



the year ahead...

4th January - 5th February
READING PLAN 2021

INTRODUCTION

Every year we start with aspirations and goals. How many of us have made a New Year's resolution to diet or to give up sweets or to go to the gym? I know I have. Focussing on physical health in the New Year is a great idea, but what about your spiritual health? Exercising your spiritual muscles is just as important as toning those biceps.

Here's a challenge for the 2021 New Year: let's get our Bible muscles in shape. Let's increase our spiritual strength and our devotional and leadership stamina. In a world of opinions, tweets, and over-sharing, let's practice listening to God's voice.

We serve a God who is unlimited in every aspect. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to one person – Jesus Christ. We believe that we can do all things through Him who strengthens us and therefore we believe that there are no limits on what God can do through us. We know that He can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.

We need to recognise we are not here by accident. God has assigned us a purpose on earth and has equipped us specifically to fulfil it ... and if you'll seek Him, He'll awaken your passion for that purpose in ways you never imagined.

As we travel through this biblical path in His turningpoint church, we will find ourselves rising to fulfil our God-given purpose planned just for us. We're all called to be spiritual leaders so we should be seeking ways we can serve at turningpoint and be ready to rise to leadership positions as the opportunity presents.

Long before TED Talks, best-seller lists, podcasts, and conferences, there was a man whose influence and impact changed the world. He came to be known as the Apostle Paul, and he can teach us quite a bit about leadership. 'Follow Me' takes leaders back to ancient principles and propels them forward into lives of greater influence. It's 1st-century wisdom for 21st-century leaders!

So together let's learn what it means to become a better leader in 2021.

Acknowledgements for this Reading Plan to Youversion,
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KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING

'I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving: To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it, but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor' – Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Paul had remarkable clarity about his calling. He didn't determine or develop it. Rather, he discovered it. Paul didn't have to start from scratch; God already had something in mind. That's not to say that God had every detail already mapped out. (Beware of that thinking; it can paralyse you.) God did, however, have a mission in mind for Paul. I believe that's the case for us too. We don't have to develop it, but we do have to discover it.

Turningpoint, that's good news, and it gets even better. God doesn't want to keep His thoughts, ideas, purpose, and calling a secret from us. He wants us to know Him and His calling even more than we do. If you're listening, church, He'll speak—sometimes through His Word, sometimes through His Spirit nudging our hearts, or sometimes through unexpected conversations or seemingly random circumstances.

We may not gain the same level of clarity that Paul had. Jesus is probably not going to show up with blinding light and turn-by-turn directions. The leaders at our church may not lay their hands on us and send us packing. But that's okay! In 2021, we don't need to wait for the level of clarity or the specific communication that Paul received. Do you know why? Because the church has already received more than Paul ever did! The church has more divine revelation at its fingertips than anyone in the first century. We have the completed Scriptures, centuries of role models, and a growing global community of God's people. The church has all it needs to get the direction it needs.

God has revealed more than enough of Himself and His will for us to understand what we are here for. **Turningpoint** is here for a reason. God has a purpose. And He doesn't want to keep that a secret! So, in 2021, ask, listen, and follow.

REFLECT

- As you look back, how have you seen God at work in your life?
- As you look ahead, what do you think He is calling you to pursue?

Memory Verse

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Tuesday 5th January

Acts 16:6-10

Proverbs 16:9

MAKE ADJUSTMENTS

‘Failed plans should not be interpreted as a failed vision. Visions don’t change, they are only refined. Plans rarely stay the same and are scrapped or adjusted as needed. Be stubborn about the vision, but flexible with your plan’ – John C. Maxwell.

Paul made plans but held them loosely. He had mapped out where he thought the group should go, but God had something else in mind. Paul and his merry men were kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in Asia (Acts 16:6). They tried another option, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them (Acts 16:7). I wish we had a few more details about these divine redirections. What roadblocks did God use? How did He detour Paul and his partners? I don’t know, but I’m grateful that Paul was sensitive to the Spirit’s redirection and willing to be re-routed. Who knows what would have happened if Paul had stubbornly insisted on his plan and forced his way toward his goal?

Paul was convinced that his mission was from God, but he knew that his plans were his own. Consequently, he was willing to adjust them when necessary. Andy Stanley, pastor of North Point Community Church, captures this idea when he says:

‘Marry your mission. Date your model’. He puts it another way when he says, ‘Fall in love with your vision. Stay mildly infatuated with your approach’.

Our world is changing faster than ever. The forms, the models, the plans will need to change just as rapidly, while our calling, mission, and ultimate vision hold firm. The leaders who understand that, will continue to lead and thrive. The others will not. Stay committed to your calling, turningpoint, but write your plans in pencil.

REFLECT

- Are you cultivating the habit of listening to, and obeying the Spirit’s promptings?
- When God seems to be nudging you, write down what you think He’s saying. Keep a record of His prompting and your response.

Memory Verse

Proverbs 16:9 In their hearts, humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.

CHOOSE POSITIVITY

'Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all' – Helen Keller.

Have you heard of Alexander's terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day? That was nothing compared to Silas and Paul's misunderstood, mistreated, stripped, beaten, severely flogged, and imprisoned day! (Read about it in Acts 16.) Yet somehow their circumstances did not dictate their response. They salvaged the situation. They made the most of the moment. They didn't react; they responded. They refused to focus on all that had been taken away, but rather chose to see the unique opportunity they had been given.

