

# MODULE 1: THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE

## SESSION 4: LIVING AND LEARNING

### Key Ideas for This Session:

- Learning is a life-long process that contributes to our growth and development by opening up new experiences and opportunities.
- Knowledge can contribute to a person's development in many ways including a person's intellect, emotional intelligence, and spiritual maturity.
- Key Verse: Proverbs 4:7-8:  
*The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honour you.*

### Learning Never Stops:

Long before we can speak or understand, we are already learning. Once we have learned how to communicate, we are able to learn a lot more. In the early school years, we learn many standard subjects—for example, reading, writing, science, and math. If we continue from high school to university or community college, we have the opportunity to learn more in specialized subjects or professional areas. We can also pursue learning technical skills or trades.

The knowledge we gain shapes who we are and how we relate to others. Not all knowledge is academic or technical and not all education happens in school. There is street knowledge, life skills, and common sense, as well as things we learn just by doing. Every one of us probably has skills that the other members of this group do not know or have which makes each of us unique. You may not even realize how many skills you have until someone else points them out!

### Growing in Knowledge:

You may have heard someone say, "It's not what you know, it's who you know." Sometimes this seems to be true, but it is also true that knowledge itself is power. What you know can change the direction of your life. For example, if you learn a skill that you enjoy and is also valuable to others (E.g., fixing a car,

cooking, researching), you may open up opportunities for employment, but also have an activity that is satisfying and soothing to your soul. In fact, according to Scripture, being productive is what God intended for us.

Ephesians 2:10

***For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

As you think about your school experience, is there a subject that you took a real interest in and wanted to learn more about? If yes, explain how you pursued that interest.

---

---

How did your teachers encourage or discourage your learning?

---

---

At this point in your life, if you could study or learn anything what would you want to learn? Why?

---

---

**Life-long Learning:**

Some people simply stop learning because learning can be difficult, and learning takes discipline. But learning is often what makes a person interesting and different from other people. Anyone can park themselves in front of a television set or internet device to be entertained, but people who pursue knowledge keep their minds active. Mental development is an ongoing process for a lifetime.

Are there things you could be learning (specific knowledge, skills etc.) that would help you as you return to the community and get on with making a life for yourself? What are some of these things and how might they help?

---

---

If you want to sharpen or learn a new skill or gain new knowledge, what will your first step be towards making this happen?

---

---

Read Proverbs 18:15

*The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out.*

What do you think this Proverb is saying?

---

---

How does discerning relate to learning?

---

---

Can you relate to this verse?

---

---

**Emotional Intelligence**

There are different kinds of knowledge and not all knowledge is academic or technical. One other area of learning and personal development is known as

emotional intelligence. How we feel and respond to other people and situations is a big part of our story. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence involves self-awareness, self-regulation or motivation, empathy, and social skills. People with well-developed emotional intelligence are generally able to do three things:

- 1) They know what they are feeling. They are aware of their own emotions in response to a situation or another person(s).
- 2) They are able to channel their emotions positively and apply them to particular tasks like creative thinking, problem solving, and competition.
- 3) They are able to recognize what or how other people are feeling and respond appropriately to cheer them up or calm them down (particularly in a conflict situation).

People with well-developed emotional intelligence are in touch with their own feelings and with the feelings of others. However, they do not react based on their own feelings and are not controlled by those of others. You may have participated in an anger management course. Anger management is one way of learning to control your emotions in a situation instead of reacting based on how you feel or how another person makes you feel.<sup>1</sup>

Read Romans 12:14-21

***Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. <sup>17</sup>Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup>Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup>On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.***

---

<sup>1</sup> Psychology Today, Dr. Daniel Goleman, American Psychologist.

How do you think the behaviours in these verses reflect high emotional intelligence?

---

---

---

What are some things you think you can do to become more sensitive and respond more appropriately to the “high” emotions of other people? How can you avoid being hooked into or reacting to their emotions?

---

---

The following list represents some of the ways people who lack emotional intelligence react in emotional or difficult situations<sup>2</sup>:

- Tend to become easily stressed and anxious.
- Fear that by asserting themselves they may upset others.
- Have difficulty in expressing what they feel and tend toward anger in response.
- Jump to quick conclusions and become defensive about them.
- Have difficulty getting over or letting go of grudges and mistakes.
- Often feel misunderstood or unheard by other people.
- Often mask their true feelings behind a smile and superficial happiness.
- Blame other people for their feelings.
- Become easily offended by what other people say about them even when said as a joke.

Have you in the past, or do you currently experience any of these reactions? (Check off any that apply.) How do you think you can you learn to respond differently or more positively?

---

---

---

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Travis Bradberry

## **Spirituality:**

An area of learning or personal development that is often neglected is spiritual learning—learning about God and a life of faith. In fact, the Bible teaches that spiritual learning is the foundation for a meaningful and fruitful or flourishing life. Spirituality is also part of our personal story and connects us deeply with the larger human story as we discussed in Session 1.

Let's review the Bible story of Daniel again. Daniel and his three friends were taken captive when their country was conquered by a foreign king. They had grown up as believers in God and when the king saw that they were special young men, he selected them to be trained and educated in the king's court. When they found themselves in the king's court, they had access to all the best food and all kinds of new knowledge. However, they were determined to stay grounded in their faith.

Read Daniel 1:17-20

***To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. <sup>18</sup> At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup> The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. <sup>20</sup> In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.***

As the story of Daniel and his friends plays out, we see that they were different from all the other young men because they were of trustworthy character. They did not give in to the pressures and the influences around them but stayed true to God and true to themselves regardless of the circumstances.

What made the difference in addition to all the knowledge they acquired was that they “knew God” and they “knew who they were in relationship to God.” That became their moral foundation and gave them a sense of security and purpose in life more than anything else. Their lives were focused on God.

Today, part of focusing on God includes seeking to understand His instruction. The Bible contains Scripture that is designed to give guidance on how to live. It is often called “the living word” because its wisdom “breathes” into a person's life.

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

***All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.***

How does this verse characterize the teachings in the Bible?

---

---

---

Of all the things you’ve learned and skills that you’ve been taught, would you include spiritual knowledge or say that you “know God”? Yes/No (Explain.)

---

---

How has spirituality (faith and a relationship with God) influenced your story and is it part of your story now? If yes, how?

---

---

Do you think that spirituality is important and matters in your life going forward? Yes/No (Explain).

---

---

---

What can you do to grow spiritually—in faith, in relationship with God?

---

---

---

Break into small groups and discuss the following if there is time, or think about these topics this week:

- *Make a plan to grow your knowledge base in these areas: Education/skills, emotional intelligence, spiritual maturity and discernment. A social worker and/or chaplain would be great resources to discuss this.*
- *The Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament is known for its guidance relating to wisdom. Proverbs 8 describes the importance of wisdom with beautiful, poetic words. Choose two verses that are meaningful to you and write them out to reflect on.*

---

---

---

---

---