



PWOC

Protestant Women of the Chapel

3 silly glasses
1 clear glasses
4x6 cards
markers
poster board
music
mints

WORKSHOP: The Leadership Lens:

Leading Through the Lens of the Gospel

By Heather Anne Ward

LEADER'S GUIDE

RELEVANCE: The "lens" we use to view the world around us is essential to our understanding of the truth, which impacts the characteristics and quality of our leadership. How leaders view the people they are leading, the issues they encounter, and their motives for leading are defined by which *lens* they use. For a gospel-centered leader, their lens is the gospel- the truth of the Word of God. This lens brings clarity and visibility to the leader's view, which in turn impacts their understanding of the world around them and their response to it. Without the gospel as the leader's lens, their view becomes distorted, and their quality of leadership is significantly diminished. Therefore, the truth found in God's Word is the foundation of a thriving leader.

CONTEXT: This workshop is designed to train up future and current leaders in a variety of capacities: ministry within the chapel, their unit, outside organizations, and within their home and other areas of influence. This material lays the foundation for training leaders, and would be beneficial for training a new board, a special training for the PWOC body, or as a workshop for a program day or retreat. It can also be shortened for a devotional.

TIME: 60-75 minutes



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HOOK YOUR AUDIENCE: (5 minutes)

Begin the workshop by asking the following questions and “modeling” each “lens” as it applies:

Note to Trainer: Model various types of “distorted” glasses: with lenses that have eyes with springs on them, glasses with lines on the lenses, glasses with blurry lenses, etc. Be sure to include one pair of glasses that are clear. Each pair of glasses can be labeled with a tag signifying the type of “lens” the viewer is using: The Past, Feelings/Emotions, Worldly Philosophies, The Gospel (clear lens).

Think about what kind of lenses you use, and how you view the world around you. I’m going to show you some different types of lenses and ask you to think about – but not answer out loud – the kind of lenses you use:

(Trainer, put on the spring-eye glasses tagged with the label “Your Past”)

These lenses represent **my past**. When I wear these kinds of lenses, my understanding of the world around me is based on my past. I tend to filter my interactions with others and the situations I encounter through my past experiences, whether they are failures, accomplishments, joys, sorrows, or my background.

(Trainer, put on the blurry glasses)

Here is another kind of lens I’ve used - **my feelings**. When I wear these lenses, I have a tendency to define what is happening around me and things said to me through my emotions– how I FEEL.

(Trainer, put on the glasses with lined lenses)

And there’s the lens of “**Worldly Philosophies**,” which come at me from all angles. When I wear these lenses, I am filtering my understanding of truth through the lens of philosophies that may “sound” truthful but are twisted and distorted forms of truth.

(Trainer, take off the “funny” glasses, and put on the clear glasses)

Those lenses gave me a distorted view of life. Obviously I could not see things clearly. As a leader, it is vital that we see things clearly, and that our understanding of the world around us is based on truth– what is really REAL. Our lens of choice as a leader needs to be the gospel- God’s Word. We must filter our motives, our interactions with people, and the issues we encounter through the good news of the gospel.

Each of you has a 4x6 note card. Take the next 2-3 minutes to write your answer to the following question: WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

(Trainer, play soft, quiet music during this time while participants are writing.)



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MAKE YOUR POINT 1: The LENS- The Gospel (5 minutes)