In his book, *How to Lead When You're Not in Charge*, Clay Scroggins draws great insight from Paul's prison perspective:

'Don't let the frustration you feel over what you don't have keep you from doing what you can do. Changing your perspective on your situation can change everything. Seeing what you do have will allow you to overcome what you don't'.

Paul got this. Somehow, he didn't get lost in the weeds and miss what was in front of him. Paul's panoptic vision told him, 'I'm not chained to this prison guard. This prison guard is chained to me!' He stayed true to his calling even when the odds were stacked against him. He kept his eyes up even when his feet were in chains. Church, we want what he had! If Paul had this view in prison, hopefully, it's possible for turningpoint to have it where God has put us.

Regardless of where God has put us, we have a choice to make. Choosing positivity is deciding to find and focus on the good instead of the bad. Make no mistake about it; both good and bad will always be present. No matter how good life is in 2021, there will be challenges that we might whine about. No matter how bad life was in 2020, there were blessings that we could rejoice about. There is always something to complain about and always something to be thankful for. The choice is ours.

REFLECT

- What challenges are you facing right now?
- How are you tempted to respond? Is there a better option?
- List a few of the ways God is showing up and coming through for you.

Memory Verse

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice!

Thursday 7th January

Philippians 3:3-9

Acts 14:11-15

DON'T MAKE YOUR STORY ALL ABOUT YOU

'True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less' – C.S. Lewis.

Paul was not one to boast. In fact, the one time that he did list his accomplishments (a list that most would be proud of), he counted his victories as losses. What others would treasure; he considered trash. Similarly, when an excited crowd hailed his accomplishments and spoke words that certainly would have inflated my ego (Acts 14:11-15), Paul deflected the praise and drew the attention to Christ.

The natural inclination is to use our power and authority for ourselves, often to acquire more power and authority. Jesus, Paul, and history's greatest leaders have used their position for the sake of others. Rather than elevating themselves, great leaders lower themselves and elevate others. How can we at turningpoint also move down that path? Consider these three 'habits of humility' and see what others we can add to the list.

1. Think about ourselves less: Pay attention to our thoughts. You can lead them; they don't have to lead you. Take note of how often we are thinking about ourselves—what we want, what we deserve, how we've been treated. Recognise those thoughts and replace them with thoughts about people we are thankful for; people whom we could serve, and people who are overlooked.
2. Talk about ourselves less: Replace 'I' with 'you'. See if you can keep ourselves out of the centre of the conversation. Let someone else praise you and not your own mouth (Proverbs 27:2). We need to affirm and applaud those around us. Ask about their interests, pursuits, accomplishments, and challenges.
3. Pray for ourselves less: I was surprised when I realised how often I prayed for myself. They're not overtly selfish or proud prayers, but they do centre on my situation, my decisions, and my responses. In 2021, make a conscious effort to pray for ourselves less and pray for others more.

REFLECT

- Think about your position, authority, and influence.
- How could those platforms be used to elevate yourself?
- How could they be used to elevate others?

Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

FOLLOW THROUGH

'I was just a start-and-stop guy. I could never really follow through on anything that I started' – Chuck Norris.

Acts 15:41 Paul went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

For many leaders, starting something new is easy. Keeping it going, not so much. Any entrepreneur will tell you that starting something is often easier than keeping it going. Paul wasn't starting small businesses, but he certainly was an entrepreneur who knew how to keep a start-up going. He didn't just plant seeds. He watered the seeds, cultivated the soil, and checked in regularly to encourage their progress.

What was it that motivated Paul to invest so deeply? Was it simply his desire to succeed or his fear of failure? I don't think so. Instead, I believe he was driven by his deep and sincere love for people. These churches were not just projects that he was starting, they were people that he loved. He genuinely cared deeply for the believers that he met and served and led. When we love the people we are leading, we lead them well. We stay connected. We remain invested. We follow up and follow through.

Great leaders don't just launch projects; they love people. The people we are serving are the priority. They matter to God. They are unique and irreplaceable. They are worth our time, our energy and our investment. So, church, don't just launch projects in 2021, dig deep and love people.

REFLECT

- What projects and, more importantly, which people, are you committed to for the long haul?
- What will you do to check in and follow through?

Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 2:8 ... we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

Beach Baptisms



Sunday 24th January

See Ps. Norma or one of the Pastors/Elders by Sunday 10th January if you would like to book in to be baptized.

*Preparing God's people
for works of service*

Ephesians 4:12-13



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DON'T WORK ALONE

'Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light' – Helen Keller.

Ernesto Sirolli teaches leadership and coaches entrepreneurs. In his riveting TED Talk, 'Shut Up and Listen', he tells us about an assignment he often uses to begin a course on entrepreneurship. Students are given the first two pages of Richard Branson's autobiography. (Branson is a global entrepreneur who has launched a dozen billion-dollar businesses and hundreds of other companies.) The students are instructed to count how many times Branson uses the word 'I' and how many times he uses the word 'we'. After only two pages, here is the score: 'I' = Zero; 'We' = 32! One conclusion seems obvious: Great leaders don't work alone.

From beginning to end and on every journey in between, the apostle Paul had people around him. He was constantly expanding his circle of influence, pouring himself into potential leaders as well as leaning on and learning from others. Paul knew that neither life nor leadership are solo sports.

The logic is solid. The examples are prevalent from the Apostle Paul in the first century to Richard Branson in the twenty-first: great leaders don't work alone. They invite others to join them, help them, partner with them, and even lead them. Why, then, do so many leaders in the church tend toward isolation and try to 'go it alone?' It may seem easier, quicker, and less complicated to simply do it ourselves. There may be a few rare instances when that is the best idea. Far more often, though, the better option is to invite, invest in, and develop others to lead alongside us.

