



Caring for God's People

Timothy Leadership Training Program

www.tlti.org

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Introduction

Welcome to TLT! As you begin training with this first in a series of seven courses, you join a network of learners from around the world. (Learn more at www.tlti.org)

The seven TLT courses provide essential training for Christian ministry. Through the course Caring for God's People you will explore ways to follow God, who is the Good Shepherd. You will learn of ways to care for God's people and serve with them.

Throughout Church history, personal conversations on matters related to faith were regularly conducted by pastors and other church leaders. These conversations often took place in the homes of those visited. Today *home visitation* is still a common worldwide practice.

At the same time, Scripture teaches that *all* mature Christians are called by God to care for others. Care for others begins by showing interest in them, taking the time to listen and understand them, and then responding with respect and in Christ's love. These conversations can take place during a home visit, but also in a variety of other contexts like in a café or during a walk.

Whether you are a pastor, someone appointed by your church to visit others, or a regular church member, this course will provide guidance and encouragement.

Working through this course, you will:

- Interact with Scripture and other participants to better appreciate how God cares for us and our responsibility to care for others.
- Write, review, and begin to accomplish Action Plans that reflect the Good News of the Kingdom of God.
- Evaluate and enhance your active listening skills.
- Consider ways to engage in ministries of *comfort, guidance, healing, and reconciliation* with those around you, including your family.
- Identify those in your church whom you could train for this same ministry.

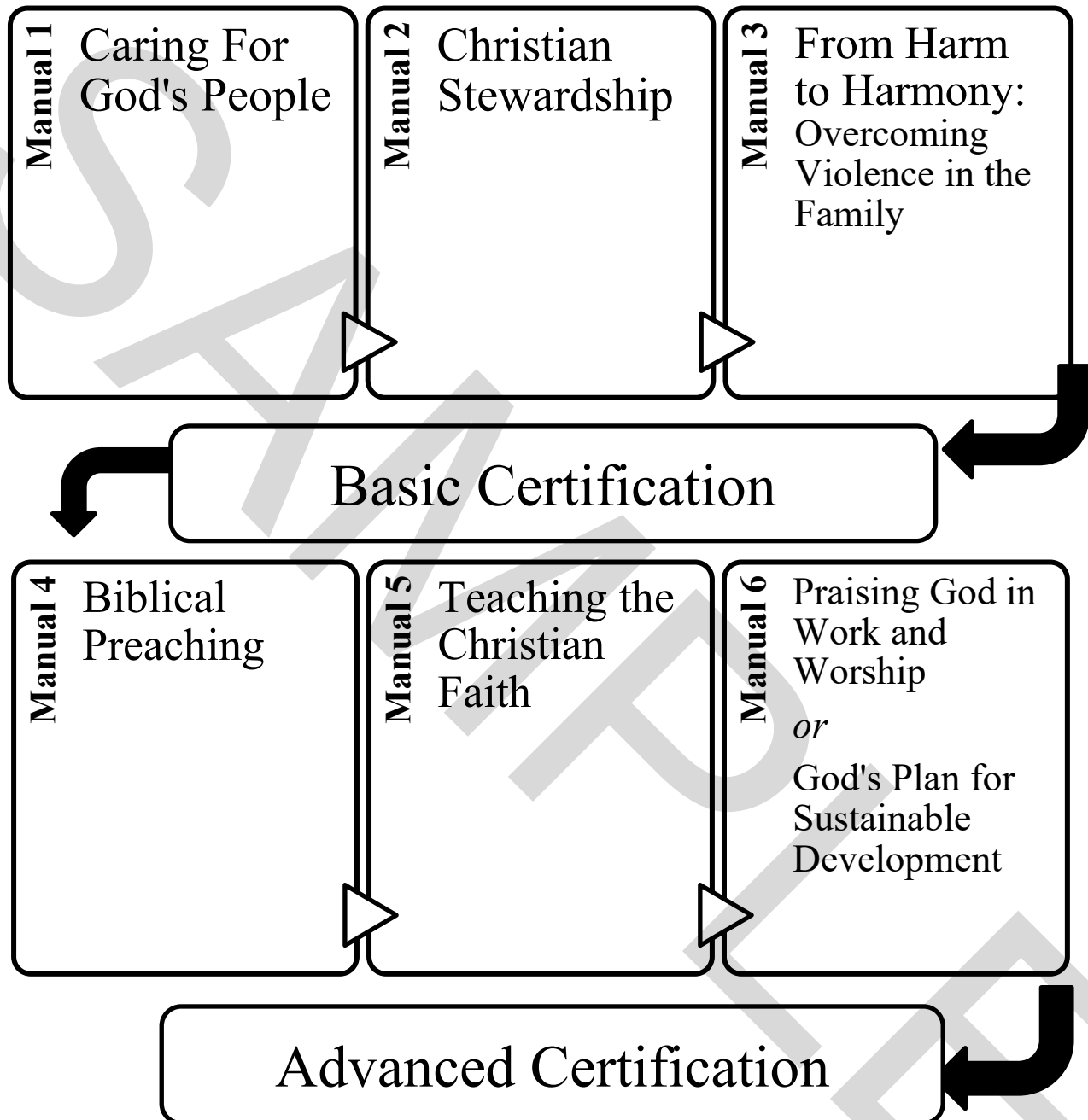
Whether you are a regular church member or a leader in your church, this course will provide you with a tool to train others: Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders, other church members, elders, and deacons. As you work through this course, discuss with your group how God may be preparing you to train others, even those from other churches or from outside your area.

