share your answer with someone else.
3. Describe a testing situation that you know that God led you through in which you responded positively to him. Describe the test, your response and identify the expansion that God brought as a result.
4. Describe a testing situation that you know God led you through which you responded negatively to him. Describe the test, your response, and identify the remedial training that God brought as a result. When you were retested, how did you respond?

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is meant by processing ("shaping activities")? (p. 155)

2. What is meant by “The Response Premise”? (p. 156)
3. Why is timely and proper response to God important for our leadership growth and development? (p. 160-162)
4. What are the two basic “testing patterns”? (p. 163)
5. What is meant by “remedial training”? (p. 165-169)
6. What are the differences between “pop quizzes,” “tests,” and “exams” in processing and our responses to God? (p. 170-171)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 9 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 10: The Power of Mentoring**

### **Evaluation and Application**

1. Prayerfully ask God whether or not you have the type(s) of mentoring you need in your life.
2. Reread the section(s) that pertain to your situation and look up all of the supporting passages while asking God to reveal himself and his purposes to you. Write down your insights and ask God how he wants you to apply these insights. Write down a strategy for applying these insights, act on them, and evaluate.
3. Begin to systematically study the lives of Biblical, historical, and contemporary Christian leaders in order to learn from them. See the Bibliography for a list of books about leaders who finished well.
4. Pick up the book *Connecting* by Bobby Clinton and Paul Stanley. Study the issues and dynamics of effective mentoring. Begin to use them in your life.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is your definition of a mentor? (p. 177)
2. What has been your experience with mentoring?
3. Why is mentoring important in the support, growth, and development of younger emerging leaders? (p. 177)
4. What are the “dynamics of mentoring relationships”? (p. 178-179)
5. What are McGinnis’ twelve “rules” for bringing out the best in people? (p. 183)
6. What type of mentoring do you need in your life? (see Diagram 8: Different Mentoring Types on p. 180)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 10 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 11: The Issue of Destiny**

### **Evaluation and Application:**

1. Take the following three leaders (Joseph, David, Paul) and analyze their lives in terms of destiny. In what ways did God prepare them for his plan? How did God reveal his plans to them? What insights can you learn about destiny by studying God's activity in their lives?
2. Have a discussion about the "dangers of destiny". Talk about the issues of spiritual pride, false hopes and expectations, and the sense of drivenness that is unhealthy. Explore how each of these issues impacts your own life and understanding. What can you do to guard against them?
3. Have a discussion about the positive benefits of being aware of your destiny. Talk about the issues of motivation, faith, hope, purpose and meaning, and learning to respond in faith. Explore how each of these issues impacts your own life and understanding. How can you allow your awareness of destiny to encourage you and build you up?

4. Spend time reflecting back over your life. In what ways has God prepared you or revealed his plans (your destiny) to you? Write down as many incidents and situations as you can. Describe them and evaluate what God might have been saying to you. Begin to keep a journal or file of these situations.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is meant by a “sense of destiny”? (p. 199)
2. What is meant by “Destiny Preparation”? (p. 199-200)
3. What is meant by “Destiny Revelation”? (p. 201-202)
4. What is meant by “Destiny Fulfillment”? (p. 202-204)
5. What is your “sense of destiny”?
6. How does your “sense of destiny” match up to the eight questions listed in this chapter? (p. 204-213)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 11 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?

## **Chapter 12: Strategies for Starting Well**

**Evaluation and Application: None for this chapter.**

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is meant by “strategy” and why can a strategy help you start, stay, and finish well? (p. 217-218)

2. How are you DEVELOPING A BIBLICAL IMAGE OF GOD? (p. 220-222)
3. How are you CULTIVATING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD? (p. 222-223)
4. How are you ENGAGING IN THE PROCESS OF CHARACTER TRANSFORMATION? (p. 223)
5. How are you INVOLVED IN MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS? (p. 224-225)
6. How are you ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD AND OTHERS? (p. 225-228)
7. What one insight have you gained from chapter 12 and how do you plan to apply it to your life?