

An Essential Skills Level Personal Ministries Instructional and Enrichment Training Course

This Enrichment Training Course was prepared for the Adult Ministries Department
of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America

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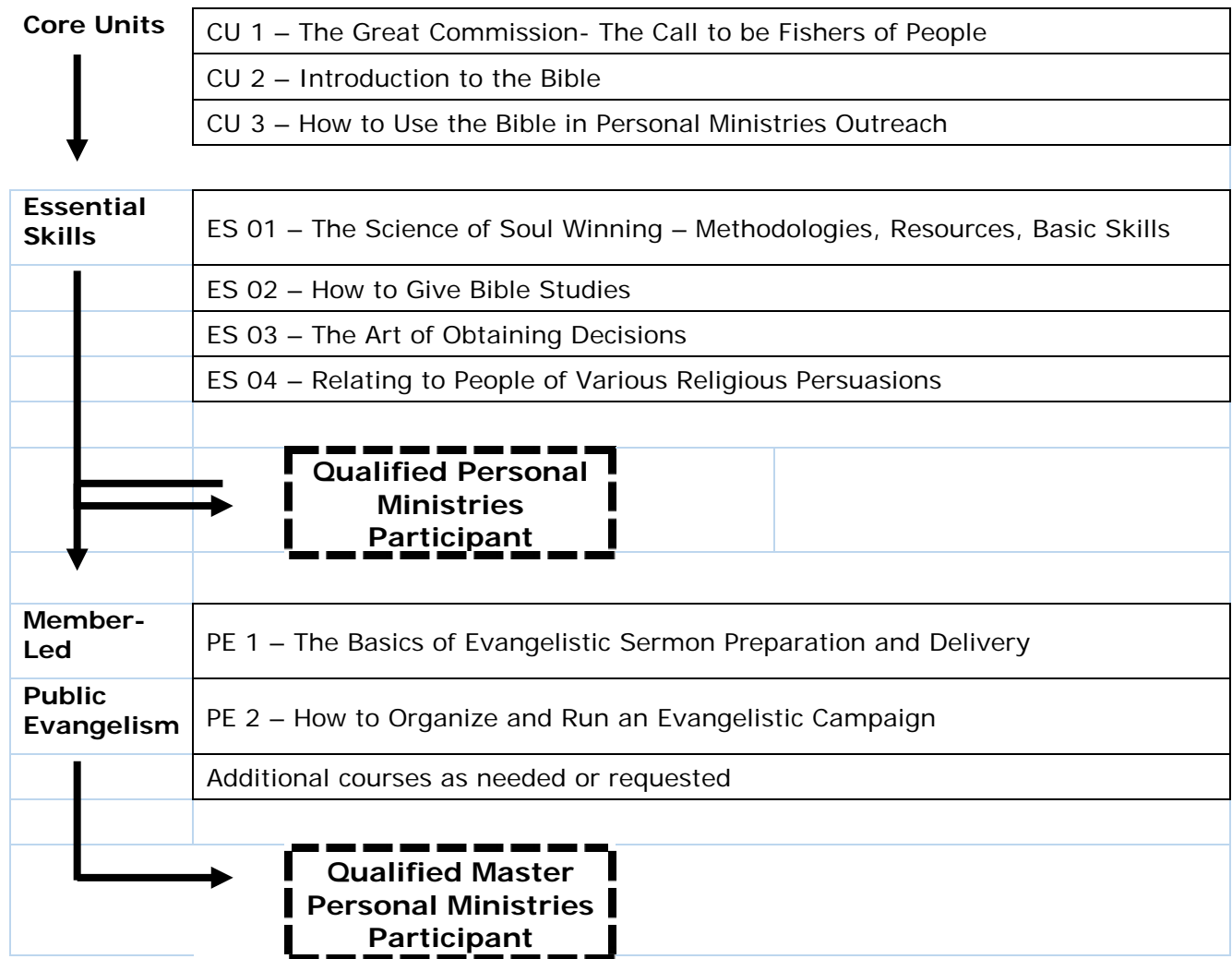
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**A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored
Essential Skills Level Personal Ministries Instructional
and Enrichment Training Course**

The Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division sponsors a curriculum for the instruction and enrichment of those involved in personal ministries outreach and leadership. This curriculum has three levels of training and enrichment. All the courses are available online at www.nadadultministries.org.

These courses are all self-contained units. If you wish to obtain either the "Qualified Personal Ministries Participant" or "Qualified Master Personal Ministries Participant" *Certificates of Accomplishment* you must complete all of the previous courses in the curriculum outline.

**North American Division Personal Ministries Participants
Qualification Process and Curriculum**



The Art of Obtaining Decisions

**A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored
Essential Skills Level Personal Ministries Instructional and
Enrichment Training Course**

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Course Description

Personal Ministries is both the name of a department sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist church, and a designation for any ministry carried out by individual members, or small groups of people, focused on direct evangelistic contact such as Bible studies, baptismal classes, church member-led evangelistic campaigns, or other methodologies involving direct soul winning outreach.

Ellen G White gave us the phrase “the *science* of soul saving” (See *Ministry of Healing*, p. 398). To learn and practice that science, the same statement admonishes, “a broad foundation must be laid.” This course is about one of the essential skills of that broad foundation: How to obtain decisions.

Obtaining decisions is a key strategy of personal ministries participation. Those who master this skill will see many people receive Jesus as a personal Savior, accept the seventh-day Sabbath, and become members of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

How to Study this Course

This is one of the online courses sponsored by the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division. When you finish, you will receive a Certificate of Completion indicating that you have satisfactorily complete this course via the website www.nadadultministries.org.

This course is both theoretical and practical. It is composed of a course outline, assignment sheets, and attached readings from various sources that cover valuable insights about personal ministries outreach enrichment.

You can download the material if you prefer to study from a printed copy. You can also study it directly on the screen if that is your preference.

Often Bible texts are indicated as references. It is always a good idea to look up these texts to see how they fit the pattern in which they are quoted or referred to in this course.

Vocabulary

Bible studies/Bible readings. Bible studies refer to teaching/facilitating a Bible-based series of lessons in a systematic format. Bible studies and Bible readings are two titles for the same process.

Christian personality. The term "Christian personality" refers to the manifestation of the Christian virtues and attitudes in the life of an individual Christian or corporate body of Christians.

Church growth eyes. The term "church growth eyes" is an analogy referring to the ability to recognize how elements of church life relate to the Great Commission. A person with church growth eyes "sees" evangelistic opportunities to which others are "blind."

Church/district. Many churches in the North American Division belong to an extended family known as a district. This is usually because the local conference can only finance one pastor for various churches. Since this type of arrangement is common, and often the churches in a district cooperate in sponsoring training programs, etc. the identifier "church/district" is used.

Decisions. This word refers to the process of following through on the soul winning method used by Jesus. It refers to the step referred to in Mathew 28:19 as "baptizing them." In the sequence outlined by Ellen G White (See *Ministry of Healing*, p. 143), decisions are the final step = "Follow me."

Evangelism. In this course evangelism refers to the entire process of winning converts and incorporating them into the life of the congregation. It is not limited to public meetings.