As you engage in this training, we pray that it will open doors for growth and renewal—for you personally and for those you serve.



Timothy Leadership Training Certification

This is the path for Basic and Advanced certification by the Timothy Leadership Training Program.



*Note: to receive an official TLT certificate you must be trained by a TLT-certified facilitator following required training guidelines. Facilitators report trainings and request certificates through reporting@tlti.org or WhatsApp +1-616-438-5757.



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Participant Testimonies

The following testimonies come from participants around the world. More such testimonies are available on the Timothy Leadership Training website.

ASIA

Philippines

After visiting an outlying tribal area, eighteen people began to worship together. They say, "We are so glad that Christians visited us and brought us the Word of God."

AFRICA

Cameroon

The students in our Bible school learned to listen attentively to those they visited. During their field work, they taught church members what they had learned. As a result, many churches experienced reconciliation and growth.

Guinea

In our church, we learned to share our food, our clothes and our money with those in need. And we are learning to be more generous and tolerant of those who don't always share our opinions.

AMERICAS

Dominican Republic

One person we visited was a prostitute who received Christ during the visit. Her testimony and new life have made a great impact on our town.

El Salvador

Since regular visitation started through TLT last year, our church attendance has grown by an average of four people per month, and many new church members are engaged in significant ministry in the church.

United States

I enlisted nine retired people to train for visitation through my adult education class. I told them to not just visit socially but to leave those they visited with something to think about and give them purpose. Over three months these nine retired people have made over fifty calls, sometimes alone, sometimes with grandkids or in pairs.



Learning through TLT

TLT follows 5 steps:

- 1) **Report** - At the beginning of each lesson (except for the 1st lesson) each participant presents the report of what was accomplished since the last lesson.
- 2) **Reflect, discuss, and discover** - Participants read Scripture and discuss together the related questions. It is often helpful to remind each other of the context of specific Bible texts. Group discussion trains participants to listen carefully to each other and to present their ideas clearly.
- 3) **Plan** - Participants write a plan to put into practice what they have learned.
- 4) **Pray** - Participants pray for God's guidance as they write their plans, and they commit these plans to God.
- 5) **Work** - Participants implement their plan. They report on their plan at the beginning of the following lesson.

If the lessons are done in a two-to-four-day workshop rather than one lesson per week, there will not be a report at the beginning of each lesson. However, the **SHORT ACTION PLAN** should always be read at the end of each lesson, and every participant should write the **Situation and Goal for Kingdom Change**. These will help with ideas for making the 3-4 Month Action Plan (Lesson 10).

The Report of the 3-4 Month Action Plan (Lesson 11) will be given at the beginning of the next course.

TLT training is for those who are prepared to make plans, to put their plans into action, and then report on them. Most TLT learning takes place as participants work their plans.

TLT training is interactive learning through group discussion and practical application.

Interactive Learning

TLT training is interactive. It is not like classroom teaching where the teacher lectures while students listen and take notes. With interactive TLT training, a facilitator, or trainer, asks good questions and then gives participants **time to reflect and discuss**. They use what is learned to formulate and accomplish Action Plans for Kingdom change.

