

Faith Steps

Analysis and application 13-week study guide

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Goal: These 13 lessons invite participants to interact with the Scriptures and with the content of the book, *Faith Steps*. The goal of this study is not only enhanced understanding of Scriptural principles but also *personal application* and *action*.

Questions: The questions in this study guide are generally open-ended and designed to stimulate personal reflection and application rather than to simply transmit and test knowledge (“Jesus wept.” What did Jesus do?). So allow for times of silence as people think about the questions. Sometimes rephrasing a question may help if responses are not forthcoming.

Preparation: Participants should read ahead of time the relevant chapter(s) and Scripture(s) for the upcoming week’s lesson. It is still possible for someone to join the group discussion without having done this, but obviously participants will get more out of the learning opportunity by preparing.

Late joiners: Participants also should be able to join the group at any point during the 13 weeks, though they should read at least Part One and Part Two of the book to understand the fundamental principles of *Faith Steps*.

Time: Since each group will have differing amounts of time allocated for its meeting and each will move through a lesson at a different pace, you may find that a week’s unit will have either more or less content than your group will cover during the session. If you find that your group will run out of time before all the material is covered, just focus your time on the content that your group is most likely to benefit from most. If you find that time will be left over after you’ve covered the lesson, you might use the remaining time for discussing related current events or reviewing previous chapters. Allow adequate time for the guided prayer for each lesson.

2015 First Edition note: To use this study guide with the original 2015 printed edition of *Faith Steps*, chapter numbers will differ beginning with Lesson #10. The original edition Chapter Thirteen, “Freedom of faith, conscience and speech” is now “Healthcare and conscience.” A new chapter Fourteen, “Marriage,” has been added. Chapter titles after that remain consistent with the original edition, but the number of each original chapter increases by one digit (so the original edition Chapter Fourteen is referred to in this study guide as Chapter Fifteen, and so on).

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Lesson #1 – Chapter One

Ch. 1: Prodigals or prophets? Christians engaged in public policy

1. Acts 17:10-27
 - a. This passage recounts two presentations of the Christian faith. At Berea, Paul and Silas teach in the Jewish synagogue. At Athens, Paul launches discussions with Greek thinkers in the marketplace and later delivers a message at the Areopagus (site of the Athenian government council).
 - i. How did Paul need to tailor his message for these two different audiences?
 - ii. What sources of knowledge and revelation did Paul appeal to in each?
 - iii. How do you explain the differences in response of the two audiences?
 - iv. What can we learn from each of these presentations about communicating with different people to encourage them toward a relationship with God?
2. What principles should political leaders consider about including Scripture or other mentions of faith in public addresses?
3. Have you ever interacted with government officials for the purpose of advocacy?
 - a. In what specific ways?
 - b. What does Romans 13:7 suggest related to communicating with government officials?
4. What do the following Scriptures:
 - * Ephesians 4:7-13
 - * I Corinthians 12:13-31
 - * I Timothy 5:7teach us about:
 - a. God's gifts to us of certain abilities?
 - b. His calling to specific avenues and offices of service?
 - c. How we esteem those who hold various offices in the church?
5. Regarding politics and power:
 - a. What unique challenges and temptations does a Christian who holds political office face?
 - b. How should a Christian in public office (a) view political power and (b) handle its accompanying temptations?

6. Do you find parallels of power and temptation in your own position and/or work, and how do you handle it?
7. If you were to "take home" one important message from this chapter, what might it be?

Guided prayer

- ❑ Wisdom, protection and following God's principles:
 - *Community*: Elected officials, courts, law enforcement, education officials, social services agencies
 - *State*: Governor, legislature, courts
 - *Nation*: President, cabinet and agencies, senators, representative, courts, armed services
- ❑ Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- Communicating with government officials: <http://congress.org/>
- Congressional Prayer Caucus: <https://forbes.house.gov/prayercaucus/>