Friendship evangelism. A system of evangelization based on the *koinonia* (fellowship) and *oikos* (sphere of influence) principles that involve human relationships and listening skills, as well as the passing on of information about the gospel and the church.

Giving Bible Studies. This is a common phrase used in Seventh-day Adventist literature and training classes for the on-the-spot action of presenting a Bible study. It may refer to the process or to the on-the-spot action.

Incarnational evangelism. Incarnational evangelism refers to outreach attitudes and systems that build relationships with people rather than simply passing on information. It is based on the methods used by Jesus and Paul's statement that Christians are "living letters."

Missionary. This title is most often applied to someone who crosses salt water and works in a place other than his or her country of origin. The Bible, while it does not use this particular word, applies this role to anyone who is actively involved in "spreading the Gospel."

Missiology/Missiologist. Missiology is an academic discipline that studies ways and means of reaching people groups around the world with the Christian message. A missiologist is someone who is trained in this academic discipline.

Outreach. This is another word for evangelism. It refers to the process of reaching people with the Gospel and winning them to the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Personal ministries participant. Anyone involved in soul winning/outreach/evangelistic activities in an intentional way.

Small groups. Small groups refer to any gathering of three to twelve people who do something in common by intention.

Spiritual gifts. A spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ, according to God's grace, for use within the context of the Body.

Teaching ministry. Teaching ministry refers to any activity in the church whose objective is that the individual student or audience learn either information or application.

Testing truths. This phrase refers to specific Seventh-day Adventist doctrines such as the Sabbath, state of the dead, etc. These represent major decisions people make.

Unchurched. Any person or persons who does not regularly attend church services, or is not involved in the life of the church.

Witness/witnessing. This term refers to the responsibility of every Christian to relate to others what the Lord has done in his or her life, and appeal to people to accept the plan of salvation.

Textbook

There is no specific textbook for this course. Three valuable resources, obtainable on the Internet or at Adventist Book Centers, will be helpful: (1) Mark Finley, *Persuasion: How to Help People Decide for Jesus*, (2) Joseph C Aldrich, *Gentle Persuasion: Creative Ways to Introduce Your Friends to Christ* (Portland, OR; Multnomah Press, 1988. This is an instruction/inspirational book filled with valuable information), and (3) Ellen G White, *Evangelism: "Clinching the Interest:"* (Section IX, Pages 279 – 333). Other resources will be referenced in various places in the course materials.

Student Fulfillment Card

At the end of this Study Guide you will find a *Student Fulfillment Card*. This is the record of study you will forward to the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division (jalfred.johnson@nad.adventist.org) so you can receive your Certificate of Accomplishment.

Types of Study Locations

- If you are studying this class on your own, this online Study Guide will indicate the exercises that you should complete. These contain question-and-answer sheets you can print out. They identify the important points of the readings and units of study. It is very important to fill in these sheets. They are your way of knowing how you are doing in the class.

- If you are studying in a classroom-type setting, an instructor will lead you through various participatory activities.

- If you are studying in a small group, ideas may also be included for those studying in this environment.

- There are no examinations scheduled for this class, unless an individual instructor decides to use them.

Course Introduction

The Bible emphasizes the responsibility of the followers of the Lord to pass on the instructions and belief system recorded in Scripture. This implies acquiring and building skills in the science of soul winning.

Medical personnel are highly trained to do their jobs. You and I would not dream of going to a doctor who had no specialized training or medical degree. We know what the results would be! When your car needs repair, you take it to a certified auto mechanic because that person has been trained to repair whatever the problem is. If you try to fix it yourself with no knowledge of how automobiles function, the problem will probably just get worse.

The science of soul winning is no different. Participants need to acquire certain essential skills to do an effective job. Some of these skills involve understanding and applying resources and social skills. Others encompass the content of the message communicated to others.

The Bible outlines many methodologies for doing outreach. Sometimes it is done through social networks (The woman at the well); sometimes through governmental agencies (Daniel, Nehemiah); sometime through public proclamations to large groups (Ezra, Paul); sometimes through one-to-one Bible study, conversations, and discussions (Nicodemus).

This present course focusses on how to obtain decisions in a setting of one-to-one or small group Bible studies.

The world Adventist church sponsors many mass media evangelistic outlets and initiatives. It has many resource materials available to accomplish these tasks. These methodologies are based on the principle that every believer is called to share his or her convictions and belief system with someone who is not a believer, or who inadvertently or deliberately believes things that the Bible does not teach.

This is the purpose and assignment of what the Seventh-day Adventist church has chosen to call "Personal Ministries."

The local church/district is the best place to accomplish soul winning and establish discipleship. To accomplish this mission, Ellen G White writes, "Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted." -- *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 148, 149.

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to gain an understanding of the skills of a personal ministries participant, and the use of these skills as basic outreach tools and methodologies.

After completing this course, you should:

- Understand the basic principles of obtaining spiritual decisions.
- Understand and articulate the processes involved in obtaining decisions.
- Be able to articulate either in writing or in practice the processes of obtaining decisions.
- Understand and demonstrate the best ways to call for a decision.
- Become knowledgeable in the identification and use of some key resources for learning how to obtain decisions.

Unit 1

What Spiritual Decisions Are All About

The course you are studying is about the art and process of helping people make a decision based on what they have studied and learned.

In the case of Seventh-day Adventists, we are endeavoring to lead people to make three critical decisions: (1) To accept Jesus as a personal savior, (2) accept and keep the seventh-day Sabbath, and (3) request baptism and join the Seventh-day Adventist church. There are other decisions about biblical doctrines, but these are the “big three.”

Concepts about Decisions

Some people feel that the only decision that matters is to accept Jesus as Savior, and that learning and understanding doctrines is of minor importance. The Bible does not teach that. The apostle Paul writes: “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:16).

Some religious persuasions believe that God makes people’s decisions for them. People are assigned a category of saved (commonly called “The elect”), or unsaved. All a person can do is recognize the category the Lord has assigned to them. Once you detect and acknowledge that you fall into the “saved” category you are forever saved, a concept commonly known as eternal security, or “once saved-always saved.”

Some people believe that while they are free to choose, it is the church that has the authority to tell them what to do. So they will remark: “Let me check with my (priest/pastor/Rabbi) to see what he or she says.”

Seventh-day Adventists believe in *personal free will*. People are free to make their own decisions. The Holy Spirit speaks to people’s hearts and minds. He speaks to their consciences. The grace of God is always available and He is always “speaking” to people. What the person must do is listen and respond.

People may respond to the call of the Lord, and later change their minds and return to a former lifestyle. That is an unfortunate decision they may make, but they are free to do so. The apostle Paul, for instance, mentioned a man named Demas who left him “because he loved this world” (2 Timothy 4:10).

What is a “Spiritual” Decision?

When you are studying with someone through Bible studies, correspondence lessons, public evangelism, friendship evangelism or social media, at some point you will ask them to make a decision.

A spiritual decision is a decision to follow the Lord, to accept Jesus as a personal savior, to accept the teachings of the Bible, and to live a biblical oriented lifestyle. This kind of a decision is not made easily or lightly. It is based on a way of thinking the apostle Paul states as: “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The purpose of this course is to outline some techniques for helping people make correct spiritual decisions.