Some TLT facilitators find it difficult to facilitate in an interactive way. If a facilitator has this difficulty, it is often helpful to break into smaller groups. This makes it possible for each participant to join in the discussions.

Good facilitators already practice what is taught in this course. They share from their own experiences how TLT brings change in the church and community. They make sure that the group is a place where people can share their ideas without fear or embarrassment.

Reminder: The last two lessons, Making a 3-4 Month Action Plan and Reporting the 3-4 Month Action Plan, are very important and should not be skipped!



LESSON 1

Great Things with God

1. Read **Psalm 68:35, Acts 1:8**

A. *What are God's people given? What is this given for?*

B. When God shows power through believers, **change** happens. *Share some of the changes that took place:*

- *When God led Israel out of Egypt through Moses.*
- *When God rescued Rahab through Joshua.*
- *When the Holy Spirit sent Paul as a missionary to other nations.*

C. *As you think about stories from the Bible, what kind of changes does God bring through his people?*

2. Read **John 1:11-12**. *What happened when Jesus was sent into the world through God's power?*

3. Sometimes people welcome God's change. Other times they resist God's change.

A. *What are some reasons people welcome change?*

B. *What are some reasons people resist change?*

C. *Share a time where you welcomed or resisted God's change. What did you learn?*

4. Kingdom changes are those that demonstrate the work of Jesus and show that God is among us, as we pray in Matthew 6:10, "May your Kingdom come." God will bring *Kingdom Change* in our churches and communities as we honor and serve him.

In TLT, learning for Kingdom Change takes four steps:

1) **Small group discussion and discovery**

Participants study the Bible together. They share their understandings and experiences. Everyone participates to answer the question: "How can these Bible teachings bring change in my family, church, or community through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit?"

2) **Action planning and prayer**

At the end of each course, participants discuss and pray over three questions:

- A. What problems or opportunities do I know about that need attention and change?
- B. What will be the result in my family, church, or community if this change took place?
- C. What will I do through God's grace and strength to make that happen?

God's Kingdom is the reign of God over everything. Jesus Christ is King. We receive citizenship in this kingdom as a gift from God, by his grace. God's Holy Spirit is always with us for strength and encouragement.



The answers to these three questions make up what is called a “TLT Action Plan.” In the next lesson, we will learn how to make good Action Plans.

3) Working the Action Plan - Read Matthew 7:26, James 1:22-25

What did Jesus say about those who do not practice what they learn? What did James say?

During the time between each course, participants put their plans into practice.

4) Reporting the Action Plan - Read Acts 14:26-27

What did Paul and Barnabas do at the end of their first missionary journey?

The 3-4 Month Action Plan reports are shared when the group meets again for the next course. Each participant shares the changes their Action Plan brought in their family, church, or community. Sometimes a plan will not be accomplished. In that case, the group together identifies the obstacles which prevented it from being achieved, and discusses ways to overcome those obstacles.

5. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12.

- A. *What is Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians?*
- B. *What desire for goodness has God stirred in your heart through this lesson? Write down or share one small deed, prompted by faith and with God's power, that you plan to do before the next lesson?*
- C. *In partners, pray for each other as you begin this course: “I pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. I pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”*



LESSON 2

Action Planning for Change

- 1. Reporting** (can be done in small groups or in the larger group)
 - Did you accomplish the small deed you planned to do with God's strength?
 - Share what went well or did not go well.
 - What did you learn about yourself and God?
- 2. Action Plans.** Good intentions are important. For example, someone may have the good intention to visit church members regularly. However, if there is not a specific plan to visit them, the visits may not take place.

Action Plans are more than good intentions. They describe:

- A. A *specific Situation* that needs attention.
- B. A *specific Goal for Kingdom Change*.
- C. *Specific Activities* we plan to do to achieve our goal.

Of course, our Action Plans are only accomplished by the grace and strength God gives us, and his blessing on our efforts.

Grace is God's unearned favor to us through Jesus Christ. All we have and do is by his gifts and his grace in Jesus Christ!