Lesson #2 – Chapters Two, Three

Ch. 2: How worldview impacts public policy

1. Deuteronomy 30:11-20
 - a. Verses 11-14
 - i. What do these verses suggest about the ease or difficulty of discerning God's principles for living?
 - ii. How does the concept of revealed truth and moral laws contrast with contemporary thought?
 - b. Verses 15-18
 - i. Choose one of the ten commandments that Moses delivered (Deuteronomy 5:4–21). How might following that commandment lead to life and prosperity, and how might violating them lead to death and adversity?
 - c. Verses 19-20
 - i. What do these verses teach about our purpose for life and how we fulfill that purpose?
2. What is a worldview, and what are some examples?
3. What changes in moral perspectives in the country and in your community have you noted over the past several decades of your life?
4. Can you think of any cultural icons (celebrities) or movements or events that illustrate the moral perspective of today?
5. How would you describe the changes in general worldview of people now and people then that have led to these changes in moral perspectives?
6. What are some key elements of a Christian worldview?
7. What do you think of the argument advanced by some, that prostitution is a legitimate profession based on autonomous choice?
8. What examples today can you think of where autonomy is advanced as a reason to legalize or legitimize a certain practice or right? How would you evaluate that rationale and its likely results?
9. What examples of court decisions or political leaders can you think of in which the judges or public officials elevated their own opinions and desires above the law?
10. If someone asked you to explain your worldview, what might you say?

Resources

- Christian creeds and catechisms - <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/creeds-confessions/>

- The Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview - www.colsoncenter.org/wfp-home

Ch. 3: Faith Steps – Moving toward God

1. Romans 1:18-22, 28
 - a. (v. 18) The Greek word (*katéchō*) translated "suppress" as it relates to God's truth means to hold it down, hold it illegally, hinder it, keep it back. Can you think of examples in politics, media, the entertainment industry, academia or science where God's truth has been suppressed?
 - b. (vss. 19-20) How does God make his truth evident within us?
 - c. (v. 20) What are some examples of God's attributes, power and nature discernible in His creation?
 - d. (v. 21) When people reject God and His truth, futile thinking results. The Greek work in v. 21 for "futile" (*mátaios*) connotes vanity (in the sense of emptiness), pointlessness and worthlessness resulting from deception. What evidence of this worldview do you see in our culture?
 - e. (v. 28) The Greek word (*adókimos*) for "depraved," used to describe the mind of someone who rejects God's truth, means inauthentic, unattested, unreliable. Because such thinking runs contrary to God's design, actions based on that thinking result in failure, whereas aligning our thoughts and actions with God's design yields positive results. What are some examples of public policy or government programs that (a) run counter to or (b) align with God's design?
2. Understanding faith steps
 - a. Review and explain the key principles of faith steps highlighted in this chapter.
 - b. How do the principles of faith steps align with what Francis Schaeffer noted, "The truth that we let in first is not a dogmatic statement of the truth of the Scriptures but the truth of the external world and the truth of what man himself is"?
 - c. How does the ministry of John the Baptist illustrate the principle of faith steps?
3. In your own life, what are some examples of how you have either complied with or violated God's principles? Describe the results and what you took away from those experiences.

4. What opportunities can you personally take advantage of to help influence individuals, employers, institutions or the government to make moral choices aligned with God's principles?

Guided prayer

- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.
- Worldview, Scriptural understanding and courage to live out God's principles even when they go against the culture:
 - Myself
 - My loved ones
 - Our church and/or group
 - The Church in our nation
- Cultural influencers – for salvation, strengthened faith and godly influence:
 - Entertainers and athletes
 - Educators
 - Political leaders
 - Business and professional leaders
 - Artists, writers and thought leaders

Resources

- Bible word study - *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume*, Kittle and Friedrich
- The Trinity Forum - <http://www.ttf.org/>

Lesson #3 – Chapters Four, Five

Ch. 4: A personal journey

1. Luke 3
 - a. How do John's message and instructions to the people illustrate the principles of *Faith Steps* outlined in the previous chapter?
 - b. How and why did John challenge a secular government authority on a moral issue (v. 19)? What do you think of this?
2. Luke 7:28-35
 - a. How do our works—our moral choices, attitudes, words and actions—affect our relationship with God?
 - b. How did the Pharisees respond to God's revelation? Do you see parallels today in your own or others' attempts to encourage people to follow God and His ways?
 - c. The saying, "wisdom is vindicated [proved right, justified] by all her children" (v. 35) suggests that we can judge the wisdom of a course of action by its results. How might we apply that principle to individual behavior and to public policy?
3. Personal testimony
 - a. If you or someone you know has experienced a similar pattern in your faith journey to that described by this author in Chapter Four, please describe it. How did your choices impact your moving toward or away from God?