REFLECT

- Think through this past week. How many tasks and projects did you work on by yourself? How many involved others?
- How can you be more intentional about drawing people in and developing the people around you?

Memory Verse

Acts 15:40 ... but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.

Tuesday 12th January

Luke 6:34-35

Romans 5:8

GIVE YOURSELF AWAY

'If you want to live forever, give yourself away for others' - Debasish Mridha.

Deep down, every one of us is generous. We all give our money, our time, and our energy away to someone. The problem is that some people are only generous for their own benefit. Even when they're 'giving', they're really only looking for something in return (Luke 6:34-35). This kind of lifestyle has no place in God's kingdom. Sincere, biblical generosity gives to others without expecting to ever be paid back.

Jesus, of course, was the most generous person who ever lived, giving His life for people who did not deserve it and who could never pay Him back (Romans 5:8). As leaders, our lives should be marked by radical generosity. We should give financially when appropriate, being very openhanded when a need is presented. But generosity with money is only a start. Generous leaders see the needs of the people around them as opportunities to share the love of God, to invest in others, and to build genuine relationships.

Jesus took one boy's lunch and multiplied it so there was enough food to feed everyone present. The accounts say that there were five-thousand men in the crowd, which means there might have been an equal number of women and children there.

Jesus could have warned the crowd in the morning that they should bring a packed lunch. He could have shrugged off the needs of those people as 'not my problem'. The disciples knew that the people would be hungry, and they offered a sensible suggestion to Jesus: Send everybody home before dark.

But Jesus didn't send the people away. He provided for them. That's the generosity of Jesus. He gave when He didn't have to, and with no expectation of anything in return.

REFLECT

- Would others consider you a generous person?
- What would change the story for you?

Memory Verse

1 John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

IMPROPER AMBITION

‘Ambition is a good servant but a bad master’ – Author Unknown.

As Christians, is it possible to be ambitious and still have our self-worth and identity firmly rooted in Jesus Christ? The world tells us that ambition is essential. The meta-narrative is we must make a name for ourselves in this life and prove to the world that we are important, valuable, and worthy.

Of course, this is nothing new. Since the Fall, human beings have been using work to make a name for themselves, rather than to glorify God and serve others. Take the Babylonians as an example. In Genesis 11 we read the account of these ancient entrepreneurs discovering the incredible technical innovation of brick-making. With the invention of the brick-making process, the Babylonians could build better homes, roads, and cities—all wonderful things; but driven by pride, the Babylonians’ ambition wasn’t to glorify God through their work.

Their ambition was to make a name for themselves. They said, Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth (Genesis 11:4). And if there ever was a question as to whether or not our motives matter to the Lord, the rest of the passage provides the answer. The Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city (Genesis 11:8).

Creating a tower, a new business, a piece of art, or a piece of music is not inherently bad. Our cultural creations can and do reveal God’s character and also love and serve others. But when we create something out of a motivation to make a name for ourselves, we are attempting to rob God of the glory that is rightfully His.

While Scripture makes clear that creating in order to make a name for ourselves constitutes improper ambition, the Bible makes equally clear that ambition can indeed be God-honouring, so long as it flows out of a response to the work Christ did on our behalf on the cross.

REFLECT

- As you look back, how would you see ambition in your life?
- As you look ahead, what do you see yourself pursuing?

Memory Verse

Proverbs 16:2 All a person’s ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD.

Thursday 14th January

Galatians 2:20

WHY WE WORK

'I'm a greater believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it' - Thomas Jefferson.

As we read yesterday, in Genesis 11, the Babylonians were driven by selfishness to create a tower that would reach the heavens and make a name for themselves, a temptation that still plagues humankind today. When we create out of a desire to make a name for ourselves, or to put it in more modern terms, to accumulate fame and fortune, we are essentially trying to save ourselves.

What is it about the human condition that causes us to use our work as a tool for proving something to the world? Deep down, all human beings know there is something wrong with us. We know we are flawed. We know we're not 'right'. Deep down, we know that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Ever since Adam and Eve bit into the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, we have been trying to cover up these flaws, not with fig-leaves, but with our accomplishments. We think that if we write a bestselling book, or sell a business for millions of dollars, or sign a record deal, or get 100,000 Instagram followers, or build the world's tallest tower, then we'll be able to mask our sinful human condition. Essentially, we use work as a means of saving ourselves.

But as Christians, we know that the work of salvation is complete! Because Jesus said, 'It is finished', we no longer have to use our work as a means of saving ourselves. What incredible freedom we will experience when we let that truth really sink into our hearts! Because of the gospel, we are free to work and create - not as a means of making a name for ourselves, but as an act of worship to the One who made us, saved us, and called us to create. As we will see in tomorrow's devotional, this truth replaces our improper ambition with proper ambition that flows out of a love for Christ and a desire to make His name famous throughout this earth.

REFLECT

- What can change improper ambition with proper ambition?
- What drives us to have our name become famous?

Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new is here!

PROPER AMBITION

'A man's worth is no greater than the worth of his ambitions' – Marcus Aurelius.

Over the past few days, we've been digging into the story of the Tower of Babel as a case study in improper ambition, by using our work as a means of making a name for ourselves.

Today's passage from Isaiah 60:1-14 provides a beautiful answer to those questions. In this passage, the prophet Isaiah is pointing us to a picture of the reversal of the events that transpired at the Tower of Babel. Rather than the people being scattered out of the city to the ends of the earth, Isaiah shows us a picture of all the nations coming back together into 'the City of the Lord'. This isn't Babel. This is a glimpse of the New Jerusalem on the New Earth.

