A Renewed Mind about **Leadership**

Ephesians 4 explains that our relationship with Jesus changes the way we think about our life and circumstances. There is a way of thinking that is godless and self-absorbed—this kind of thinking is a temptation for every person, although it looks different from person to person. But in Christ we learn a new way of thinking and living:

> But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to **put off** your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to **be renewed** in the spirit of your minds, and to **put on** the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:20–24, emphasis mine)

Don't be fooled—the world is not passive. Rather, the world around us is actively discipling people to follow its thoughts, values, and actions. Add your own fleshly nature to the mix and you begin to better understand why the pull to promote yourself and use others for your benefit is so strong. This is the way it has been ever since the first I-want-my-own-way decision in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-7). But there is hope—because God has overcome the world through Jesus Christ (John 16:33; 1 John 4:4). Christ is not passive. He actively disciples those who are in Him in an entirely different way from the world's way of doing things. And because you are in Christ, you have His Spirit powerfully working in you to change the way you think, what you value and desire, and how you live. This is good news when it comes to our personal struggle to lead others as a Christlike servant.

Not only does God promise that in Christ we "overcome the world," He also tells us that "our faith" has a part to play in overcoming (1 John 4:4; 5:4). In other words, God invites us to cooperate with what He is doing in us. We cooperate by hearing His Words (listening), and then doing what He has said (obedience). This is discipleship according to Jesus: *hearing* and *doing* (Luke 6:46-49; 8:21; James 1:22).

How to do this study:

Use the guide to follow to cooperate with God as He disciples you in this area. How will you demonstrate your love for God through your obedience to His words and ways? Start with prayer—asking the Lord to enable you to be an *obedient listener*. Then think through each question and write down your answers. This process will be especially helpful if you can discuss it with a godly, trusted adult.

Renewing my Mind about Leadership

Put Off (Ephesians 4:22)

Renewing your mind about authority begins with hearing God's Word. Your time spent reading *Help! I Want to Be a Leader* helped start this process. As you heard what God says about servant leadership, what did the Lord show you needs to change in your life? Think about the various relationships God has placed in your life: at home, at church, at school, and/or at work. What do you need to *stop doing* to better conform to the words and ways of Christ, the ultimate servant leader?

In Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul is reminding us of this wonderful reality: in Christ, the old way of life in Adam (the way we thought, what we desired and valued, and the choices of our will) has been put off.

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We are dead to sin, which means we are not slaves to sin anymore (Romans 6:6-7)! We do not have to believe lies. We do not have to obey our wrong desires. Because of what Christ has done for us, we can live like who we are in Christ: dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11)! Take the time to confess and forsake any sin God has revealed in your life (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9).

- **Confess to God:** In what specific ways has God shown you that you are not reflecting Christ in the way you seek to influence others? In what ways are you rejecting God or His promises by your selfishness?_____
_____
_____
_____

- **Ask Forgiveness:** Are there ways that you have sinned against others for which you need to seek forgiveness (e.g., an arrogant attitude, boastful speech, slander, gossip, focus on self, using others for your benefit)? Use the space below to write out your plan for seeking forgiveness from those whom you have sinned against or with. _____
_____
_____
_____

- **Make it hard to sin:** What do you need to radically remove from your life to make it hard to sin in this area again? Are there any known triggers that you can avoid? _____
_____
_____
_____

Renew (Ephesians 4:23)

After taking steps to *put off* the wrong things, you need to spend extra time *putting in* God's truth. You put in truth by meditating on God's Word—especially on God's character and promises. You could really describe the entire *put off* and *put on* process of change described in Ephesians 4 as the act of *renewing*. As God opens your eyes to truth, you respond by putting off what is not like Christ, and by putting on what is like Christ. This is the life of "faith" God calls all believers to continue walking throughout their lives. Each step is taken in loving obedience to the Lord—not in your own strength or wisdom, but in reliance on the strength and wisdom He provides through His Word and your relationship with Jesus Christ.

- **Read**, **study**, and **memorize** God's Word. Take time to prayerfully **meditate** (think about) the passage of Scripture you are reading.[1] Make a journal of what the passage teaches about God (Who God is) and what commands or promises He gives (What God says). As you study God's Word, apply it to your own life. Include in your journal how knowing God changes your thoughts and responses regarding your specific situation or your authorities. Consider: how does knowing this truth change what you believe, what you value and desire, and how you act? Some ideas from the mini-book are included below. Pick one; then create a plan for how you will put God's truth into your heart and mind. Remember, the renewal process is key to lasting change in the life of the believer.