Ch. 5: How individuals take faith steps

1. Matthew 14:22-33
 - a. How common were supernatural feats for Jesus and also for His disciples, and why?
 - b. How do you relate personally to the following quote from *The Normal Christian Life*, by Chinese missionary and martyr Watchman Nee?
 - i. "All temptation is primarily to look within; to take our eyes off the Lord and to take account of appearances. Faith is always meeting a mountain, a mountain of evidence that seems to contradict God's Word, a mountain of apparent contradiction in the realm of tangible fact—of failures in deed, as well as in the realm of feeling and suggestion—and either faith or the

mountain has to go. They cannot both stand, but the trouble is that many a time the mountain stays and faith goes. That must not be. If we resort to our senses to discover the truth, we shall find Satan's lies are often enough true to our experience; but if we refuse to accept as binding anything that contradicts God's Word and maintain an attitude of faith in Him alone, we shall find instead that Satan's lies begin to dissolve and that our experience is coming progressively to tally with that Word."

2. What are some examples from the Scriptures (see Chapter Six) that illustrate how God gives us opportunities to respond to His initiative? Examples from your own experience?
3. Explain the meaning and relevance of the following quotations from and describe any application to your own life:
 - a. "When we respond to the 'gentle blowing' of God as He introduces opportunities into our lives, we are taking faith steps."
 - b. "We fail and we fail often, yet He remains *persistently merciful*."

Guided prayer

- Discernment of truth and of moral paths and the strength to make godly decisions; protection from error and temptation
- Sensitivity and openness to the leading of God's Spirit and to follow His prompting for opportunities
- Initiative to pursue God and advance His kingdom:
 - o Myself
 - o Loved ones
 - o Our church or group
- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts*, Vol. 10, by Tremper Longman, III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).
- Nee, Watchman, *The Normal Christian Life* (free download): <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/nee/normal.html>

Lesson #4 – Chapters Six, Seven

Ch. 6: How a nation takes faith steps

1. Deuteronomy 4:5-14
 - a. What had other nations witnessed regarding Israel and its God?
 - b. Besides guiding the people of Israel, what role were its godly governing principles to play in the world?
 - c. Why does Moses emphasize the need for vigilance and education regarding the keeping of God's tenets?
2. American educators in times past taught civics to children, but that emphasis has waned in recent years. How has this impacted our present, how might it affect our future, and what could you and others do about it?
3. What influences of Christian principles do you see in the US Declaration of Independence and in the US Constitution?
4. What are some examples of laws that reflect the Ten Commandments?
5. In what ways would you say that the United States today abides by the principles of the Ten Commandments, and in what ways does it violate those principles?

Ch. 7: How to encourage faith steps toward God

1. Deuteronomy 30:15-20
 - a. Would obeying / disobeying God's law lead to life / death, prosperity / adversity:
 - i. Because of God's direct compensation (of His blessing or judgment)?
 - ii. Because of the natural consequences that accompany moral choices?
 - b. What is God's purpose in providing His principles for living?
 - c. Moses (a) points to the path for life and (b) outlines the benefit of choosing and the harm of rejecting that path.
 - i. What are some examples of harms and benefits experienced as a result of their choices by:
 1. the nation Israel?
 2. our nation?
2. Relate a personal example of a conversation that presented the harms and benefits of a particular choice or course of action. How did it result and what, if anything, was learned from that result?

3. Can you think of any specific New Testament examples of teaching and preaching that reflect the approach of presenting harms and benefits and allowing choice?
4. What are some concrete ways that you, your church or your Christian group are helping those outside the faith to see the principles of your faith? Any ideas for new ways?

Guided prayer

- Alignment of American law and policy with God's principles:
 - Sanctity of human life
 - Family
 - Sexuality
 - Protection of poor, vulnerable and marginalized
 - Military, law enforcement and justice system
- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- *The Purpose Driven Life* and also *The Purpose Driven Church*, both by Rick Warren
- Library of Congress legislative resources for teachers:
<http://thomas.loc.gov/teachers/>
- Freedom2Care – www.Freedom2Care.org