But here's what's most fascinating about this glimpse of our eternal home: While the Babylonians were scattered throughout the earth because of their desire to create in order to make a name for themselves, Isaiah shows us a picture of people from around the world entering the New Jerusalem with cultural artefacts in hand. The people of Tarshish bring their ships, Midian and Ephah bring their livestock, Sheba brings gold and frankincense. 'The wealth of the nations', the best creations of the nations, are being brought into the Eternal City to glorify the One who called the people to create. Unlike in Babel, the people are not using their creations to glorify themselves, they are laying their creations down as an offering of worship to God.

Scripture commands us to work...with all your heart (Colossians 3:23). We are called to be ambitious, to work hard, and to be good stewards of the talents God has given us. But we are called to do these things not for our own glory, but to do it all for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). When our work is motivated by a desire to glorify God, serve others, and create something that may be considered 'the wealth of the nations', laid down as an offering to God, then we have proper ambition to create with everything we've got!

REFLECT

- What is your work motivated towards?
- Do you lay it down as an offering to God?

Memory Verse

Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

Save the Date Point Seminar

Friday 5th February - Saturday 6th February

*Preparing God's people
for works of service*

Ephesians 4:12-13



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ARE LEADERS BORN OR MADE?

'Leaders aren't born, they are made. And they are made just like anything else, through hard work' – Vince Lombardi.

Some people become leaders by opportunity and timing. A crisis comes, no one better-qualified steps forward, and a leader is born. But closer investigation usually reveals that the selection was less fortuitous and more the result of hidden training that made the person fit for leadership. Joseph is a perfect example (Genesis 37–45). He became Prime Minister of Egypt through circumstances that most people would call 'lucky stars'. In fact, his promotion was the outcome of thirteen years of rigorous, hidden training under the hand of God. When we contrast natural and spiritual leadership, we see just how different they are.

Each Christian should make it his constant prayer that Christlikeness might more rapidly be incorporated into his or her own personality.

Those without natural leadership skills do not become great leaders at the moment of conversion. Yet a review of the history of the church reveals that the Holy Spirit sometimes releases gifts and qualities that were dormant beforehand. When that happens, a leader is born. When the burning zeal of the early church began to draw converts at an extraordinary rate, the Holy Spirit taught a wonderful lesson on leadership. The church had too few leaders to care for all the needs, especially among the poor and the widows. Another echelon of leaders was needed. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them (Acts 6:3).

These new leaders were first and foremost to be full of the Spirit. Spirituality is not easy to define, but we can tell when it is present. It is the fragrance of the garden of the Lord, the power to change the atmosphere around us, the influence that makes Christ real to others. If deacons are required to be full of the Spirit, should those who preach and teach the Word of God be any less? Spiritual goals can be achieved only by spiritual people who use spiritual methods. How our churches and mission agencies would change if leaders were Spirit-filled! But the secular mind and heart, however gifted and personally charming, has no place in the leadership of the church.

REFLECT

- Would people say of me 'you are full of the Spirit?'
- How would you say you have grown in your leadership in the last year?

Memory Verse

Matthew 20:26 ... whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.

Tuesday 19th January

1 Timothy 3:2-7

1 Corinthians 3:9-17

PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP

‘No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself, or to get all the credit for doing it’ - Andrew Carnegie.

Paul embodied principles of leadership and described it in his letters. He certainly thought the life of individual believers and churches ought to resemble a solid foundation on Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9–17). Looking at Paul’s life, we can see leadership all the more clearly. Paul’s moral and spiritual greatness is all the more evident in the irony that God selected one of the most aggressive opponents of the early Christian movement and made him into its most outstanding leader.

Paul was uniquely equipped for the major role to which God called him. A present-day parallel to this amazing man would be someone who could speak in Chinese in Beijing, quoting Confucius and Mencius; write cogent theology and teach it at Oxford; and defend his cause using flawless Russian before the Soviet Academy of Sciences. By whatever comparison, Paul was certainly one of the most versatile leaders the church has known.

Paul did not appoint elders in every place on his first missionary journey. He sometimes waited until a later visit when questions about spiritual development had been clarified by time and experience (Acts 14:23). Timothy was converted during Paul’s first journey, but not ordained until the second journey.

In the church, maturity is shown in a magnanimous spirit and broad vision. Paul’s encounter with Christ transformed him from a narrow-minded bigot into a full-hearted leader. The indwelling Christ enlarged his passion for others, broadened his view of the world, and deepened his convictions. But even in Paul’s case, these changes took time.

The importance of the above requirements for leadership in the Christian church are recognised even in secular circles. If the world demands such standards of its leaders, the church of the living God should select its leaders with even greater care.

REFLECT

- How would we describe our ‘passion for others’?
- How does our Godly convictions set our world view?

Memory Verse

Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church.

THE APOSTOLIC

'We are in the times of the beginning of a new epoch for Christianity. True apostolic Christianity is being restored to the earth' - Rick Joyner.

Peter was the natural leader of the apostolic band. What Peter did, the others did; where he went, the others went. His mistakes, which sprang from his impetuous personality, were many, but his influence and leadership were without equal. We do well to ponder the advice of Peter's mature years to spiritual leaders of every generation.