Decisions in the Bible

The Bible mentions many decisions. For those involved in one-to-one or small group Bible studies two biblical stories stand out, and are used extensively to illustrate the importance and content of a spiritual decision:

1. *Joshua 24:15*: "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."
2. *2 Kings 18:21*: "Elijah went before the people and said, 'How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.'"

Similar decisions happened in all kinds of circumstances and venues, and they were all important and had significant fallout.

The people you study with will probably fit into some biblical story about a decision. Knowing what, when, where, and why a decision was called for and made will help you recognize the decision you may call for at some point in studying with a person.

The following chart illustrates some biblical decisions.

Examples of Good Decisions

Text	Incident or Advice	Decision
Genesis 6:9, 14, 22.	" <u>Noah</u> was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. . . . So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; . . . Noah did everything just as God commanded him."	Noah did what the Lord asked him to do.
2 Kings 22:11; 23:3	<u>King Josiah of Judah</u> . "When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. . . . The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD—to follow the LORD and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant."	Josiah and the people listened to what the Bible had to say and followed it's instructions.
Jonah 3:5,6	"The Ninevites believed God. . . . When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust."	The city was saved. Repentance is part of the spiritual decision process.

Matthew 4:18, 20	<u>Peter and Andrew.</u> "As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, . . . At once they left their nets and followed him."	Decisions to follow Jesus should not be put off. They should be made as quickly and earnestly as possible.
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Acts 16:29, 30, 34	<u>The jailer in Philippi.</u> "The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' . . . The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household."	Acquiring family decisions to accept Jesus and join the church are ideal decisions to obtain.
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Examples of Bad Decisions

Genesis 19:26	<u>Lot's wife.</u> "But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt."	Decisions need to be well made and well thought out. "Looking back" is not a good idea.
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1 Kings 12:27, 28	<u>King Jeroboam.</u> "If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, . . . After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves."	It is always better to listen to the Bible than to the wrong advice, even though it is advice you may want to hear.
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Decisions from the Heart

Deuteronomy 5:29	"Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!"	God's wish for a positive decision from people.
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1 Samuel 12:24	"But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you."	The key decision is from the heart.
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Ezekiel 18: 31, 32	<p>“So turn around! Turn your backs on your rebellious living so that sin won’t drag you down. Clean house. No more rebellions, please. Get a new heart! Get a new spirit! Why would you choose to die? I take no pleasure in anyone’s death. Decree of God, the Master. Make a clean break! Live!” (<i>Message Bible</i>)</p>	<p>God’s appeal to everyone to make a decision to follow Him.</p>
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Romans 6: 17	<p>“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.”</p>	<p>The value of decisions to believe and follow correct teachings (doctrines).</p>
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The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Decision Process

Satan has devised a strategy for dealing with the human mind:

1. He blinds the mind to spiritual perceptions – 2 Corinthians 4: 4.
2. He blinds it with twenty categories of sins – 2 Timothy 3.
3. He cuts off spiritual perception – Ephesians 4: 17, 18.
4. He causes people to believe false doctrines – Revelation 17: 2.

The role of the Holy Spirit is to open people’s minds and hearts and orient the decision-making process. Ellen G White clarifies how this happens:

1. *The Holy Spirit opens minds.* “There is a living power in truth, and the Holy Spirit is the agent that opens human minds to the truth” – *Evangelism*, p. 169.
2. *The Holy Spirit speaks to the heart* - “Kindly words simply spoken, little attentions simply bestowed, will sweep away the clouds of temptation and doubt that gather over the soul. The true heart-expression of Christlike sympathy, given in simplicity, has power to open the door of hearts that need the simple, delicate touch of the Spirit of Christ” - *Evangelism*, p. 483.
3. *The Holy Spirit guides into truth* - “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth” (John 16: 13).
4. *The Holy Spirit presents truth correctly* – “Ministers must seek God for His Holy Spirit, in order that they may present the truth aright” — *Evangelism*, p. 663.
5. *The Holy Spirit makes correct impressions on human minds* – “It is the Holy Spirit that makes the truth impressive” - *Evangelism*, p. 124.
6. *Angels cooperate with the Holy Spirit to make truth impressive.* “Pray that angels of God may come close to your side to impress the mind; for it is not you that work the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit must work you”- *Evangelism*, p. 124.
7. *The Holy Spirit makes appeals effective.* “It is the power of the Holy Spirit that gives efficacy to your efforts and your appeals” -*Evangelism*, p. 285.
8. *The Holy Spirit convicts the soul.* “When the truth in its practical character is urged upon the people because you love them, souls will be convicted, because the Holy Spirit of God will impress their hearts” - *Evangelism*, p. 124.

9. *The Holy Spirit convinces the soul of its need of Christ.* "It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince the soul of its need of Christ" - *Evangelism*, p. 283.
10. *The Holy Spirit produces genuine love for Christ.* "This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The light of the Word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. And love is manifested in obedience" - *Evangelism*, p. 308.
11. *The Holy Spirit brings life into conformity with the teachings of the Word.* "The light of the Word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. And love is manifested in obedience" — *Evangelism*, p. 308.
12. *The Holy Spirit places the soul in the arms of the church.* "God's Spirit convicts sinners of the truth, and He places them in the arms of the church" — *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 69.

An important element in personal evangelism is to intentionally call for a decision. Some people feel that they should not ask for a decision because it will either embarrass the person or place undue pressure on them to simply say whatever the personal ministries participant wants to hear. Any one of these things may happen, but that does not change the fact that a spiritual decision must be made.

The issue is not *if* a decision should be made, but *how* the process of making a decision should be applied and carried out.

Reading 1

The Roll of Decision-Making in Evangelism

➤ *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this Reading.*

1. A key factor in making disciples is obtaining decisions to follow the Lord (Matthew 28:18-20).
2. Paul: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). "For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved" (1 Corinthians 10:33).
3. "The saving of souls is a vast work, which calls for the employment of every talent, every gift of grace. Those engaged in it should constantly increase in efficiency"—*Gospel Workers*, p. 95.
4. "I have appeared to you to appoint you . . . as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. . . . I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26:16-18).
5. "The highest work we ever do for another soul is to afford incentive to immediately treat the measure of truth it already knows, as a reality, and so to act upon it." (Richard Day, *Bush Aglow; Biography of D. L. Moody*, p. 244).
6. "Through us, he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation—an aroma redolent with life." (2 Corinthians 2: 15,16 -Message Bible).
7. "He should speak as one conscious of possessing power and authority from God. His discourses should have an earnestness, a fervor, a power of persuasion, that will lead sinners to take refuge in Christ." — *Gospel Workers*, p. 172.
8. "If the preacher's sermon does not move to the objective of decision, as an arrow strikes straight for its intended mark, that minister's preaching is in vain, and the oratory of politicians commonly employed for the express purpose of winning to an idea should surely shame him." (W.B. Riley, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, p. 18).
9. "The study of the workers now should be to learn the trade of gathering souls into the gospel net" — *Review and Herald*, December 8, 1885.
10. "There are thousands upon thousands, millions upon millions, who are now making their decision for eternal life or eternal death" — *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 406.
11. "It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince the soul of its need of Christ. Many are convicted of sin, and feel their need of a sin-pardoning Saviour; but they are merely dissatisfied with their pursuits and aims, and if there is not a decided application of the truth to their hearts, if words are not spoken at the right moment, calling for decision from the weight of evidence already presented, the convicted ones pass on without identifying themselves with Christ, the golden opportunity passes, and they have not yielded, and they go farther and farther away from the truth, farther away from Jesus and never take their stand on the Lord's side" — *Evangelism*, p. 283.
12. "When persons who are under conviction are not brought to make a decision at the earliest period possible, there is danger that the conviction will gradually wear away" — *Evangelism*, p. 229.