Lesson #5 – Chapters Eight, Nine

Ch. 8: Euthanasia and assisted suicide

1. Exodus 20:12-17
 - a. This section of the Ten Commandments focuses on six aspects relating to how we treat others: parents, murder, adultery, theft, false testimony and coveting.
 - i. What fundamental moral and/or relational principle(s) are common to all?
 - ii. Which of these six aspects might possibly come into play with euthanasia and assisted suicide, and how?
 - b. Is there a moral difference between murder and other occurrences that result in death (e.g., wars, self-defense, death penalty) in the Scripture, and if so, what is the difference?
2. What do the following Scriptures suggest about those who participate in suicide and euthanasia?
 - a. I Samuel 31:3-5, II Samuel 1:5-16 (Saul and armor-bearer)
 - b. II Samuel 17:21-23 (Ahithophel)
 - c. I Kings 16:16-19 (Zimri)
 - d. Matthew 4:5-7 (Satan)
 - e. Matthew 27:3-5 (Judas)
 - f. Acts 16:27-30 (jailer)
3. In each of the three Dutch euthanasia stories described in this chapter:
 - the patient of Dr. Zbigniew Zylicz
 - Franz the sailor
 - the grandfather of Henk Reitsemaexamine the attitude and actions of each of the following persons or entity and how that person or entity either discouraged or contributed to the euthanasia:
 - a. patient
 - b. family
 - c. physician
 - d. government
4. If you were a vulnerable patient possibly nearing the end of your life, what persons or entities would you take comfort in or worry about regarding decisions about your life?
5. What stories have you heard or personal experience have you had regarding euthanasia and assisted suicide?

6. If you were conducting a campaign to prevent assisted suicide or euthanasia from taking root in your state:
 - a. what *stories* would you present, and
 - b. what practical arguments (*harms and benefits*) would you emphasize?
7. Beyond public policy work to stop medical killing, how can we persuade individuals and influence our culture toward seeing that *life is worth living*?

Ch. 9: Sexual risk avoidance

1. Romans 6
 - a. (v. 1-11) When we unite with Christ through faith, we are born again. God replaces our old, fleshly nature with a new, spiritual nature. He wipes clean the ledger sheet of our sins and empowers us to resist the temptations that once bedeviled us.
 - i. Does a gap remain between these truths and appropriating their reality in our daily experience, and if so, why?
 - ii. The Greek word *logizomai* used in verse 11 (and also in Genesis 15:6 in the Greek translation of the Old Testament) means calculate, conclude, reckon. How do we daily implement the principle of considering ourselves as dead to sin?
 - b. (vss. 12-14)
 - i. These verses warns us to (a) turn a deaf ear to the siren call of evil desires to indulge in sin that enslaves and sickens us while driving us away from God; and, (b) to consciously appropriate our God-given spiritual power to remain free and healthy under grace.
 1. Can you think of some specific examples of how we can do this practically when faced with temptations?
 - c. (vss. 15-23)
 - i. What does this passage suggest about "sexual liberation"?
 - ii. How does verse 23 provide a template for understanding and explaining (a) the situation of someone who does

not know God and (b) for arming ourselves for good decisions when we do know God?

2. Can you share any consequences of helpful or harmful sexual choices that you have observed in our culture, in your community, in acquaintances or in yourself? How can those observations inform future choices?
3. How might differences in worldview translate into sex ed programs that either focus on sexual risk reduction (e.g., by normalizing non-marital sexual activity and emphasizing condom use) or focus on sexual risk avoidance (e.g., by emphasizing self-respect and the benefits of saving sex for marriage)?
4. What are some common temptations triggered by our physical desires?
5. Do you note any differences in how men versus women or younger versus older individuals are tempted regarding physical desires?
6. What specific strategies are you aware of that help individuals overcome addictions of any kind, and what are some key elements of those strategies?
7. What are some practical safeguards an individual might employ to protect himself or herself from sexual temptation:
 - a. With another person?
 - b. With pornography?

Guided prayer

- God help us to build a culture of life in our homes, in our community and in our nation.
- Expose the harms of assisted suicide and sex outside marriage.
- Influence lawmakers, educators, the medical community, and family members to pursue policies and principles that respect life and save sex for marriage.
- Deliver those addicted to pornography and restore respect, morality and human dignity.
- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans-Galatians, Vol. 11*, by Tremper Longman, III et. al.
- Assisted suicide and euthanasia:

- Christian Medical Association:
<http://tinyurl.com/EndingLife>
- US Conference of Catholic Bishops:
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/assisted-suicide/to-live-each-day/index.cfm>
- Life Issues Institute:
<http://www.lifeissues.org/category/issues/euthanasia/>
- Sexual risk avoidance:
 - National Abstinence Education Association:
<http://www.abstinenceassociation.org/>
 - National Center on Sexual Exploitation:
<http://endsexualexploitation.org/>