See that your 'flock of God' is properly fed and cared for, Peter urges (1 Peter 5:2). Such is a shepherd's primary responsibility. In these words we can hear the resonance of Peter's never-to-be-forgotten interview with Jesus after his failure, the conversation that restored him and assured him of Jesus' continuing love and care (John 21:15-22). Likewise, these strangers in the world (1 Peter 1:1) about whom Peter was writing were themselves passing through deep trials. Peter could feel for them and with them, and he wrote his letter to elders with that in mind.

First, Peter deals with a leader's motivation. The spiritual leader is to approach the work willingly, not by coercion. Leaders of the church in Peter's day faced challenges that would daunt the stoutest heart, yet Peter urges that they not faint or retreat from them. Nor should leaders serve from a sense of mere duty but because of love. The work of pastoring and helping new believers is to be done as God wants, not directed by personal preferences or desires.

A leader must be a worthy example for the people. But being examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3). These words remind us of Paul's advice to Timothy: But set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Timothy 4:12). Peter teaches that elders need the shepherd-spirit. Should elders ever forget Whose flock they lead, Peter reminds them that it is God's. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd; we are assistants and associates working under His authority.

REFLECT

- What do we see as the most treasured thing in our lives?
- Are we setting an example in our speech?

Memory Verse

1 Timothy 4:12 ...but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

Thursday 21st January

2 Timothy 1:3

2 Corinthians 2:17

INSIGHT

Insight perceives, intelligence understands, intellect comprehends, wisdom knows' - Matshona Dhliwayo.

Vision involves foresight as well as insight. A leader must be able to see the end result that is advocated. Responsible leadership always looks ahead to see how policies will affect future generations. The great missionary pioneers were people of vision. William Carey saw the whole globe, while fellow preachers limited the world to their parish borders. Henry Martyn saw India, Persia, and Arabia—the Muslim world—while the church at home squabbled over petty theological disagreements.

Eyes that look are common; eyes that see are rare. How many seeing-eyes do we have at turningpoint church? The Pharisees looked at Peter and saw an unschooled fisherman—not worth a second look. Jesus saw in Peter a prophet and preacher, saint and leader who would help turn the world upside down.

Vision involves optimism and hope. The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty. The pessimist tends to hold back people of vision from pushing ahead. Caution does have its role to play. We all live in a real world of limitation and inertia. Cautious Christians draw valuable lessons from history and tradition, but are in danger of being chained to the past. The person who sees the difficulties so clearly that he does not discern the possibilities cannot inspire a vision in others in the church.

Paul spoke of his failures and successes with an openness few of us are prepared to copy. Even before his conversion he served God sincerely (2 Timothy 1:3) and with great personal integrity. Later he wrote: In Christ we speak before God with sincerity (2 Corinthians 2:17). These two qualities of leadership were part of God's law for the Israelites (Deuteronomy 18:13). God wants His people to show a transparent character, open, and innocent of guile. Surely the spiritual leader must be sincere in promise, faithful in discharge of duty, upright in finances, loyal in service, and honest in speech.

REFLECT

- How are we discharging our duties within the church?
- Are we upright with our finances?

Memory Verse

Hebrews 13:7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

'You have one business on earth – to save souls' John Wesley.

The book of Acts is the story of people who established the church and led the missionary enterprise. The Spirit did not delegate authority into secular hands. In our church, even when a particular job has no direct spiritual teaching involved, all workers must be Spirit-led and filled. Likewise, in 2021, selection of kingdom leaders must not be influenced by worldly wisdom, wealth, or status. The prime consideration is spirituality. When a church or missions organisation follows a different set of criteria, it essentially removes the Spirit from leadership. As a consequence, the Spirit is grieved and quenched, and the result is spiritual dearth and death for that effort.

Selecting leaders apart from spiritual qualifications always leads to unspiritual administration. The Holy Spirit does not take control of anyone against his or her will. When people who lack spiritual fitness are elected to leadership positions, He quietly withdraws and leaves them to implement their own policies according to their own standards, but without His aid. The inevitable result is an unspiritual administration.

The church at Jerusalem listened to the apostles' instructions and selected seven men who possessed the one necessary qualification. As a result of their Spirit-filled work, the church was blessed: the men selected to distribute food and earthly care were soon seen as the Spirit's agents in dispensing heavenly blessings. Stephen became the first martyr for Christ, and his death played a large role in the conversion of Paul. Philip became an evangelist and was used by the Spirit to lead the great revival in Samaria. Leaders who are faithful in the exercise of their gifts prepare the way for promotion to greater responsibilities and usefulness.

These early leaders of the church were sensitive to the leading of the Spirit. The Spirit intervened to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. The Spirit's great purpose is missions. Should that not be ours too? They were accountable, not only to the church, but also to the Holy Spirit. What a sense of assurance and responsibility, what a spiritual authority this teaching brought them, and brings to us at turningpoint!

REFLECT

- Are we accountable to the church?
- Are we accountable to the Holy Spirit?

Memory Verse

Acts 20:28 ... Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.

Save the Date Point Seminar

Friday 5th February - Saturday 6th February

*Preparing God's people
for works of service*

Ephesians 4:12-13



STUDY WITH US IN 2021

turningpoint School of Ministry

On the 19th of February join us for an introduction to our
Cert III, Cert IV, & Diploma courses

THE ART OF PRAYER

‘For the man who prays in his heart, the whole world is a church’ - Sylvain of Athos.

All Christians need the art of prayer, and the Holy Spirit is the master teacher. Paul and Jude teach that effective prayer is praying in the Spirit. True prayer rises in the spirit of the Christian from the Spirit who indwells us. To pray in the Spirit is important for two reasons.