Reading 2

The Process of Decision in a Person's Experience

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this Reading.*

The compilation of Ellen G White statements in the book *Evangelism* (pp. 286-289) outlines some core aspects of the decision-making process as it occurs in people's lives.

The Experience of Genuine Conversion

I have been shown that many have confused ideas in regard to conversion. They have often heard the words repeated from the pulpit, "Ye must be born again." "You must have a new heart." These expressions have perplexed them. They could not comprehend the plan of salvation.

Many have stumbled to ruin because of the erroneous doctrines taught by some ministers concerning the change that takes place at conversion. Some have lived in sadness for years, waiting for some marked evidence that they were accepted by God. They have separated themselves in a large measure from the world, and find pleasure in associating with the people of God; yet they dare not profess Christ, because they fear it would be presumption to say that they are children of God. They are waiting for that peculiar change that they have been led to believe is connected with conversion.

After a time some of these do receive evidence of their acceptance with God, and are then led to identify themselves with His people. And they date their conversion from this time. But I have been shown that they were adopted into the family of God before that time. God accepted them when they became weary of sin, and having lost their desire for worldly pleasures, resolved to seek God earnestly. But, failing to understand the simplicity of the plan of salvation, they lost many privileges and blessings which they might have claimed had they only believed, when they first turned to God, that He had accepted them.

Others fall into a more dangerous error. They are governed by impulse. Their sympathies are stirred, and they regard this flight of feeling as an evidence that they are accepted by God and are converted. But the principles of their life are not changed. The evidences of a genuine work of grace on the heart are to be found not in feeling, but in the life. "By their fruits," Christ declared, "ye shall know them."

Many precious souls, desiring earnestly to be Christians, are yet stumbling in darkness, waiting for their feelings to be powerfully exercised. They look for a special change to take place in their feelings. They expect some irresistible force, over which they have no control, to overpower them. They overlook the fact that the believer in Christ is to work out his salvation with fear and trembling.

The convicted sinner has something to do besides repent; he must act his part in order to be accepted by God. He must believe that God accepts his repentance, according to His promise. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

The work of grace upon the heart is not an instantaneous work. It is effected by continuous, daily watching and believing the promises of God. The repentant, believing one, who cherishes faith and earnestly desires the renewing grace of Christ, God will not turn away empty. He will give him grace. And ministering angels will aid him as he perseveres in his efforts to advance.

Conversions—Not All Alike

All are not constituted alike. Conversions are not all alike. Jesus impresses the heart, and the sinner is born again to new life. Often souls have been drawn to Christ when there was no violent conviction, no soul rending, no remorseful terrors. They looked upon an uplifted Saviour; they lived. They saw the soul's need; they saw the Saviour's sufficiency and His claims; they heard His voice saying, "Follow Me," and they rose up and followed Him. This conversion was genuine, and the religious life was just as decided as was that of others who suffered all the agony of a violent process.

Conversions Not Precise and Methodical

Those men who calculate just how religious exercises should be conducted, and are very precise and methodical in diffusing the light and grace that they seem to have, simply do not have much of the Holy Spirit.

Though we cannot see the Spirit of God, we know that men who have been dead in trespasses and sins, become convicted and converted under its operations. The thoughtless and wayward become serious. The hardened repent of their sins, and the faithless believe. The gambler, the drunkard, the licentious, become steady, sober, and pure. The rebellious and obstinate become meek and Christlike. When we see these changes in the character, we may be assured that the converting power of God has transformed the entire man. We saw not the Holy Spirit, but we saw the evidence of its work on the changed character of those who were hardened and obdurate sinners. As the wind moves in its force upon the lofty trees and brings them down, so the Holy Spirit can work upon human hearts, and no finite man can circumscribe the work of God.

The Spirit of God is manifested in different ways upon different men. One under the movings of this power will tremble before the Word of God. His convictions will be so deep that a hurricane and tumult of feeling seem to rage in his heart, and his whole being is prostrate under the convicting power of the truth. When the Lord speaks forgiveness to the repenting soul, he is full of ardor, full of love to God, full of earnestness and energy, and the life-giving spirit which he has received cannot be repressed. Christ is in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. His feelings of love are as deep and ardent as was his distress and agony. His soul is like the fountain of the great deep, broken up, and he pours forth his thanksgiving and praise, his gratitude and joy, until the heavenly harps are tuned to notes of rejoicing. He has a story to tell, but not in any precise, common, methodical way. He is a soul ransomed through the merits of Jesus Christ, and his whole being is thrilled with the realization of the salvation of God.

Others are brought to Christ in a more gentle way. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." You cannot see the operating agency, but you can see its effects. When Nicodemus said unto Jesus, "How can these things be?" Jesus said to him, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" A teacher in Israel, a man among wise men, a man who supposed that he was able to comprehend the science of religion, and yet stumbling at the doctrine of conversion! He was not willing to admit truth, because he could not understand all that was connected with the operation of the power of God, and yet he accepted the facts of nature although he could not explain or even comprehend them. Like others of all ages, he was looking to forms and precise ceremonies as more essential to religion than the deep movements of the Spirit of God.

Unit 2

Processes for Obtaining Decisions

Basic Principles

The science of obtaining decisions consists of properly applying those divinely appointed laws, or principles, which govern the action of the human mind and heart in responding to the call of God for obedience.

"There are great laws," writes Ellen G White, "that govern the world of nature, and spiritual things are controlled by principles equally certain. The means for an end must be employed, if the desired results are to be attained." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 221.

Decisions from the Heart

Decisions, while rational and knowledgeable, are also made from the heart. We often call these "emotional decisions." "Emotional" doesn't mean that the decisions are only momentary or not permanent. It means that their "heart" is "speaking" to them. Knowing and understanding a biblical truth is important, but a person will make a decision based on what their heart tells them. That is what the phrase "how to approach" means:

"In order to lead souls to Jesus there must be a knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind. Much careful thought and fervent prayer are required to *know how to approach* men and women upon the great subject of truth." — *Testimonies*, Vol 4, p. 67.

For instance, Ellen G White tells us about John the Baptist:

"With vision illuminated by the divine Spirit he studied the characters of men, that he might understand *how to reach their hearts* with the message of heaven." — *Desire of Ages*, p. 102.

What this means is that the personal ministries participant must be attentive to the body language, expressions, observations, questions, and objections of the person with whom they are studying.

"We all need to study character and manner that we may know how to deal judiciously with different minds, that we may use our best endeavors to help them to a correct understanding of the word of God and to a true Christian life." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 69.