Lesson #6 – Chapters Ten, Eleven

Ch. 10: Abortion

1. Psalm 139:1-18
 - a. 1-6
 - i. What do these verses reveal about how God relates to, cares for and values us?
 - ii. What thoughts come to mind as you consider the fact that God knows your every thought, word and deed?
 - b. 7-12
 - i. Besides the way that the biblical Jonah tried to geographically flee from the presence of God so as not to obey His command, what are some other ways that people attempt to flee from the presence of God?
 - ii. Do you see any parallels between the fleeing from God's presence in Psalm 139:7 and the suppression of truth in Romans 1:18?
 - c. 13-16
 - i. What do we know about early human development that illustrates what these verses describe?
 - ii. The Psalmist sees the active hand of God in the development of a human being in the womb. Yet abortion advocates sometimes portray a developing baby as a mere blob of tissue. What explains the difference?
 - iii. What does verse 16 suggest about:
 1. the beginning of life?
 2. God's plan for your life?
 - d. 17-18
 - i. What are the personal implications of the unsearchable vastness of God's thoughts and wisdom?
2. Abortion
 - a. Which of the personal testimonies of abortion in this chapter did you find especially compelling and why?
 - b. As described in this chapter, abortionist Kermit Gosnell violated both the law and professional medical ethics. How could a physician rationalize the actions he took, and how could a government fail to stop it?
 - c. How would you answer someone who claimed that the Bible says nothing about abortion?

Ch. 11: Stem cells and human cloning

1. Stem cells and human cloning

- a. How might you use scientific facts to highlight the humanity of a human being from the point of fertilization?
- b. Imagine that you had been born as a result of a human cloning experiment. How might that realization affect you psychologically, emotionally and relationally?
- c. Generally speaking, how objective and trustworthy do you think (a) scientists and (b) the media are? What factors can affect the objectivity and trustworthiness of what these groups say publicly?

Guided prayer

- Healing for those who have experienced abortion.
- Help, hope and life-honoring decisions for those considering abortion.
- Provision, protection and effectiveness for those ministering to women in crisis pregnancies.
- God help us to build a culture of life in our homes, in our community and in our nation.
- Scientists to come to know Christ, and courage and favor for believing scientists.
- Life-honoring laws and policies.
- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- **Legal:** Americans United for Life: <http://www.aul.org/>
- **Help:** Care Net pregnancy centers: <http://www.care-net.org/>
- **Activism:** www.MarchForLife.org
- **Science:** Family Research Council - Stem Cells and Biotechnology: <http://www.frc.org/stem-cells-and-biotechnology>

Lesson #7 – Chapter Twelve

Ch. 12: Human trafficking

1. Psalm 10
 - 1-2
 - i. The psalm begins with “Why do You stand afar off, O Lord?” (v. 1) and ends with “You will incline Your ear to vindicate the orphan and the oppressed” (vss. 17-18). Are these expressions reconcilable?
 - ii. Can you recall a time when you had an urgent need for help and felt that God was “standing afar off”? How does the psalmist respond throughout this psalm to the feeling of God’s disengagement or slowness to execute justice?
 - 3-11
 - i. What specific verses gives us clues regarding the knowledge of God and the attitude toward God of the wicked who are described in this passage?
 - ii. How does this passage relate to Romans 1:18-25?
 - 12-18
 - i. Can you identify any parallels between the assumptions of the wicked regarding morality and justice described in v. 13 and the assumptions of our culture today?
 - ii. How does the psalmist resolve his feelings expressed in the beginning of the psalm (v. 1)?
 - iii. Compare this psalm to Psalm 22:1-5, 24, which is considered a prophetic messianic psalm (see esp. vss. 14-18). What can we learn from these psalms that can inform how we deal with the existence of evil and the perceived lack of justice for evildoers in light of the power and justice of God?
2. Which of the profiles of human trafficking victims did you find especially compelling and why?
3. Compare and contrast the “harm reduction” strategy for victims of human trafficking with the rescue strategy and discuss which you favor and why.
4. Many refer to prostituted individuals as “sex workers.” Discuss whether or not this label is appropriate or not and why.

5. If you were to develop a plan to help your own community increase awareness of and response to local instances of human trafficking, what might that plan include? What groups would be important to engage? What might be some objections and how could they be addressed? How might you incorporate public awareness, training and legislation?
6. Regarding identifying and reporting potential victims:
 - Would you know how to spot a potential victim? What are some clues?
 - To whom would you report a suspected victim?
7. Can you think of any other ways that you or your group might personally get involved in the fight to abolish modern-day slavery?