First, we are to pray in the realm of the Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is the sphere and atmosphere of the Christian’s life. In this we often fail. Much praying is physical rather than spiritual, in the realm of the mind alone, the product of our own thinking and not of the Spirit’s teaching.

Second, we are to pray in the power and energy of the Spirit. Give yourselves wholly to prayer and entreaty; pray on every occasion in the power of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18).

Spiritual leaders should know the experience of praying in the Spirit as part of their daily walk. Do we ever try to live independently of the Spirit? Do we fail to see full answers to prayer at turningpoint? We can read all day about prayer, and experience little of its power, and so stunt our service.

The praying Christian wields no personal power, but power nonetheless delegated by the victorious Christ to whom that faithful believer is united by faith. Faith is like a reticulating system through which the victory won on Calvary reaches the devil’s captives and delivers them from darkness into light.

God makes available His divine authority through prayer, and we can confidently claim it. Jesus promised His disciples: I have given you authority . . . to overcome all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19).

REFLECT

- How is your Prayer life?
- Do you feel secure or threatened in your daily life?

Memory Verse

Luke 10:19 I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

Tuesday 26th January

• **Romans 12:1-11**

THE BEST FOR GOD

'I used to ask God to help me. Then I asked if I might help Him. I ended up by asking God to do His work through me' - Hudson Taylor.

Like any other worthwhile activity, if leadership can be improved, we should seek to improve it. In so doing, we prepare ourselves for higher service that may be just around the next corner, though unseen at the present. Romans 12:1 issues this imperative to leaders: Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. The Greek aorist tense of the verb 'offer' (which signifies a onetime act that is finished and done) is followed by thirty-six present-tense verbs (continuous action) that specify what should happen once we obey and offer. Two of those results are especially noteworthy here.

First, exert yourself to lead (Romans 12:8). Barclay translates this phrase, If called upon to supply leadership, do it with zeal. Here is the summons to dive wholeheartedly into leadership, to serve with energy, to leave no room for sloth. Are we doing it? Does your leadership in the church at turningpoint show the intensity typical of Jesus?

When the disciples saw the Master ablaze with righteous anger at the desecration of His Father's temple, they remembered the writings: Zeal for your house will consume me (John 2:17). So strong was Jesus' zeal that His friends thought He had abandoned common sense (Mark 3:21) and enemies charged Him with having a demon (John 7:20). Do people ever use 'zeal' and our name in the same sentence?

Our second present-tense verb in Romans 12 comes from verse 11: Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Most leaders know times of great spiritual excitement, of the burning heart, of special nearness to God, and more than ordinary fruitfulness in service, but the problem is staying there! Verse 11 holds out the alluring possibility of living aglow with the Spirit. We need not go off the boil if the Spirit is the great central furnace of our lives.

REFLECT

- How do we feel about serving in the house of God?
- Do we feel threatened if others seem to be honoured before us?

Memory Verse

John 2:17 ... Zeal for your house will consume me.

Wednesday 27th January
Matthew 16:25, 1 Corinthians 15:31, Mark 10:38-45
Galatians 6:17

ASPIRE TO LEADERSHIP

'The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority' - Ken Blanchard.

God's kingdom requires us to be willing to pay a price for true leadership. That is the price of every great achievement, and it is not paid in a lump sum. Achievement is bought on the time-payment plan, with a new instalment required each day. The drain on resources is continuous, and when payments cease, leadership wanes. Our Lord taught that we could not save ourselves in the task of offering salvation to others. When Jesus said, For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it (Matthew 16:25), part of what He meant has to do with hoarding personal resources in the vain hope that they will preserve us.

Self-sacrifice is a daily cost that we pay. A cross stands in the path of spiritual leadership, and the leader must take it up. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers (1 John 3:16). To the degree the cross of Christ is across our shoulders and over our backs, so the resurrection life of Christ is manifest through us. No cross, no leadership. Paul declared, I die every day (1 Corinthians 15:31).

Whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:44-45). Each of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 was called to sacrifice as part of his or her service. Those who lead the church are marked by a willingness to give up personal preferences, to surrender legitimate and natural desires for the sake of God.

Nothing moves people more than the print of the nails and the mark of the spear. Those marks are tests of sincerity that none can challenge, as Paul knew well. Let no one cause me trouble, he wrote, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus (Galatians 6:17).

REFLECT

- Have we ever had to pay a price for someone else?
- What sort of marks do we carry for Christ?

Memory Verse

1 John 3:16 - This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Thursday 28th January

• 2 Timothy 2:2

RESPONSIBILITY TO TRAIN OTHERS

'None of us is as smart as all of us' - Ken Blanchard.

Paul trained others to lead. Barnabas's spiritual stature is seen in his entire freedom from jealousy when his protégé Paul surpassed his own leadership skills and became the dominant member of the team. It follows that a leader must provide subordinates with opportunity to exercise and develop their powers.

Paul showed concern for training young Timothy and Titus. Paul's method for preparing Timothy for the church in Ephesus is deeply instructive. Timothy was about twenty years old when Paul became his friend. Timothy tended toward melancholia, and he was too tolerant and partial to people of rank. He could be irritable with opponents. He was apt to rely on old spiritual experiences rather than kindle the flame of daily devotion.

Travelling with Paul brought Timothy into contact with men of stature whose characters kindled in him a wholesome ambition. From his mentor he learned to triumphantly meet the crises that Paul considered routine. Paul shared with Timothy the work of preaching. Paul gave him the responsibility of establishing a group of Christians at Thessalonica. Paul's exacting standards, high expectations, and heavy demands brought out the best in Timothy, saving him from a life of mediocrity.