- 3. How to make a TLT Action Plan**
 - A. Identify a specific **situation**. The situation is a problem or an opportunity that God has brought to your mind through the TLT lessons. It may be a *problem* for which you strongly desire to see change take place. It may be an *opportunity* for growth or improvement. It is a situation that you are able to do something about.
 - B. Identify a specific **goal**. The Goal for Kingdom Change describes what you want to see happen. It is a change that shows the work of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. It describes what a family, church, or community will look like when the specific problem is overcome or the opportunity is addressed.
 - C. Identify specific **activities**. The Activities in a TLT Action Plan state what you will do. They list the steps you will take so that the specific goal will be accomplished.
- 4. Read the following examples.** They are not complete Action Plans. They only show the connection between Situation, Goal, and Activities.
 - A. **Situation:** Our street is littered with garbage.
Goal: Our street will be clean and beautiful.
Activities: I will organize people to clean our street each Saturday.
What other activities can you think of to accomplish your goal?



- B. **Situation:** Many new immigrant families have moved into our community.
Goal: Everyone will feel welcome, safe, and encouraged in our community.
Activities: I will invite each home in our neighborhood to join a community WhatsApp group.

What other activities can you think of to accomplish your goal?

- C. **Situation:** My brother is not a follower of Jesus.
Goal: My brother will testify of the joy he has in following Jesus.
Activities: I will pray daily for my brother. I will invite my brother and his family to church.

What other activities can you think of to accomplish your goal?

5. SMART Goal for Kingdom Change

The goal in a TLT Action Plan can be described using the five letters of the word **SMART**.

- **Specific:** The change I expect to happen is described **in detail**.
- **Measurable:** The goal can be **measured**. I will know when it has been completed.
- **Appropriate:** God and people will be **honored** when the goal is accomplished.
- **Realistic:** The goal can be **achieved**.
- **Time bound:** The **time** when this goal will be achieved is indicated.

6. SMART Activities

Like the goal in a TLT Action Plan, activities can also be described using the five letters of the word **SMART**.

- **Specific:** The activities I will do are described **in detail**.
- **Measurable:** The activities can be **measured**. I will know when they are completed.
- **Appropriate:** The activities are **proper** for me to do. They demonstrate my love for God and my neighbor.
- **Realistic:** The activities can be done with the **resources** I have. They take into account my limitations, time, and energy.
- **Time-bound:** The period of **time** when I will do the activities is indicated.

How would you describe the differences between a Goal for Kingdom Change and the Activities in a TLT Action Plan?



7. Learning to Make Good Action Plans

- A. Here is an example of a good TLT Action Plan. *Identify how the Goal for Kingdom Change and Activities are both SMART (Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, and Time bound):*

Situation: Several people in my church are unable to leave their homes because of sickness, age, or disability.

Goal for Kingdom Change: By God's grace, in the next four months 12 people who are unable to leave their homes will be encouraged, expressing how they feel valued and cared for.

Activities: During the next four months, on 3 Saturday afternoons each month, I will visit one person from our church who is unable to leave their home.

- B. Read the following examples. As we read:

1. *Ask if the goal and activities of each one are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, and Time bound).*
2. *If it is not SMART, suggest how to make it better.*

Example 1

Situation: There have been many occasional visitors to my church during the past year.

Goal for Kingdom Change: Our church will grow after six months of visits with those who occasionally attend our church.

Activities: I will visit two families who are members of our church every day for the next four months between 2 and 6 p.m.

Example 2

Situation: There are people in my church who doubt God cares about them.

Goal for Kingdom Change: Everyone who is struggling in their faith will trust in God. They will express their faith in God during the times we meet together.

Activities: I will personally meet with two people who are experiencing difficulty in their lives. During our meeting, I will show God's love by listening to them carefully and patiently, and responding appropriately.



Example 3

Situation: Many members of my church have skills of carpentry, repairing vehicles, and plumbing.

Goal: Everyone who needs help with home and vehicle repairs will experience God's love and care through our church's ministry of home and vehicle repairs.

Activities: I will form a team of volunteers to serve in our community each Saturday.

Example 4

Situation: Some of the ministries in my church are failing.

Goal for Kingdom Change: Church members will be active in our church ministries.

Activities: With the elders in our church, we will contact all the members in our church by telephone. When appropriate, we will follow up by a face-to-face visit or meeting. We will identify the abilities of those we visit and show how they can be used through specific church ministry.