Guided prayer

- Rescue, hope and healing for victims of human trafficking.
- Justice for perpetrators and aid and protection for rescuers.
- Laws and policies protecting individuals from the harms of trafficking and prostitution.
- Efforts to decrease the demand for prostituted individuals.
- God's guidance and provision for new efforts to address human trafficking.
- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: Revised edition 5 – *Psalms*, by Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Zondervan). See. esp. commentary on Psalm 137:9 regarding imprecatory psalms in light of biblical injunctions to love our enemies.
- Human trafficking education:
 - www.cmda.org/TIP (CME credit available)
 - <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/anti-trafficking>
- Reporting human trafficking victims: <http://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>
 - To report suspected human trafficking: **1-866-347-2423**
 - To get help from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 1-888-373-7888 or text HELP or INFO
 - BeFree (233733)

Lesson #8 – Chapter Thirteen

Ch. 13: Healthcare and conscience

1. Daniel 3:8-30
 - a. 8-12
 - i. Romans 13 teaches that God has established governors and entrusted them with power in order to promote good and punish evil. How did Nebuchadnezzar's decree violate this principle, and what is the responsibility of His people in such cases?
 - b. 13-15
 - i. Why does Nebuchadnezzar react as he does?
 - ii. Do you see any comparable situations today in which those with governing power seem to be acting solely to punish those who oppose its ideology or power?
 - c. 16-18
 - i. Did the faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego require an assurance of God's protection and an understanding of His purposes? What can we learn from their example?
 - ii. At the beginning of their captivity (Daniel 1:8-16), these three men along with Daniel had proposed a compromise that allowed them to stay true to their convictions while accommodating the goals of the government. How do you explain the difference of their response to the King in this situation? Again, what can we learn from their example?
 - d. 19-30
 - i. To what purposes did God turn the persecutions of the opponents and the government?
 - ii. What might have been God's purpose in rescuing Shadrach, Meshach or Abed-nego and leaving them to serve as captives in a foreign kingdom, as opposed to taking them home (through death) to their eternal reward?
2. What examples of government pressure against or outright persecution of people of faith do you see today?

3. What is being done and what should be done to address abuses of government power against the faith community?
4. Are you personally or professionally vulnerable to government or institutional pressure or persecution for your conscience convictions regarding abortion, assisted suicide, embryonic stem cell research or similar issues, and if so, what is your plan of action?

Guided prayer

- Laws, policies and court rulings to uphold conscience freedom for health professionals and choice for patients.
- Medical organizations to adopt life- and conscience-honoring policies.
- Conviction, courage and favor for life-honoring health professionals.
- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- Freedom of faith, conscience and speech: www.Freedom2Care.org
- *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* by Eric Metaxas (Thomas Nelson)

Lesson #9 – Chapter Fourteen

Ch. 14: Marriage

1. Matthew 19:3-12
 - a. 3-6
 - i. Based on the text, what do we learn about God's design for *men and women, gender, sex, and marriage*?
 - b. 7-9
 - i. Based on the text, what do we learn about God's view of *divorce, faithfulness and adultery*?
 - c. 10-12
 - i. Based on the text, what do we learn about God's view of *singleness*?
2. In Matthew 19:8, Jesus explains that “Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.” Even though divorce violated God's design, the Old Testament Law accommodated man's sinfulness with a law that allowed for divorce while requiring a certificate that served to protect the divorced wife.
 - a. Can you give any examples of modern laws that accommodate man's departure from God's design?
 - b. Does this mean that Christians should not be concerned with conforming laws to God's design?
 - c. Can you summarize any important principles regarding lawmaking and considering God's design?
3. How does your social group, school or profession view (a) same-sex marriage and (b) those who hold to marriage as reserved for a man and a woman? How much tolerance is demonstrated for differing views?
4. If you were called upon to articulate your own convictions regarding marriage, sex, gender and divorce, how well prepared do you feel you are you to do so (a) to those likely to *agree* with you and (b) to those likely to *disagree* with you?
5. Are you personally or professionally vulnerable to government or institutional pressure or persecution for your conscience convictions regarding marriage, and if so, what is your plan of action?