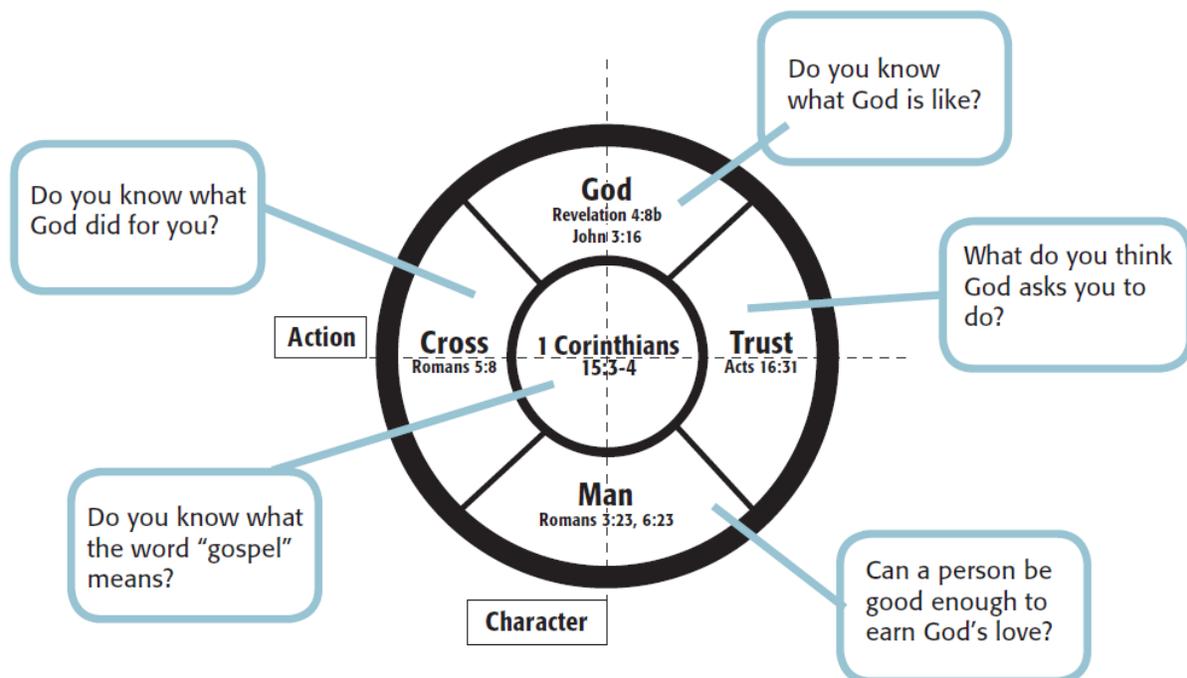
Now that you have written a definition of the gospel, we will “self-grade” our responses based on the Biblical definition of the gospel. I will let the Holy Spirit help you in any adjustments that need to be made to your current definition.

Before we can know what a gospel-centered leader looks like and how he or she functions, we must define the “lens” by which this type of leader views everything around them. We must lay the foundation of an accurate understanding of the gospel in order to build the characteristics and functions of a gospel-centered leader.

Simply put, the gospel is the “Good News.” Let’s explore this “Good News” together!

To help us simply and accurately define the gospel, we will use the “Gospel Wheel” tool that is used by AWANA Clubs International (www.awana.org). It is a great illustration that can help us accurately and clearly share the gospel.

(Trainer: Use a blank Gospel Wheel to teach the gospel to the participants, filling in the main words while having them fill-in the wheel in their Participant's Guide. Use the Scripture references on the wheel to help in your explanation. (Note: To mix things up and to help your participants feel included, it would be good to have volunteers read the Scriptures.)



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Our Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (NIV)

The bottom line of the gospel is that it is all about Jesus. *We need to acknowledge that we are helpless sinners and then trust in Jesus to save us from our sin. It is not the size of our trust that saves us. It is Jesus who does the saving. It is all of him and none of us. (John R. Cross, *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*, page 256)*

The gospel is therefore central to all theological truth, and is the overarching reality that makes sense of all reality.
- Dave Harvey, *When Sinners Say "I Do"*

Now that we have "refreshed" our understanding of the gospel, let's "refresh" our mouths as we get ready to practice teaching the gospel to one another. *(Trainer: give each participant a mint or chocolate mint of some kind.)*

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 1: (5-10 minutes)

