

Session 1: The CALL to LEADERSHIP

Aim:

To be reassured regarding the call God has placed on our lives to do youth ministry. Many volunteers have doubts about their call, some feeling unworthy or inadequate for the task. These however are precise qualities that God is looking for in leaders! We can tend to assume that when God calls us the call is unmistakable whereas often it is less obvious and something we grow into. Therefore we will explore different ways in which God call's us.

Summary of Key Points: How Do I Know I am Called?

To gain a thorough overview of the content of this session it is strongly recommended that the leader read chapter one of the P4 resource "Growing in Leadership" available from the YouthTRAIN store: www.youthtrain.com/P4/store. A summary of the key points is as follows:

1. A Sense of RESPONSIBILITY.

Not everyone has an overwhelming sense of conviction when it comes to working with young people. Some get into it through simple choice or preference, while others get there through circumstance or even coercion. God can and does use all these means. What is important is not how we got into youth leadership but that we are reassured we are there by God's design.

2. A Sense of INADEQUACY.

We tend to think that youth leaders should be skilled, confident and possess natural leadership ability. In fact what God so often looks for are people who are unskilled, lacking in confidence and unaware of any natural leadership abilities.

3. A Sense of FAITH.

Being unskilled, lacking in confidence and unaware of any natural leadership abilities however is not enough to qualify someone to lead. With that they must have a sense of faith that God can use them. This faith is not based on any outward evidence, but on an inner conviction. The faith may be small – as small as a mustard seed, but it must be there if the person is to grow in their leadership.

4. A Sense of CONFIRMATION.

In the midst of our sense of inadequacy there are means through which God is able to confirm the call on our lives to engage in youth ministry. It commonly comes through the confirmation of others such as more experienced leaders or even the response of the young people themselves along with a growing sense of personal fulfillment.

5. A Sense of GROWTH.

Another indicator that we are called to youth leadership is evidence of growth in our faith, our character and our effectiveness as a leader.

Personal Illustrations

Use the following questions to help you develop your own personal illustrations for when you teach this material. In developing illustrations think about your own experiences but also share the experiences of others you know. You can also supplement these personal illustrations with examples of Bible characters and well known Christians you have read about.

It is not necessary to come up with illustrations for all the questions or for at least one question from each section. Two or three good personal illustrations are all that is needed some of which will cover more than one question.

1. A Sense of RESPONSIBILITY.

- How did God first call you to be a youth leader?
- How did He call you to be a youth pastor or team leader?
- What examples have you seen of leaders who have developed a clear sense of call and have been very effective, yet their initial sense of call was not based on a strong conviction that God had called them?

2. A Sense of INADEQUACY.

- What fears did you have when you took on various leadership responsibilities? In what ways did you feel inadequate, unskilled and/or unworthy? How did you overcome these perceived weaknesses?
- What examples have you seen of effective leaders who initially lacked confidence? How did they overcome their fears and their sense of weaknesses?

3. A Sense of FAITH.

- To what extent did you believe that God could use you despite your perceived weaknesses? How did this help you overcome your fears and sense of inadequacy?
- Give examples of specific instances of when your faith that you were called to lead was tested and strengthened.
- What examples do you have of others who have used faith in God to help them grow in confidence as a leader?

4. A Sense of CONFIRMATION.

- How did God confirm to you that you really were called to youth ministry? What feedback did you receive from more experienced leaders or the young people themselves?
- What examples do you have of being able to confirm a sense of call on someone else who doubted their call? What convinced you that their call was genuine?

5. A Sense of GROWTH.

- How has leadership drawn you closer to God?
- How has leadership shaped your character?
- What examples have you seen of leaders who have grown noticeably once they took on leadership responsibilities?

Learning activities

Having developed an outline of what you want to teach you need to now include some learning activities to help participants remember what they have been taught. You do not need to try and use all these at once. Do them over a number of weeks so that eventually the points you are teaching are clear. If you are conducting your own seminar tick those activities you will include. The ones already ticked are those that appear as part of the seminar in the Participant's Workbook.

BRAINSTORM

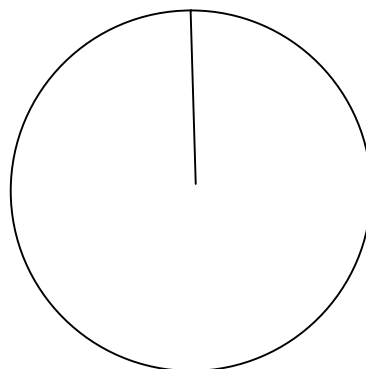
This exercise can be done as a whole group using a whiteboard, or discussed in pairs. Participants can be given some time to write an answer first before discussing it with others. They might also be invited to find anyone else who agrees with their answer, forming clusters and reporting back to the wider group. Make the point that there is a variety of answers that are all valid.

Complete the following sentence: *"I am a youth leader because..."* or *"I am going to be a youth leader because..."*

PIE CHART

Explain the difference between the four common "calls": Conviction, Choice, Circumstance and Coercion. Invite each person to complete a pie chart that shows the relative sizes of each component as it relates to their own call.