Guided prayer

- ❑ Laws, policies, court rulings and education upholding God's principles for marriage and children.
- ❑ Conviction and courage for individuals struggling with sexual issues and/or marital fidelity to follow God's design and principles.
- ❑ Compassion, courage and effectiveness for those ministering to individuals struggling with sexual issues.
- ❑ Truth and conviction, understanding and compassion in the Church for individuals struggling with sexual issues.
- ❑ Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- *Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom and What Is Marriage?* by Ryan Anderson
- *Same-Sex Marriage: A Thoughtful Approach to God's Design for Marriage* by Sean McDowell & John Stonestreet
- Focus on the Family: <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/>

Lesson #10 – Chapters Fifteen, Sixteen and Seventeen

Ch. 15: Toward a Christian view of government

1. Romans 13:1-7
 - a. 1-4
 - i. Based on the text, (a) what is God's purpose for government and (b) what are the duties of rulers?
 - b. 5-8
 - i. The use of the word conscience (the Greek *syneidēsis* can also mean consciousness) likely implies that because Christians are aware of God's purpose for government, they should act accordingly. How is our understanding of the role of government in God's kingdom to translate into our actions toward government?
 - c. In what ways is a government likely to find the Church (a) a threat to its power (b) a potential partner in achieving the government's goals?
 - d. Which of the teachings of the Christian leaders outlined in this chapter (the Apostle Paul, American Revolution pastor Jonathan Mayhew, early Church leader Augustine, Dutch politician Abraham Kuyper and evangelical thinker Charles Colson) did you find especially meaningful and why?

Resources

- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans-Galatians*, Vol. 11, by Tremper Longman, III et. al.
- *City of God*, by Augustine of Hippo
- *God and Government*, by Charles Colson
- Family Research Council: www.frc.org

Ch. 16: The 'free exercise' of religion

1. Acts 17:16-34
 - a. 16-21
 - i. In what three places did Paul speak, and was his message likely different in each place? How might

- these places represent groups that Christians today also need to address?
- ii. In what ways were the responses that Paul encountered similar to those believers encounter today?
- b. 22-34
 - i. What did Paul find in common with his audience as a starting point of communication? What role did Scripture play in his presentation?
 - ii. In v. 28, Paul cites quotations from the works of the Cretan poet Epimenides and the Cilician poet Aratus. What does this suggest about Paul's knowledge of and engagement with popular culture, and why does he cite these writers?
 - iii. How do you evaluate the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of Paul's message with this audience, and what can we learn from this?
 2. Based on the text and crafting of the First Amendment of the US Constitution ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"), how would you explain the constitutional relationship of Church and state?
 3. Polls show that an increasing number of Americans do not affiliate with a particular religion but do consider themselves spiritual. How are such individuals similar to those addressed by Paul in Athens, and how might we adapt his approach to communicating with such people?

Resources

- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts*, Vol. 10, by Tremper Longman, III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).
- Christian legal organization: Alliance Defending Freedom: <http://www.adflegal.org/issues/religious-freedom>
- Secular legal organization: The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty: <http://www.becketfund.org/>

Ch. 17: The role of Christians in government

1. I Corinthians 5:9-13

- a. What does this passage assume regarding the association of believers with those who do not share our faith, and how does that assumption parallel the life of Christ?
 - b. What type of judging is expected of members of the Church, and what type is not?
2. What reasons have you heard from believers who feel that Christians should not engage in public policy, and how might you respond?
3. To what extent and in what way do you personally sense a call to engage in public policy? What about your group or church?

Guided prayer

- Laws, policies, court rulings and education upholding religious freedom.
- Discernment of my own role and that of our church or group in influencing government.
- Godly, wise and effective believers to serve in government.
- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- *Democracy In America*, by Alexis De Tocqueville
- Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission: <http://erlc.com/>

Lesson #11 – Chapters Eighteen, Nineteen

Ch. 18: Christ-like in controversy

1. Acts 1:1-11
 - a. 1-5
 - i. Verse three notes that for weeks after His suffering and resurrection, Jesus presented Himself with “many convincing proofs” (including those described in Luke 24:13-51). Consider this fact and the persisting doubts of Thomas (see John 20:24-29). What do these examples suggest about what it takes for some individuals to believe in Christ, and how should that affect our efforts to lead others to Christ?
 - b. 6-8
 - i. The first two chapters of Acts emphasize the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostles likely knew all they needed to know to go out and preach, and yet Jesus commanded His disciples to wait “until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). What can we learn from this that relates to our communicating faith principles in the public square?
 - c. 9-11
 - i. What does the angels’ statement in verse 11 suggest about our mission on earth and our focus?
2. What specific social and moral issues currently seem to generate the hottest controversy in the current political debates? When is strong language over moral and social issues appropriate and, when inappropriate, how might it be improved?
3. What is your own personal attitude toward conflict and controversy, and how do you handle it?