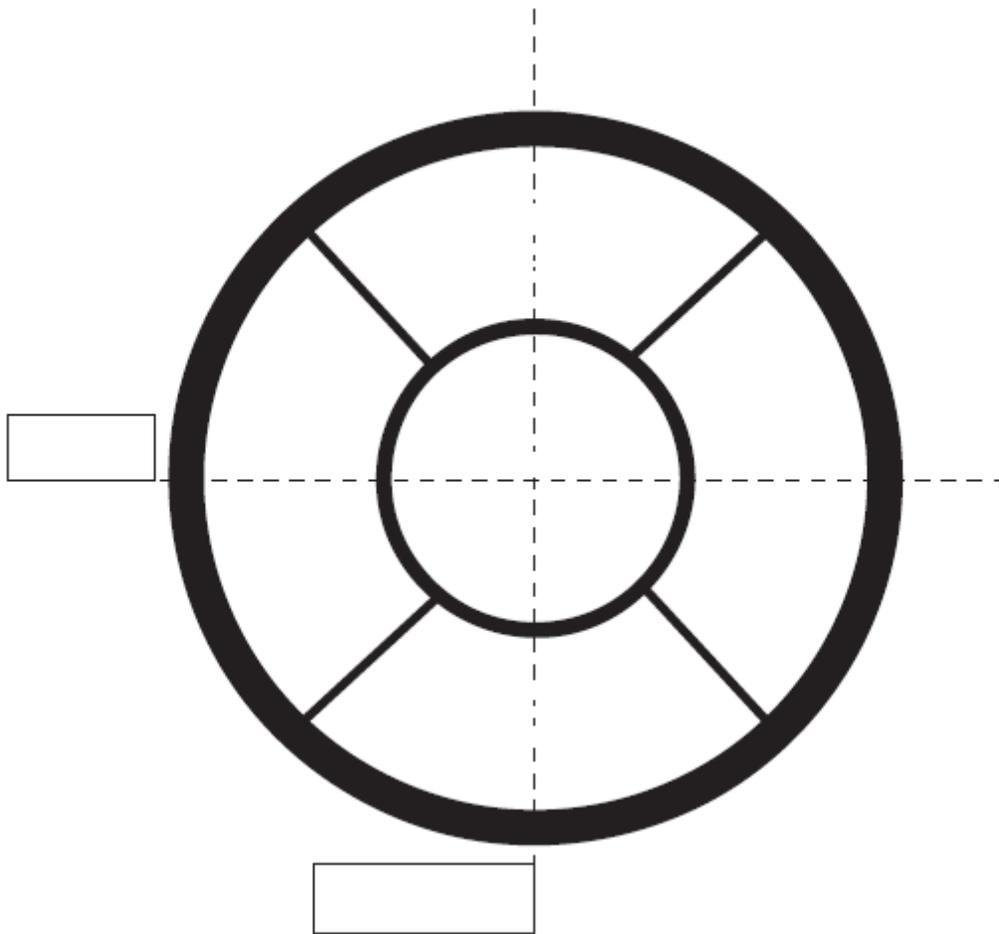
Being able to share the gospel is the First AIM of PWOC: "To LEAD women to accept Christ as personal Savior and Lord." Take the next five or so minutes to use the blank (practice) Gospel Wheel to share the gospel with a partner.

Note to Trainer: Have ladies pair up and use the blank (practice) Gospel Wheel to practice sharing the gospel with each other. Be sure to walk around the room to listen and observe – as well as answer any questions. After it appears that all ladies have had an opportunity to share, bring them back together.

Great job sharing the gospel with each other! Keep studying the gospel and memorizing the key verses so that you will be ready to boldly step out in faith in and obedience to God whenever He presents an opportunity. Furthermore, through studying God's Word, you will be able to continually wear the gospel lenses and have a clearer and more accurate view of the world around you. In so doing, you will become a more effective leader.



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MAKE YOUR POINT 2: The OBSERVER (10 minutes)

Characteristics of a Gospel-Centered Leader

So, what DOES a gospel-centered leader look like? What are the characteristics that make up a person who wears the *lens of the gospel* on a regular basis? To help clarify and define the characteristics of a gospel-centered leader, take about 3-5 minutes to read the following excerpt taken from Chapter 9 of *Creature of the Word: The Jesus-Centered Church* by Matt Chandler, Josh Patterson, and Eric Geiger. Be sure to highlight and make notes of any words or phrases that stand out to you.

(Trainer: play soft, quiet music during this time while participants are reading.)



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This excerpt is taken from Chapter 9 of Creature of the Word: The Jesus-Centered Church by Matt Chandler, Josh Patterson, and Eric Geiger. Copyright, 2012.