The Gospel is Always Gain

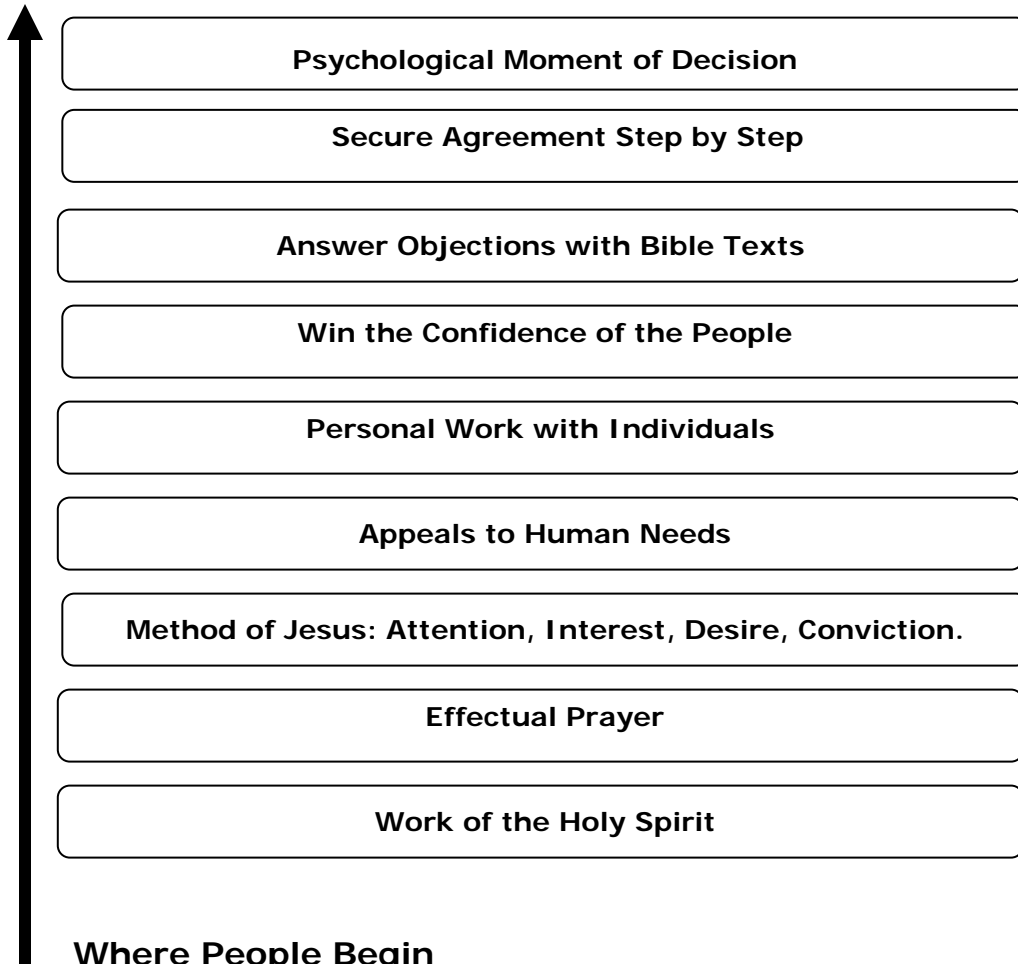
Always point out that the gospel is gain.

"The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power. . . . He is not content merely to announce these blessings; *He presents them in the most attractive way*, to excite a desire to possess them. So His servants are to present the riches of the glory of the unspeakable Gift." — *Desire of Ages*, p. 826.

Nine Steps to Decision

A personal ministries participant will take a person through nine steps toward making a spiritual decision. These steps may or may not emerge in the exact order of the chart below, but they are all involved at some point in the decision-making process.

Where You Want People to Be: "Then Jesus said, 'Follow me.'"



Where People Begin

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."
(Ephesians 2: 1,2.)

Time Sequence for Decisions

Decisions to follow the Lord and accept the teachings of Scripture are not made all at one time. The best way is to call for small decisions in a regular sequence. It will then be easier for the person to make the larger decisions.

- Ask for a decision on the material presented at the end of every study.
- Encourage the student to put into practice each new duty as it unfolds.
- Do not ask for a major decision until the student has sufficient information to enable him or her to make an intelligent decision.

Recognize Signs of Conviction

Sensitivity to signs of conviction is necessary to know when to ask for a decision.

“When persons who are under conviction are not brought to make a decision at the earliest period possible, there is danger that the conviction will gradually wear away.”—*Evangelism*, p. 298

“If words are not spoken at the right moment, calling for decision from the weight of evidence already presented, the convicted ones pass on without identifying themselves with Christ, the golden opportunity passes, and they have not yielded, and they go farther and farther away from the truth, farther away from Jesus and never take their stand on the Lord's side.”—*Evangelism*, p. 283

The key is to learn to recognize decision signals such as the following:

- Would I have to stop doing (whatever)?
- What if my husband wouldn't let me tithe?
- What if I can't get Sabbaths off?
- What will my neighbors or family say?

Positive Alternatives

Ask for a decision on the basis of a choice between two alternatives, both of which are positive and possible, for example: “We are planning a baptism on the 15th and one on the 29th. Which would be better for you?”

Present Jesus as the One who is calling for their decision. The acceptance of Jesus as a personal Saviour is essential to all other major decisions. Avoid presenting the church or yourself as calling for decision.

“Talk to souls in peril and get them to behold Jesus upon the cross dying to make it possible for Him to pardon us.”—*Testimonies*, vol., p.67

Use Scripture to Make Appeals

Scripture appeals carry tremendous force. Employ Scripture as a basis for appeals:

“One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man's ideas or arguments.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p.71

“Be very careful how you handle the Word, because that Word is to make the decision with the people. Let the Word cut and not your words.”—*Evangelism*, p. 300.

Use Bible Illustrations

The Bible contains many illustrations, incidents and narratives which can be made the basis for powerful direct appeals to interested people whose cases or situations are parallel to the experiences set forth in the Bible.

- Israelites crossing the Jordan (Joshua 3). Use in relation to the person who is willing to begin to keep the Sabbath if God will open the way in their home or work.
- The two builders (Luke 6:46-49). Use in relation to those who admit keeping the Sabbath is right but make no move to keep it.
- The prodigal (Luke 15). Use in relation to the backslider who feel they have gone too far for the Lord to receive them back.

Use Prayer as a Means of Calling for Decision

Prayer is a powerful help in obtaining decisions. It may be employed in three ways:

- Pray *for* the person to have the courage to make a decision.
- Pray *with* the person.
- If it is appropriate, ask the person to pray.

Understand the Role of the Will in Making Decisions

The will is the master key of decision. Because God has given human beings free will, it must be awakened and used for them to make a decision.

“What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends upon the right action of the will.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 47

“Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in the life. By yielding up the will to Christ, we ally ourselves with divine power. A pure and noble life, a life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to everyone who will unite his weak, wavering human will to the omnipotent, unwavering will of God.”—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 176

- Show that this is a life and death matter.
- Picture the love of God. Show the danger of delay. Emphasize the individual's decision to assure salvation.
- Stress their influence on loved ones and friends.
- Point out that there will be only two classes of people at the end. Emphasize that Christ is our example.
- Assure them of God's care and interest.
- Emphasize the need for Christ's approval.
- Relate your own experiences. Vividly portray the triumph of truth.
- Stress that it takes courage to be a Christian.
- Inquire, “Where are you planning to spend eternity?”