[1] If you need help knowing how to do read, study, memorize, and apply Scripture see *Keys to Your Own God & I Time* (https://lifelineforteens.com/resources/keys), or ask a trusted, godly adult for help.

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Ideas for Renewing my Mind about Leadership:

- Read through the story of **Joseph's life** (Genesis 37-50) and note the many different leadership positions God put him in. Write down ways that you see him leading his family, his friends, and the country of Egypt by serving them.
- Memorize and meditate on **Philippians 2:5-11**. How does this passage show that Jesus Himself serves as the definition of servant leadership?
- Read **John 13:1-17**. This account of Jesus washing the disciples' feet is the greatest object lesson we have of servant leadership. Read through this account slowly and focus on Jesus' actions and the disciples' response. Then, think through ways that you can serve your family and friends and what their reactions might be if you lead by serving them.
- Moses demonstrated servant leadership as he led God's people out of slavery in Egypt and up to the front door of the Promised Land. However, Moses did not always obey God. Multiple times he allowed his sin of frustration and anger to dictate how he led the people. On two different occasions God used Moses to provide water to His people. In **Exodus 17:1-7** Moses obeyed God's commands, but in **Numbers 20:1-13** Moses disobeyed God. Compare and contrast the two accounts of Moses' leadership. What did God point out to Moses as the key issue at stake regarding Moses' disobedience to God as he led the people?
- In **Romans 12:3-8** Paul challenges the church in Rome about how they should use their gifts to serve one another within the church. Notice how Paul starts by warning people in the church about thinking too highly of themselves. Why do you think Paul addresses this idea of pride before he begins talking about spiritual gifts? Read through the spiritual gifts that Paul lists in **Romans 12:3-8** and **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**. Write down spiritual gifts that you think you might see in your life or that others have said they have noticed. How can those gifts help you as you lead others by serving?
- The Apostle Paul spends a great deal of time in his letters to his two younger pastor friends, Timothy and Titus, describing how leaders in the church should lead. Read through the different qualifications for pastors (overseers/elders) and deacons in **1 Timothy 3:1-12** and **Titus 1:5-9**. While God may not call you to be a pastor or deacon one day, we know the God still wants us to lead those who are around us. What are some qualities that Paul lists that you could apply to the way you should lead your friends and family each day?

My Plan:

- When and where will you spend time in God's Word? _____
  _____
- What will you prayerfully read, study, meditate on, and personally apply from God's Word? _____
  _____
- Choose a verse from the passage you are currently studying to commit to memory. What specific verse(s) will you memorize? _____

Put On (Ephesians 4:24)

You don't have to wait to begin moving forward in obedience until you have mastered the other aspects of

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the renewing process. In fact, *putting off* and *putting on* should happen simultaneously. The pursuit of Christlikeness is actually essential to keeping the wrong things out of your life. And keep in mind that the pursuit of Christlikeness is really the pursuit of a Person. Just as Jesus demonstrated in His earthly life, your obedience is an expression of love for God.

God, through His Word and by His Spirit, is committed to making you more like His Son. He wants you to grow and change and invites you to be a part of this process! Obedience isn't always easy—but because of your union with Christ, it is possible. But God doesn't expect you to do it alone. He has provided His Word, His Spirit, and His people. We grow best in community with other believers who walk beside us on our journey to Christlikeness.

- **Replacement:** What positive steps of obedience does God want you to take in response to the what He has shown you in His Word? Consider obedience in the way you think, what you value and desire, and how you act. _____
- **Accountability**: Who in your life can you trust as a mentor to help you? _____
- **Opportunities:** How might God want you to use a position of leadership He has given you to serve those around you? How can you use your God-given resources for the good of others? _____

You may find it helpful to revisit this worksheet multiple times over the next several weeks. Your thinking and responses may change as you face new circumstances and new relationships. You may see significant improvement in some areas or increased challenges in others. But overtime, as you cooperate with God's process of change in your life, He will give you the grace to grow in your relationship with Christ and see His servant-hearted character more fully developed in your life.

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