Godly leadership is stewardship. It is the recognition that personal agendas, entitlements, vainglory and selfish ambition must be put to death. A leader who is transformed by the gospel seeks not to make a name for himself but to lift high the name of Jesus. His obsession is not with building his own empire, but living for the kingdom of God.

What IS Gospel-Centered Leadership?

Most Christian approaches to leadership simply find good and bad examples of leaders in the Bible and say, "Be like this," or "Don't be like that." Although the Bible certainly provides great examples of leadership, these approaches often assume the Bible is a book primarily about you and what you are to do, rather than primarily about God and what He has done in Christ.

Gospel-centered leadership does not begin with the command to imitate, but with the good news that God is gracious and has sent His Son to take our sins and give us life.

So, yes, gospel-centered leadership may end up looking like Nehemiah or Moses, but that's because it's grounded in being united to the One toward whom they point: Jesus. When you're united to the One who died on the cross and rose from the grave, then your life (and your leadership) is shaped by dying to self and allowing Christ to live in you.

In light of all of this, how can we best understand and define leadership, specifically gospel-centered leadership?

Jesus-centered leadership is God-focused, Christ-exalting and Spirit-led influence toward a kingdom agenda. Gospel-centered leadership is inextricably linked to the work of the triune God in redemption. The gospel is Trinitarian. The Father sends, the Son accomplishes, and the Spirit applies. Thus, gospel-centered leadership is marked by its redemptive influence and kingdom initiatives.

This definition is in accord with the theological grid distilled from the Scriptures. Gospel-centered leadership focuses on the glory of God and is grounded in God's reign and rule.



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Gospel-centered leadership aims to exalt Christ Jesus in all things and is sourced in His Person and work. He is the Chief Shepherd, the Senior Pastor and Head of the body.

Gospel-centered leadership recognizes that we cannot afford to be self-directed in our influence; rather we must be Spirit-led. All of our influence and inertia is toward advancing the kingdom of God by pushing back the darkness.

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 2: (10 minutes)

Now that you've read the excerpt, let's brainstorm the characteristics of a gospel-centered leader.

Note to Trainer: Spend about 5 minutes taking comments from the participants and writing the characteristics mentioned on a poster board or white board. Some possible answers are listed below. These are not intended to be the "right" answers, just some possibilities to help keep the discussion moving. Always use your participant's answers-build on their ideas; this will give them more "buy-in" and will help validate their ideas.

Possible responses:

- *Love of the gospel*
- *Transparency*
- *Generous*
- *Intentional*
- *Loving*
- *Full of grace*
- *Selfless (thinks of self less)*
- *Sacrificial*
- *Concern for God's agenda, not own agenda or gain*
- *Forgiving*
- *Life is centered on Jesus Christ*
- *Led by the Holy Spirit*
- *Consumes God's Word daily*
- *Prays continually*
- *Identity and satisfaction is found in Christ alone*

(Trainer: Wrap up the discussion with one or more of the following quotes and/or paragraphs.)



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- Gospel-Centered Leaders love the Gospel. They love to talk about it, sing about it, and tell it to others. The death and resurrection of Jesus, and their union with Him moves their heart like nothing else. They never tire of hearing the Gospel or preaching it to themselves. The Word of Christ (Colossians 3:16) dwells deeply and richly in them. They define themselves as people loved by God in and through the Person and Work of their Lord Jesus Christ. Their identity, value, worth, and significance – their life is found in him.*