Leadership training cannot be done on a mass scale. It requires patient, careful instruction and prayerful, personal guidance over a considerable time. Disciples are not manufactured wholesale. They are produced one by one, because someone has taken the pains to discipline, to instruct and enlighten, to nurture and train one that is younger.

Spiritual leadership is not a calling we choose to pursue; it is a calling we choose to answer. We don't decide to become leaders; we decide to respond, and keep responding, to God's call in our lives. Along the way, whether we like it or not, that involves us in leadership.

REFLECT

- Who have we intentionally taken into our lives as someone to train in the Gospel?
- How would others know you have decided to respond to God's call in your life?

Memory Verse

Hebrews 5:14 - But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Friday 29th January
Luke 6:34-35, Romans 5:8, Matthew 14:13-21
Matthew 6:1-4

GIVE YOURSELF AWAY

'Alone, we can do so little; together we can do so much' - Helen Keller.

Deep down, every one of us is generous. We all give our money, our time, and our energy away to someone. The problem is that some people are only generous for their own benefit. Even when they're 'giving', they're really only looking for something in return (Luke 6:34-35). This kind of lifestyle has no place in God's church. Sincere, biblical generosity gives to others without expecting to ever be paid back.

Jesus, of course, was the most generous person who ever lived, giving His life for people who did not deserve it and who could never pay Him back (Romans 5:8). As leaders, our lives should be marked by radical generosity. We should give financially when appropriate, being very openhanded when a need is presented. But generosity with money is only a start. Generous leaders see the needs of the people around them as opportunities to share the love of God, to invest in others, and to build genuine relationships.

Jesus took one boy's lunch and multiplied it so there was enough food to feed everyone in the crowd. The accounts say there were five thousand men present, which means there might have been an equal number of women and children there.

Jesus could have warned the crowd in the morning that they should bring a packed lunch. He could have shrugged off the needs of those people as 'not my problem'. The disciples knew that the people would be hungry, and they offered a sensible suggestion to Jesus: Send everybody home before dark.

REFLECT

- Do people see you as generous?
- When it comes to giving time to God or His church at turningpoint, how do we respond?

Memory Verse

Luke 6:38 - Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Vision Sunday

31st January 2021



WHAT IS CULTURE?

‘The stronger the culture, the less processes needed. When the culture is strong, you can trust everyone to do the right thing’ - Brian Chesky.

What do we mean by Culture? Simply put, it's the way we do things around here, which has been developed and learnt over time. Culture determines what is acceptable or unacceptable, important or unimportant, right or wrong, workable or unworkable. It encompasses all learned and shared, explicit or tacit assumptions, beliefs, knowledge, norms, and values, as well as attitudes, behaviour, dress, and language. Every group or organisation has a culture. Define it or it will define you!

Culture is like soil; it helps or hinders growth, depending on its quality. An experienced gardener sets the boundary and removes everything harmful to growth. Seeds are then planted and encouraged to grow through watering and feeding, along with removing any weeds that might choke the seedlings as they mature.

In the same way, we can actively seek to cultivate the Culture of Heaven around everything we do, eradicating negative values, attitudes and behaviours and sowing positive, Godly ones. By intentionally watering and feeding (encouraging) new growth and challenging unwanted behaviours, a new culture becomes ‘the new way of doing things around here’.

I heard a great story from a young man who recognised he carried Kingdom authority to shift the atmosphere in his office, which up until then had been unpleasant due to gossip, slander and people not caring for one another. He began to look for small ways to introduce honour and respect, taking in cakes, making drinks, and intentionally helping colleagues and demonstrating kindness. Gradually others began to follow his lead and the culture started to shift for the better. This can apply in the church. Why not at our church? And why not us?

REFLECT

- How would you describe turningpoint culture?
- How are you supporting and encouraging this culture?
- What steps can you take in 2021 to change any negative culture?

Memory Verse

Galatians 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Tuesday 2nd February

Isaiah 61:1-11

THE CULTURE OF HEAVEN

'God does not give us everything we want, but He does fulfil His promises, leading us along the best and straightest paths to Himself' - Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

In Matthew 6:10, Jesus teaches us to pray, 'Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' On earth as it is in heaven became a co-existing reality when Jesus came to earth, but what does 'Your kingdom come' mean?

Over the years our 'Kingdom' understanding has eroded, like a cliff disappearing into the sea, changing the landscape of our faith. Jesus references Isaiah 61, which outlines the signs of the Kingdom, The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me (God's presence), because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor (Justice). He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted (Healing), to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound (Freedom i.e. Salvation and Deliverance), to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour (Peace), and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn (Comfort), and grant to those who mourn in Zion to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit (Joy), that they may be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified'.

As adopted children of God and ambassadors for God's Kingdom, we can powerfully tap into all of these and bring them from heaven to earth as we encounter people daily.

Once we understand and focus on Kingdom values and recognise through our identity that we have access to them, their opposites become a target for our attention as we learn to pray and take authority over them. When we encounter despair - offer Comfort; when there is hopelessness - release Joy; if we witness physical and emotional pain - bring Healing. Praying for and declaring God's Presence can change any situation.

REFLECT

- What would the world look like if it was run by Kingdom culture?
- Would the way I act be different if I could see that Jesus was standing next to me?

Memory Verse

Matthew 6:10 - your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

BE A CULTURE-CHANGER

‘Culture is like the wind. It is invisible; yet its effect can be seen and felt’ - Bryan Walker, Managing Director, Ideo.