How the Mind Makes Decisions

Every personal ministries participant needs to understand clearly how the human mind works in making a favorable decision.

Decisions arise out of the interplay in a person's mind of knowledge (information), conviction and desire. Both science and Scripture demonstrate this to be true. When a

person's knowledge, conviction and desire about a subject reach a certain level of intensity, the mind moves toward decision and action.

Since knowledge, conviction and desire lead to decision, Bible studies and personal encounters should be an artful inter-weaving of these factors. This is necessary to bring about the vital interplay of knowledge, conviction and desire that leads to acceptance, decision and action.

Knowledge

Knowledge deals with the accumulation of facts relating to the decision to be made. Adequate information is necessary as a basis upon which a person can make a decision. This is especially important when seeking a decision about testing truths.

- Do not present three or four new truths back to back at the same time. Present testing truths gradually. Most series of Bible study guides intersperse testing truths with easier lessons.
- Spend the necessary time with people immediately after the presentation of testing truths to clear up any major questions.
- Make regular systematic appeals for small decisions as the studies progress.

Use Scripture Texts

Paul prepared the way for making personal appeals by effective use of the Word. His appeals were based on the teaching of the Scriptures:

“But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen” (Acts 26:22).

Use those texts that are best designed for securing the desired results. Some Bible texts are especially useful for communicating knowledge, some bring conviction, and others produce desire. Sometimes the same text contains all three elements.

Make It Clear

Focus on the texts that will implant conviction and arouse desire for accepting and following God’s great principles. Make sure the information is clear and well understood. This can be done by asking questions such as:

- Do you understand this topic?
- Is the meaning of this text clear in your mind?
- Do you have any further questions?

Make Direct Appeals

A direct appeal means that it is specific and to the point:

“The secret of our success and power as a people advocating advanced truth will be found in making direct, personal appeals to those who are interested, having unwavering reliance upon the Most High.”— *Review and Herald*, Aug. 10, 1892

For example, before King Agrippa Paul used his personal testimony about how he found Christ and what Jesus meant to him. What was the reaction to Paul’s testimony?

“The whole company had listened spellbound to Paul’s account of his wonderful experiences. The apostle was dwelling upon his favorite theme. None who heard him could doubt his sincerity.”— *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 437

Paul directed his appeal to Agrippa's convictions in the form of a question: "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?" (Acts 26:27, first part).

He designed to bring home to Agrippa a realization of his personal responsibility—an appeal at an opportune moment.

The appeal assumes that Agrippa will respond positively; "I know you do" (Acts 26:27, last part).

Was Agrippa moved? "But Agrippa did answer: 'Keep this up much longer and you'll make a Christian out of me!'" (The Message):

"Deeply affected, Agrippa for the moment lost sight of his surroundings and the dignity of his position. Conscious only of the truths which he had heard, seeing only the humble prisoner standing before him as God's ambassador, he answered involuntarily, 'Almost thou persuaded me to be a Christian.'"—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 438

General Principles of Appeals for a Decision

The following general principles apply to making appeals for a decision:

- Help the student to make a decision in every lesson. Conviction may completely disappear if one is not brought to decision at the earliest moment possible.
- Show the benefits of the right action.
- Always stress that the requirements of God are accompanied by the blessings of God, and that the blessings of God also involve meeting His requirements.
- Show the consequences of wrong action.
- Show the expectations of the God who loves us.
- Lead students to a relationship with God.
- Truth is most clear when it is fresh in the memory because Satan is working to lead the thoughts away.

Decision Crisis Points

Difficulties always come up when decisions must be made. Here are a few examples:

- A decision may be turned in another direction, or toward another church.
- Relatives or members of other churches may confuse the issues or the truth in the student's mind.
- Circumstances may very rapidly place the student beyond your reach.

The Decision to Accept Christ as a Personal Savior

Use a statement like the following and the accompanying texts in obtaining this decision:

"Notice what Jesus says in Revelation 3:20 – 'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.'

"Jesus wants to come into your heart and make your life what it ought to be. You want Him to do this, don't you? You are ready now to open the door and let Him in, aren't you?"

- Use these texts. Isa 1:18; Matt 11:28; Heb. 7:25; Ps. 34:8; Rom. 5:1; John 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:21, Acts 16:30, 31; John 3:16; Isa. 53:6; Matt. 16:26; John 8:24; Acts 4:12.

The Decision to Keep the Sabbath

The following is an example of how to obtain the decision to keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

- Ask the question: "Is it your decision to keep the Sabbath?"
- Then focus what you present from the Bible, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to implant the conviction that the seventh day should be kept holy. At the same time, arouse desire for doing so.

Ask questions such as:

- "When you think of how Jesus gave Himself for you on the cross, you can't help loving Him, and I know that you love Jesus."
- "In John 14:15, Jesus says to you, '*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*' Now that you see that one of his commandments is to keep the seventh day of the week, or Saturday, you are going to start keeping it because you love Him, aren't you?"
- "Do you know which two qualities the Lord is looking for in you and me? Notice what He says in Isaiah 1:19, '*If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.*' You want to be willing and obedient, don't you?"
- "Since the Lord has made it plain to you that the seventh day is the only day He ever sanctified for you to keep, you are willing to begin to keep it, aren't you?"

The student may say, "You folks have certainly got the Bible on your side for keeping the seventh day." This is your opportunity to reply, "I am glad you see the truth about the right day to keep. It is wonderful to know the real truth. Do you know what is the next thing the Lord wants you to do?"

- Turn to Luke 11:28. "But he said, 'Yes rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.'"
- Then say, "Notice that Jesus pronounces His blessing on those who hear His word and obey it. Now that you see that the seventh day is Christ's day, the next thing is to keep it for Jesus."

Decision about Lifestyle

Lifestyle reforms represent a very difficult step for many people, because they have to overcome lifelong habits of smoking, drinking, wrong diets, and many other things. The Seventh-day Adventist church offers many health-related activities that help people in these situations. You can refer them to the designated activity for their particular issue.

The key text for all these reforms is 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17:

"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple."

Decision for Church Membership

Another major decision is to unite with the Seventh-day Adventist church

- Ask: "The Bible foretells that in the last days the Lord will gather out a special people to keep His commandments. In Isaiah 27:12, God says He will gather them one by one. Don't you want to be one of those whom the Lord is gathering for His Kingdom?"
- Helpful texts: Revelation 18:4; John 10:26, 27; 2 Corinthians 8:12; Luke 14:33.

The following points and texts will help people decide for church membership:

- 1 Corinthians 1:2,10. Paul writes to church congregations and always appeals for unity. This shows that the church as a group is very important.
- 1 Corinthians 11:18 speaks about *coming together as a church*.
- Acts 12:1-5. The ministry of the church represents strength in being together as a united group, even in the face of persecution. This is a real advantage for Christians.
- Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18. Christ is the head of the Church, therefore it is an advantage for us to be members.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12. The church is one body made up of many parts. The parts only function when they come together.
- 1 Corinthians 12:18. God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be.
- Mark 16:16. Church membership is essential. He said to them, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."
- Matthew 18:17,18. The church is responsible for doing God's work on earth, and it is essential to be part of the body of Christ.
- Revelation 22:16. Jesus speaks to the churches, not just to individuals, showing that it is important to be a member of a congregation. God has a specific purpose in organizing the church on earth and asking us to be part of it.
- Hebrews 12:22, 23. It is the general assembly of God, the church of the first born. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.
- 1 Timothy 3:15. "God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."