(What Does Gospel-Centered Leadership Look Like? by Greg Breazeale)
- With the gospel as the leader's lens, he or she realizes that life is truly all about Jesus. These leaders know that on their own they can do nothing, but with Christ, who gives them strength, they can do whatever God calls them to do. Their focus is the glory of God and God's reign and rule. The leader who leads through the lens of the gospel is continually dying to self and allowing Christ to live in them.
- As we can see, a gospel-centered leader is characterized by sacrificial qualities, a satisfaction and identity found in Jesus alone, a focus that is on God's agenda and advancing God's Kingdom in their sphere of influence, and operating out of a love for Christ and His grace – a deep understanding that God gave them, through Jesus Christ, what they did not deserve. They have a high view of God and a right view of themselves in relationship to a Holy God. This kind of leader submits to the Gospel and allows it to influence their life.
- The Bible tells us that, while there are many different callings and many possible areas of service in the kingdom of God, one transcendent truth should define our lives. One simple truth should motivate our work and affect every part of who we are. Christ died for our sins. If there's anything in life that we should be passionate about, it's the gospel. And I don't mean passionate only about sharing it with others. I mean passionate in thinking about it, dwelling on it, rejoicing in it, allowing it to color the way we look at the world. Only one thing can be of first importance to each of us. And only the gospel ought to be."*

*(C. J. Mahaney, *The Cross-Centered Life*, page 20)*



MAKE YOUR POINT 3: The VIEW (10 minutes)***How a Gospel-Centered Leader Functions***

The gospel-centered leader operates out of a clear understanding of the gospel defined by God's Word. God's unchanging, life-transforming truth is propelling this kind of leader through all the ups and downs of leading a group of people. The gospel-centered leader is continually consuming God's Word so that their mind is being renewed by the gospel and God's truth. Their life is a perpetual prayer time with God so that they can function and make decisions based on wisdom from the Lord and not their emotions or feelings.

Let's look at those funny glasses with the distorted lenses. (*Trainer, bring out the funny glasses from the "Hook Your Audience" portion.*) These glasses represent a leader who views life and defines the world around them through their past. The enemy likes to use things from our past to keep us from experiencing the abundant life God promises. This type of leader tends to make decisions and respond to people and situations through their past experiences. In contrast, a gospel-centered leader, who is filtering their view of the world around them through the lens of the gospel and God's truth, will be able to make decisions and responses based on that truth. For example, Philippians 3:12-14 says:

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me...But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

Here's another pair of glasses that represents a leader who filters life through their feelings and emotions. (*Trainer, model another pair of glasses.*) Our emotions and feelings are God-given traits, but we must remember that basing everything exclusively on the way we *feel* – especially since our emotions are up and down – will usually result in self-centered decisions. We must take our emotions and filter them through the gospel and God's truth so that as a leader we can respond based on truth and how God is leading us to respond. A gospel-centered leader will take their feelings and emotions and filter them through the truth of God's Word. For example, Philippians 4:6-7 says:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

AND 2 Corinthians 10:5 says:

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (NIV)



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Finally, this pair of glasses (*Trainer, model the last pair*) represents a leader who filters the world around them through the lens of worldly philosophies. There are a massive amount of philosophies in our culture and our world that may sound like the truth at first, but when lined up with God's truth, His Word, we can clearly see that they are deceptive lies from the enemy. It is imperative that a gospel-centered leader is constantly lining up ideas and philosophies from things they read or hear or see with God's Word. A gospel-centered leader must take great care in protecting those they are leading from deceptive philosophies, false teachers, and lies from the enemy. Colossians 2:8 says:

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depend on human traditions and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.
(NIV)

ENGAGE YOUR LEARNERS 3: (10 minutes)

To emphasize and practice how a gospel-centered leader functions when they use the gospel as their lens for viewing the world around them, we will go through a few scenarios and develop how a gospel-centered leader should respond.

Trainer, divide the participants into three groups. Each group will be given a different scenario to read and then develop a response based on a leader who uses the gospel as their lens.

Scenario 1:

You are the Retreat Coordinator. The fall retreat was a huge success, and your retreat committee really helped to pull it all together. The Installation Chaplain heard about the successful retreat, and he made a point to congratulate you in person.

The Retreat Coordinator's Gospel-Centered Response:

Again, these are not intended to be the "right" answers, just some possibilities to help keep the discussion moving. Always use your participant's answers. Allow other team members to chime in. Carefully address non-gospel-centered responses (if there are any). Build on what is right about their ideas- "I like what you said about _____." "I think you may be on the right track when you said _____." Give them the chance to clarify and make adjustments. Affirm each group for their contributions. Avoid dismissing off-base answers- but perhaps redirect the conversation by saying something like, "What might be another approach to this?" It's always a risk to share. Do what you can to make them glad they risked it.