11. Read **Philippians 1:6** and **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**.

You can be confident that God will bring wonderful changes to your church and to your community or neighborhood through this training. There will be obstacles. But God's power, made perfect in weakness, is greater than any obstacle.

12. SHORT ACTION PLAN

Situation: Write the name of a friend who is lonely or sad:

Goal for Kingdom Change: Write the change you want to see in their life by God's grace:

(Example: *My friend will be encouraged this week. She will show that she is encouraged by expressing thanks for my call*).

Activities: Write one or two things you will do before the next lesson so that your goal is accomplished, by God's grace:

(Example: *I will call my friend this weekend to find out how she is doing*).

13. At the end of the lesson, share your plan with another person and pray together.



LESSON 3

The Person Who Cares

1. **SHORT ACTION PLAN Reports** (can be done in small groups or in the larger group)
 - Did the change you wanted and prayed for in Lesson 2 happen? How do you know?
 - Did you accomplish the activities you planned in Lesson 2?
 - Did you encounter any obstacles which prevented you from accomplishing your activities? If so, how can you overcome those obstacles, by God's grace?
 - Did anything unexpected happen?

2. Pastors and other church leaders, men and women, are called to care for God's people. The Bible teaches that they are to be shepherds, like God. Read **1 Peter 5:2**

God, our shepherd - Read **Psalm 23:1, Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34:11-16**

What is the work of a shepherd?

3. **Jesus, the good shepherd** - Read **John 10:11-15**

The word *pastor* means *shepherd*. Pastors and other church leaders do *God's* work. Through them the Holy Spirit comforts and guides God's people.

Why is Jesus called the good shepherd in these verses?

4. **Knowing and being known** - Read **John 10:1-5**

A. **Knowing the sheep by name.** The shepherd shows *real* interest in the sheep. Good shepherds know the joys and the problems of those they comfort and guide. Getting to know someone takes time!

What are some ways to show real interest in others?

B. **Knowing the shepherd's voice.** The sheep must know the shepherd. They must know what kind of person their shepherd is in order to follow him or her with confidence.

What are some ways for church members to get to know their church leaders?

C. **Entering through the gate.** Good shepherds do not sneak into the sheep pen. Shepherds of God's people are called by both God and the church to be leaders.

Describe the ways people become church leaders in your area. How are church leaders encouraged in their work?

5. **Loving** – Read **1 Corinthians 13:1, 13**

A. **A good leader loves the flock.** Christians experience God's love when their leader loves them.

1) *What does 1 Corinthians 13:1 say about the efforts of a leader who does not love others?*

2) *What happens when a leader really loves God's people? Does anyone have a personal story about this?*



B. A good shepherd loves the weak sheep – Read Isaiah 40:11

How do good leaders show that they love those who are weak?

**C. A good shepherd shows compassion to those who are sad, sick, or have sinned
- Read Matthew 20:29-34, Luke 7:36-50**

To have compassion is to feel something strongly. It means we care so much about someone that we feel it in our insides.

Describe a time when someone showed compassion to you. How did you know they cared deeply about you?

6. Taking initiative – Read Luke 15:1-7, 1 John 4:19

Good shepherds do not wait for the sheep to come to them. They go to them even before they are called. A good shepherd shows love for them even when they do not want his or her love.

A. *Why is it important for the shepherd not to wait for the sheep to come to him or her when they are in need?*

B. *Why is it sometimes difficult to be a good shepherd?*

7. The pastor's family - Read 1 Timothy 3:2-4

Pastors and other leaders should not neglect their own families because of their ministry.

A. *What happens when pastors or other church leaders do not spend time with their family?*

B. *How can the church help church leaders to spend time with their families?*

8. SHORT ACTION PLAN

Situation: Write a problem or opportunity that has come to your mind from this lesson:

(Example: My son has an annual sports competition this Saturday with all the schools from our area).

Goal for Kingdom Change: Write a change you want to see happen by God's grace when this situation receives your attention:

(Example: My relationship with my son will be strengthened as he shares with me the joys and disappointments of his sports competition).

Activities: Write one or two things you will do with God's strength before the next lesson to help accomplish this goal:

(Example: I will arrange for another person to lead my Saturday Bible study. I will attend my son's sports competition and cheer for him).

9. At the end of the lesson, share your plan with another person and pray together.