Assignment 2

Using the Principles of Decision

➤ *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this assignment.*

1. What do you understand by the concept that decisions should be “from the heart,” and not only “from the mind?”
2. Most series of Bible lessons teach what the Bible says through reading texts grouped together in topics. At the end of the study, they typically ask for a decision based on the topic studied. How can you as a personal ministries participant focus that decision as “from the heart,” as well as “from the head?”
3. **Case Study:** Study carefully the chart outlining the 9 steps to decision. Assume you are studying with someone (invent a case study if necessary).
 - a. Explain where that person is on the chart.
 - b. Explain what sequence they followed to get where they are.
 - c. Explain what kind of decisions they have already made.
 - d. Outline what the next decisions will be, and how you intend to help them make those decisions.
4. Explain why the time sequence for making decisions is important.
5. **Case Study:** Assume that a person you are studying with is showing signs of conviction (invent a case if necessary).
 - a. Outline the most apparent signs of conviction we studied.
 - b. Explain which ones apply to the person in your case study.
 - c. Explain how you would lead the person to the next important decision.
6. Write a paragraph explaining your understanding of the importance and role of the human will in the decision-making process.
7. Outline some of the major crisis points in the decision-making process.
 - a. How would you use the general principles of decision-making to help people over these crisis points?
8. **Case Study:** Assume that a person you are studying with is at the point of deciding for the seventh-day Sabbath.
 - a. Explain how you would help them make this decision.
 - b. What biblical texts and heart to heart discussions would you use?

Using the Method of Jesus

John 4 surpasses every other chapter in the Bible for the revelation of the true principles of persuasion. It contains the most complete account and exhibition of Christ's method of soul-winning as recorded in the four gospels.

A key strategy for obtaining decisions is outlined in Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (Matthew 4). Jesus obtained a decision from a person that the customs of the time prohibited him from even speaking to. He obtained the decision while avoiding doctrinal controversy, overcame the person's personal prejudice, offered her something that she did not have, and accepted her as she was (friendship evangelism).

When we study the women's responses to Christ's successive statements, and note the effect which each of these had upon her, the soul-winning process in this case is revealed as consisting of six steps, or six phases of the working of the mind and heart.

1. Christ's first statement arrested her **attention** (John 4:7, 9).
2. His second statement aroused her **interest** (vv. 10-12).
3. His third statement stimulated her **desire** (vv.13-15).
4. His fourth and fifth statements implanted **conviction** (vv. 16-19).
5. His sixth and seventh statements **intensified desire and conviction**.
6. Which led her to **decision and action** for the Lord (vv. 21-30).

Jesus won this woman by arresting her attention, arousing her interest, creating and intensifying desire for truth, implanting conviction of personal need and duty, so that she was led to decision and action for the Lord. This is how He led her from where she was to where He wanted her to be.

"Soul-winners should study and seek to follow these six phases of the working of the mind and heart, which are involved in the cases of leading people, who know not the truth, to step out and obey the truth." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 67.

A Process, Not a Timeline

These six were not so much steps, but rather an expanding, continuing, merging process. Attention ripens into interest. Interest deepens into desire and conviction. Desire and conviction crystalize into decision. Decision moves into action.

Jesus, who made human minds in the first place, conducted his evangelistic work with a lone outcast woman in keeping with the laws of mind and heart for decision:

"He brings men [people] under the transforming power of truth by meeting them where they are. He gains access to the heart by securing sympathy and confidence, making all feel that His identification with their nature and interest is complete. The truth came from His lips beautiful in its simplicity, yet clothed with dignity and power. What a teacher was our Lord Jesus Christ! How tenderly did He treat every honest inquirer after truth, that He might gain admission to his sympathies and find a home in his heart."—*Testimony to Ministers*, p. 190.

More Illustrations

- Study the following Biblical illustrations of decision, and note how it was desire and conviction that produced decision. Act. 16:30, 31; 2:37-41; 8:27-35; Luke 23: 39-42.
- Study the following Biblical illustrations of how insufficient desire and conviction result in an unfavorable decision. Matt. 19:16-22; Acts 26:1-29; 24:10-25.

Conviction and desire are the two keys which open the door of decision. As we teach the doctrines of our faith, we must in cooperation with the Holy Spirit weave the factors of desire and conviction into what we say, so as to prepare the way for decision.

Assignment 3

Jesus' Decision-Making Procedure

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this assignment.*

Study carefully Jesus' decision-making procedure outlined in John 4.

1. In your own words, outline the procedure as you understand it.
2. **Case Study:** Using either an experience you have had, or one you invent as a case study, outline how you can use Jesus' method. Be specific in applying the six steps Jesus used.

Reading 3

Dealing with Objections and Questions

➤ *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this Reading.*

When people are on the path toward decisions, objections and questions arise. Objections must be answered, but a person must not be left offended or unapproachable. We are only instruments, the Holy Spirit leads people to make decisions, and every effort should be made to answer objections with biblical information and in a positive, friendly manner.

Always give the impression that there is no such thing as a bad question or objection. Assume that all questions and objections are honest and seek a biblical answer.

Occasionally someone is argumentative. Usually, however, people are just confused or frustrated. They don't know how to solve problems that arise. They need help and assurance, not arguments.

Questions and objection fall into miscellaneous categories. These are examples of questions and objections that deal with lifestyle and personal relationships. Doctrinal issues are the subject of an additional course in this Personal Ministries Instructional and Enrichment Series.

Study the following examples. Some of these texts seem pretty inflexible, but some decisions are very difficult to make. Discipleship is never cheap!

Secularists and Indifferent People. The Call of the "World"

What if a person is indifferent and seems to have no convictions? These are some of the most difficult people to lead to a decision. Religion to them is "just one way of looking at life!" Only the Holy Spirit can break into their thinking processes. Working with these people takes a lot of prayer.

- Make Scriptural calls for a decision.
- If you are unable to get a response, leave it in the Lord's hands.

What's a Few Little Sins? "If God is love I'm sure He will overlook a few little sins now and then. Why make such a big deal of them?"

- Proverbs 14:12. "There is a way which seems right but the end is death."
- Matthew 15:8, 9. "In vain they do worship me."
- Revelation 1:7-11. Worship Him that made heaven and earth.
- Acts 5:29. "We ought to obey God rather than man."
- James 4:17. It is sin to continue doing wrong after knowing the truth.
- 2 Peter 2:20, 21. It had been better for them not to know the truth than to know and turn away. The latter end is worse than the first.

I like the pleasures of the world. "What if I can't give up my old habits?"

- Matthew 7:13, 14. Narrow is the way to eternal life.
- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. Your body is a temple of God.
- James 5:5. "You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter."