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Some possible responses:

- *She receives praise (not false humility)*
- *She shares praise (these helped or did a lot)*
- *She glorifies God (His strength, His guidance)*

Scenario 2:

You are the local PWOC President. Every week, one particular lady makes a point of coming to you during fellowship time with a list of complaints: she doesn't like the Bible studies that are offered, the praise and worships songs aren't her taste, and the snacks they give her daughter in watch care aren't the ones she prefers, etc.

The President's Gospel-Centered Response:

Some possible responses:

- *She is gracious. Tells lady, "Thank you for sharing." (Affirmation of the person)*
- *She offers encouragement: Perhaps the President will commit to pray as the lady decides on a study.*
- *She speaks the truth in love. She helps lady refocus on meaning of worship.*
- *She is generous with her time. Offers to meet with lady AFTER PWOC sometime. (Knows how to set appropriate boundaries.)*
- *She is forgiving – knowing that she is a sinner in need of God's glorious grace just as much as this lady.*

Scenario 3:

You are the Program VP, and you love planning and preparing the programs for PWOC. This month you have the great idea to use helium balloons to decorate the ceiling. You and your team fill the balloons with helium the day before the program. The decorations look great! But, when you come in the next morning for the program, the balloons have all fallen down and are deflated.

The Program VP's Gospel-Centered Response:



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Some possible responses:

- *She is transparent. Is able to be disappointed/surprised by unforeseen happenings with decorations, but knows the success of the program doesn't hinge on the decorations.*
- *She is able to move forward in finding an alternate solution to the problem, because she knows her identity rests in Christ alone and not in her failures or successes.*
- *She is teachable. She sees these "challenges" as opportunities to learn and grow in Christ.*
- *Her focus remains on Jesus no matter what happens. She realizes that God is still working even with decorations that failed.*

Now that you have had time to develop your gospel-centered responses, let's hear from each group!

(Trainer, take a few minutes to hear the responses from each group. Be sure to encourage each participant that responds.)

As a gospel-centered Leader, your view of the world around you – people you encounter, issues you face, circumstances that arise, is filtered through your understanding and continual application of the gospel. Getting in the habit of wearing the gospel lens as a leader will help you lead in a God-honoring way, reflecting God's grace and truth to those whom you serve.

"Accurately understanding and continually applying the Gospel IS the Christian life." -- Dave Harvey, When Sinners Say "I Do,"

APPLY IT TO LIFE: (5-10 minutes)

How are we to **maintain** our gospel lens as a leader? What are some practical ways we can make sure we are wearing the gospel lenses daily so that we can lead – actually LIVE the Christian life – effectively?

Take the next few minutes to reflect and ponder all that you have learned about being a gospel-centered Leader.

(Trainer, play some quiet, soft music while the participants spend time with the Lord and writing down their commitment. When the time is up – about 5-7 minutes – close



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your time in prayer, asking God to help with the commitments that were made and for everyone to keep their eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith.)

1) **Pray** and ask God to show you **one** area that needs refining in order to make you more effective as a leader.

- Do you need to make the gospel your lens?
- Is there a lens in which you've been operating that needs to be removed?
- Do you need to commit to apply a specific habit in order to make the gospel central to your life, such as consuming God's Word daily and/or developing a perpetual prayer life?
- Is there something you need to follow up on or ask forgiveness, because you didn't lead with a gospel lens?

2) Whatever it is, **write it down as a statement** of how you will practically commit to making the gospel central to your life and as a leader. **To make the Gospel central to my life, I will commit to:**

3) Consider using a blank 4x6 card to **write down one of the verses** we talked about. Carry this card with you or put it where you will see it throughout your day as you learn to walk with the gospel-centered vision in your leadership.

Resources:

- Cross, John R., *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*, 2011 by Good Seed International
- Dodson, Jonathan K., *Gospel Centered Discipleship*, 2012 by Crossway
- Harvey, Dave, *When Sinners say "I Do,"* 2007 by Shepherd Press
- Mahaney, C. J., *The Cross Centered Life*, 2002 by Sovereign Grace Ministries



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