Ch. 19: Reaching a secular culture

1. James 1:19-27
 - a. What words would most aptly describe the person who fulfills the teaching of this passage?
 - b. 19-21

- i. Regarding the exhortation to be “quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger,” what are some benefits of this approach in (a) interpersonal relationships and (b) how believers are perceived in public communications?
 - ii. Based on teachings and examples from Scripture, what anger is right and what is wrong?
 - c. 22-25
 - i. What is the purpose of Scripture for its reader, and what is the effect on an individual who fulfills that purpose?
 - d. 26-27
 - i. What concrete examples does James cite to make his point about the actions and character that accompany true faith, and why are these examples especially apt?
2. As you think of specific spokespersons who speak out publicly (i.e., in writing or speaking to mass audiences) for faith values, how would you describe how they likely are perceived by people outside the faith?
3. If you were named #1 Ambassador to the Public to speak about public policy issues, what would you consider important about yourself and your message?

Guided prayer

- God to help me see how I am helping or hurting my witness to unbelievers.
- Equip me and my church or group to communicate lovingly and effectively to unbelievers.
- Equip specific individuals in the public eye who are presenting faith-based principles to secular audiences and to our culture.
- Equip Christian legislators and public officials to present godly principles winsomely and effectively.
- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews - Revelation: 13*, by David E. Garland, et. al., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).
- *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence

Lesson #12 – Chapter Twenty

Ch. 20: Is America too far gone?

1. Esther 3:1-6, 4:4-17
 - a. 3:1-6
 - i. What provoked Haman’s hostility toward the Jews? What motivates hatred and persecution of the faith community today?
 - b. 4:4-12
 - i. Why does Esther hesitate to engage in this opportunity to impact public policy (see also 2:10)? How do her reasons parallel reasons why some believers hesitate to engage in public policy today?
 - c. 4:13-17
 - i. Why did Mordecai say what he did to Esther? Do you see any parallels with this situation facing the Jews and threats to the faith community in our own nation today?
 - ii. What are the key elements of Esther’s response and strategy?
 - iii. How might those elements inform public policy strategy for the faith community today?
2. What specific signs in our nation today do you see of (a) moral and spiritual decline and (b) moral and spiritual reformation and hope?
3. What strategies did Wilberforce and the Clapham group employ to accomplish the abolition of slavery and the reformation of culture in England? Might you, your group and your church do something similar?

Guided prayer

- Courage, protection and favor for persecuted Christians and those experiencing discrimination and rejection for their faith.
- Spiritual revival* in our community and nation: “...[if] My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (II Chronicles 7:14).

- ❑ Effective Christian ministries to reform the culture and guidance for our role in that effort.
- ❑ Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*, by Eric Metaxas (New York: Harper Collins, 2007).
- The Clapham Group: <http://claphamgroup.com/>

Lesson #13 – Chapter Twenty-one

Ch. 21: Our challenge and opportunity

1. II Corinthians 5:11-20
 - a. 11-15
 - i. What motivated the apostles and early believers to persuade others despite intense opposition, and what can we learn from their example?
 - b. 16-21
 - i. Why is reconciliation required for a relationship with God?
 - ii. Whom does God call to serve as ambassadors, messengers of the Good News of reconciliation through Christ?
 - iii. How does the fact that we had previously been estranged from and have now been reconciled to God affect our motivation and approach to those who currently are estranged from God? What does this mean for how we speak and act in the public square?
2. What are your thoughts on these questions regarding personal character? Are there any areas in which you especially would like to improve, and how might you pursue that goal? How might the same questions apply to your own group or church?
 - a. Do I sympathetically care for and sacrificially serve others?
 - b. Do I gently speak the truth in love?
 - c. Do I associate with the lowly, help the poor and defend the vulnerable?
 - d. Do I readily and candidly admit my shortcomings?
 - e. Do I show grace and compassion to those who've wandered far from God?
3. How well do you feel that you personally and also your group or church have engaged with the culture, and what might be some plans for future engagement?
4. Is there a particular issue among those discussed in Part Three of *Faith Steps* that you personally would like to learn more about and address with others, either in conversation or in the public square? What might be a plan of action to accomplish that goal?

5. What are some ideas or principles that you have found most meaningful in your reading of *Faith Steps*?

Guided prayer

- “Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way” (Psalm 139:23-24).
- Courage, protection and favor for persecuted Christians and those experiencing discrimination and rejection for their faith.
- Boldness, winsomeness and wisdom in sharing our faith.
- Spiritual revival* in our community and nation.
- Effective Christian ministries to reform the culture and guidance for our role in that effort.
- Family members, friends, colleagues and others – turn from bad decisions, make godly decisions, know and follow Christ.

Resources

- *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas á Kempis (1380-1471).