- 1 John 2:15, 16. "Love not the world."
- 2 Corinthians 6:17. "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

I will have to give up a lot. "If I join the church, won't I have to give up a lot of things?"

- Luke 14:33. "In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."
- 1 Corinthians 6:12, 13. "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food—but God will destroy them both."
- 1 Corinthians 10:31. "Do all to the glory of God."
- Philippians 3:13, 14, 17. "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal."
- Matthew 6:24. "No man can serve two masters."
- Ecclesiastes 2:1. Pleasure is vanity
- Ecclesiastes 11:9. "Rejoice in your youth but remember God will bring you to judgment."
- Psalm 16:11. There is pleasure in God.

Former Church Members

Many people have had bad experiences in their churches, former Seventh-day Adventists included. Many have deep spiritual convictions, but are frustrated with "church," whatever that means to them.

Self-righteous people. What if the person feels self-righteous and says they treat their neighbors well, therefore they must already be a good Christian?

- Romans 3:10; 5:19. Show the person that just doing good is not enough. We must be born again and follow all the Lord's teachings. Use mainly Scriptural appeals, waiting for their response before you proceed.
- Romans 14:7. Stress the influence of a decision on loved ones and friends.
- Matthew 7:13,14. Impress the thought that there will be only two classes at the end of the world, the saved and the unsaved.

There Are Many Hypocrites in the Church. "The church is filled with hypocrites. Why should I join them?"

- Matthew 13:24-30 (Parable of the wheat and tares). God's true Church is not composed of perfect people.
- Matthew 25:1-13 (The ten virgins). The church is composed of truly connected and not truly connected Christians.
- Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the finisher of our faith.
- Matthew 7:1-5. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

People Who Suddenly Recognize Their Sinful Lifestyle

I'm Not Good Enough. "I have so many things in my life that I might fall back and not really be faithful."

- John 1:12. Jesus will give you power.

- 1 Peter 5:10. "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast."

"I am such a great sinner that I cannot be forgiven. Why should I try?"

- Romans 3:23. All have sinned.
- Isaiah 44:22. "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist."
- Proverbs 28:13. "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."
- Isaiah 1:16, 18, 20. Come let us reason together.
- 1 John 1:9. Jesus will forgive all confessed sins.
- Hebrews 7:25. Jesus is able to save us.
- John 8:3, 10, 11. Jesus forgave Mary Magdalene, "Go and sin no more."
- Philippians 1:6. "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."
- Matthews 15:5. "Without me you can do nothing."
- Philippians 4:13. "I can do all things through Christ."

Sabbath-Keeping and Job Related Issues

I Might Lose My Job! "What if I can't get the Sabbath free and am in danger of losing my job? How will I take care of my family?"

- Psalm 37:25. The righteous will not be begging for bread.
- Philippians 4:19. God shall supply all your needs.
- Deuteronomy 28:1-6. God will bless your livelihood.
- Deuteronomy 8:18. God gives you power to gain wealth.
- Isaiah 58:13, 14. The Lord shall feed them.

Why should I keep the seventh-day Sabbath?

- Isaiah 56:2. Blessed are those that keep the Sabbath.

Family Relationships

My Family Doesn't Agree. "What if my family is against my joining the church?"

- Luke 6:22. "Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man."
- Matthew 10:34-38. Sometimes the enemy is in a person's own house.
- Psalm 27:10 Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.

My Family Won't Join the Church. "What if my family won't join me in following the Lord?"

- Ezekiel 14:20. Salvation is an individual decision. Parents cannot save their children.
- Philippians 2:12. Work out your own salvation.

- Matthew 10:37. "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

Personal Relationships

I don't want to leave my church. What if the person doesn't want to leave their church and join a different one?

- Hebrews 11:26. Moses regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.
- John 15:19. "I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."
- Matthew 24:1, 2. Jesus left his Jewish temple.
- Matthew 16:18. Jesus built a new Church.
- Revelation 18:4. "Come out of her my people."
- John 10:16, 26, 27 Jesus calls his sheep out from other folds.
- Acts 2:47. God added to the Church all who should be saved.

This church is too small. "This church is small. Why should I join a small (and often minority) church?"

- Luke 12:32. "Fear not little flock."
- Matthew 22:14. "Many are called but few are chosen."
- Matthew 7:13,14. Only a few will enter through the gate of eternal life.
- Isaiah 41:10. "Fear thou not for I am with you."
- Matthew 28:19, 20. "I am with you always even unto the end of the world."
- Matthew 10:32, 33. "Whosoever shall confess God publicly will also be confessed before God in heaven."
- 1 Corinthians 1:27. God has chosen the weak to confound the wise.

Delaying a Decision.

What if a person just will not make a decision and puts it off?

- Matthew 25:10; 2 Corinthians 6:2. Show the danger of delay and losing the opportunity to be saved.
- Matthew 6:33. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."
- Mark 8:36. "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?"
- Psalm 37:3. "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture."

Assignment 4

Dealing with Objections

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you completed this assignment.*

Case Study: You are studying with someone who has little or no religious background. They say to you: "What's a few little sins? If God is love I'm sure He will overlook a few little sins now and then. Why make such a big deal of them?"

Describe how you would handle this objection? What if just quoting a few Bible verses doesn't have much impact on the person? What do you do then?

Case Study: You are studying with a former Seventh-day Adventist who quit going to church because of some personality clashes with someone. How would you deal with their objection that the church is filled with hypocrites?

(Remember that this person probably needs more tender loving understanding than doctrinal information).

Course Summary

Ellen G White gave us the phrase "the *science* of soul saving" (See *Ministry of Healing*, p. 398). To learn and practice that science, the same statement admonishes, "a broad foundation must be laid." This course is about one of the essential skills of that broad foundation: How to obtain decisions.

Obtaining decisions is a key strategy of personal ministries participation. This course has focused on understand the basic principles of obtaining spiritual decisions, the processes involved in obtaining decisions, the best ways to ask for a decision, and has identified some key resources for learning how to obtain decisions.

Student Fulfillment Card

The Art of Obtaining Decisions

Name: _____
Church/District _____

This Student Fulfillment Card is the record that you have successfully completed the Essential Skills course *The Art of Obtaining Decisions* of the North American Division Adult Ministries Department Personal Ministries Instruction and Enrichment training curriculum. When all the items are completed, have the Fulfillment Card signed by the appropriate person (your class instructor, your Internet instructor, a person in charge of Personal Ministries in your church/district, your pastor or someone from the conference in charge of personal ministries or evangelism training).

Check the items completed.

- I have read the two Units of the Study Guide.
- I have looked up and read the Bible passages included in this Study Guide.
- I have completed Assignment 1: "What have You Learned?"
- I have completed Assignment 2: "Using the Principles of Decision."
- I have completed Assignment 3: "Jesus' Decision-Making Procedure."
- I have completed Assignment 4: "Dealing with Objections."
- I have completed Reading 1: "The Role of Decision-Making in Evangelism."
- I have completed Reading 2: "The Process of Decision in a Person's Experience."
- I have completed Reading 3: "Dealing with Objections and Questions."

_____ has satisfactorily completed the course *The Art of Obtaining Decisions*.

(Signature) _____ Date _____

Position _____

Please Submit to www.nadadultministries.org