Not only do we have access to the signs of the Kingdom, we get to exemplify God’s character through our behaviour and responses to others. How might we express the Fruit of the Spirit in our workplace? How do we demonstrate faithfulness in the office, love in the classroom, self-control at home with family?

How good are we at loving our neighbour? Do they experience Godly character in the way we handle our relationship with them? We need to take every opportunity to change our behaviour to one that outwardly reflects the character of God and start influencing society from a Kingdom perspective.

How we live, work, make decisions and serve the interests of those around us needs to flow from our first allegiance: from God Himself. In doing so, we follow the example of Jesus who took on the very nature of a servant.

Servant-leaders value the development of people around them; they build their communities, act authentically and share power. Secure in their identity and emotionally mature, they do not hold followers back. They serve and allow others to run past as they cheer them on, celebrating their successes. In God’s Kingdom everyone is treated with honour, dignity, and respect, and that is what we desire to create ‘on earth as it is in heaven’. And at turningpoint church!

Philippians 2:6-8, Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

REFLECT

- Do we see things change when we walk into a room?
- Do people responded to the culture I carry?
- How can I strengthen **turningpoint** culture?

Memory Verse

Galatians 5:15 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Thursday 4th February

Romans 12:1-10

THE CULTURE OF HONOUR

'In a culture of honour, leaders lead with honour by courageously treating people according to the names God gives them, and not according to the aliases they receive from people' - Danny Silk.

What might your home, workplace social gathering be like, if everyone chose to value each other through mutual respect, honesty, and sincerity? For any group of people to operate in this way the 'land' needs to be cleared of individualism, us-and-them blame-game, grumbling, gossip, and slander. New seeds of Honour need to be planted, fed, and watered, enabling people to grow, and teams to flourish on earth as it is in heaven. So, what are the seeds of Honour?

Honour says, 'Where do I position myself to bring the best out of you?' not 'What do I expect you to do for me? Work to Kingdom priorities rather than earth-based deadlines. Take the time to listen to a colleague's concerns. Show compassion to a struggling boss. Demonstrating Jesus' love by our words and actions says, 'you are worth it'. Even when the other person does not reciprocate, keep projecting honour.

Honour is grace in action. Become excellent at handing out pockets of grace as people learn and grow, particularly when mistakes happen. Honour says, 'Let's fix this together!'

Honour is not about a person's performance but their value in the image of God. Through coaching, support, and encouragement, call out an individual's talents and how God sees them, particularly when they do not see it themselves. How can we make this the best job our team members have ever had?

Honour is an attitude of gratitude toward those God has placed around us and in any situation. Do we see our team or colleagues as a blessing or a nuisance; what do we project? A thank-you goes a long way but often gets missed, because of the busyness and pressures of work.

REFLECT

- Do I speak in a way that others know I honour them?
- How could I increase honouring in **turningpoint**?
- What would I change to increase a sense of an honouring culture?

Memory Verse

Romans 12:10, Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.'

COURAGE TO SHIFT ATMOSPHERES

‘Your potential is the sum of all the possibilities God has for your life’ - Charles Stanley.

Reading the Gospels, we appreciate how Jesus stood firm with honour and compassion and was never blown around by prevailing earthly winds. He demonstrated courageous leadership, showing us how to live a naturally ‘supernatural’ lifestyle, bringing Kingdom culture wherever we go.

Our reality is that we are in a spiritual battle with Satan transmitting his negativity, which we pick up, consciously or subconsciously. Ephesians 6:10-13, Finally, be strong in the LORD and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Movie directors go to great lengths to manipulate our emotions; to scare us or make us feel sad or happy. Similarly, we can learn to recognise the atmosphere Satan is trying to create in our church environment and make a choice to take authority over it. In doing so, we bring what it is affecting it into alignment with heaven. Kingdom influencers who do this are a force to be reckoned with and make Satan quake, because he has nothing in his armoury to stop them.

Courageous people are not free from fear, they proceed despite the fear. Furthermore, worry is simply the wrong use of our imagination! In 2021, let’s seek God for His creative solutions and learn to trust Him, because He is forever good and, as His beloved children, God will always guide and protect us.

REFLECT

- How would you go about changing an atmosphere?
- Do you see the Gospel in yourself changing the atmosphere around you, or do those around you change the atmosphere?

Memory Verse

2 Kings 6:16 - Don’t be afraid... Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.



Sunday Services

CRANBOURNE

1785 South Gippsland Hwy

9:00am / 11:00am / 6:00pm

Online at 11am through website &
You Tube

(03) 5996 3048

HALLAM & SEAFORD

2/ 151 Princes Highway

10:00am

Online at 10am through
Facebook & You Tube

(03) 9773 5551

Filipino Outreach

2:00pm

[www.facebook.com/
turningpointFilipinoOutreach](http://www.facebook.com/turningpointFilipinoOutreach)

LILYDALE

197 Main Street

10:00am

Online at 10am through Facebook
(03) 9735 4419

KOO WEE RUP

335 Rossiter Road

10:30am

Online through You Tube on
Mondays at 5pm

(03) 5997 2217

WILDPATH

10:30am

Online at 10:30am through
Facebook & You Tube

(03) 9785 7229

OFFICER

In person through KWR

Online through You Tube on
Mondays at 5pm

(03) 5943 1555

MANSFIELD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

3 Sovereign Court

10:00am

Ps Nathan Bargerbos
(03) 5779 1213

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