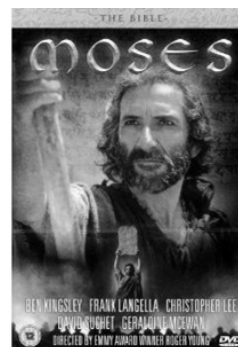
Have them write down their main component and compare answers with each other by using a show of hands, noting the variety of ways in which God calls us.



MOVIE CLIP

Watch a clip from the movie "Moses" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0117086/>) [28:12 – 33:34]

Brainstorm words or phrases we might use to describe how Moses felt when he was called to leadership. Answers should include: scared, inadequate, unskilled, unworthy.





PERSONAL REFLECTION

Have each person reflect on the list below that is also found in the Participant's Workbook. Ask them, *"How does the thought of being a leader of young people make you feel?"* and have them tick those words that best describe their feelings. Encourage them to be honest and reassure them that they won't have to share their answers with anyone.

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|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Proud | <input type="checkbox"/> | Excited | <input type="checkbox"/> | Overwhelmed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Spiritual | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pleased | <input type="checkbox"/> | Weak |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong | <input type="checkbox"/> | Energised | <input type="checkbox"/> | Impostor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Powerful | <input type="checkbox"/> | Honoured | <input type="checkbox"/> | Scared |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Important | <input type="checkbox"/> | Happy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Inadequate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Deserving | <input type="checkbox"/> | Responsible | <input type="checkbox"/> | Incompetent |
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Once they have completed the exercise have them count up the ticks in each column. Explain that if most of the ticks were in the first column than you have some **concerns** about their suitability to lead because these are not the distinguishing characteristic of a Christian leader.

If most of the ticks were in the second column, explain that you would have some **cautions** and would want to ask some follow up questions. For example, if they said that they felt pleased because they deserved to be a leader and could finally have a say in how things were run, I would be concerned. However if they were pleased because it meant they were blessed to be able to serve God and make sacrifices to help young people grow then I would be happy.

Finally, if most of the ticks were in the third column then **commend** them, because these are the traits so often evident in Biblical leaders who were called by God to lead. Rather than disqualify us from leadership, such qualities validate our call because God wants leaders who rely on His adequacy and ability – not their own. On completion of this exercise it may be that some leaders might have questions or might like to share some personal thoughts.

Note: If doing this exercise alongside the Moses DVD clip above, have them tick the boxes first, show the video, then explain about the significance of the columns.

GROUP EXERCISE

As a group, or in small groups, consider the following twelve practices related to the call to leadership. Have each person rate each one according to the scale below and then discuss your answers and try to come to some agreement. In doing so, continue to keep the principles about the call to ministry to the fore. As far as is possible, encourage the leaders to use these principles to justify their answers. On completion of the exercise ask, "Are there any changes we need to make to the way we recruits leaders for our youth ministry?"

RATING:

5 = Great! I wholeheartedly recommend it.

4 = Good. It has my support.

3 = OK but I have a few reservations.

2 = Personally I wouldn't adopt this practice

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_____ Advertising in the church newsletter asking for volunteers to help out with the youth programme.

_____ Telling the parents you lack leaders and if they don't volunteer to help out you will close down the youth group.

_____ Giving young people a say in who should be their leaders.

_____ Asking the young people to recommend potential leaders so as to give you a list of people you might approach.

_____ Allowing potential leaders to come along for at least a month before committing to leadership.

_____ Putting new leaders "on probation" in order to check them out before allowing them to become a full leadership team member.

_____ Having an application form which prospective leaders must complete in writing in order to be considered.

_____ Having a written pledge for youth leaders to sign that covers a commitment to do all that is expected of them for a year.

_____ Having parents involved in leadership regardless of whether their teenager wants them there or not.

_____ Having a lower age limit for people wanting to be involved in youth leadership.

_____ Making regular attendance at your church's worship services a condition of acceptance to youth leadership.

DEBATE

Discuss the following statements as a group and reflect on the implications of your answers. There are a few ways you can do this, depending on the size and dynamics of your group of leaders.

- i. Simply sit together and **discuss** them until you all agree.
- ii. Organise a more formal **debate** by dividing into two groups and preparing your arguments to present. Then allow them time back in their groups to come up with answers to what the other group says and do a second presentation.
- iii. Conduct a **decision walk** where leaders stand on either side of the room depending on their response to the statement (e.g. “Agree” on the right and “disagree” on the left, or one side of the room for one statement and the other side for the other statement). There can also be a third group where people stand in the middle if they are undecided. Have them discuss their opinions and encourage them to move from one side of the room to the other when they are convinced.

The statements are:

- a. *All Christians are called to lead.*
 - b. *We are called to leadership because we are gifted... or*
We are gifted because we are called to leadership.
 - c. *The responsibility of leadership is earned through godly living... or*
The responsibility of leadership is given by God not earned.
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INTERVIEW

Have the leader's imagine that they are going to conduct an interview for a prospective youth leader. Their aim is twofold: to determine whether or not the person is called by God to lead, and to help *them* to see whether they are called or not.

In small groups encourage them to begin by compiling two lists on newsprint:

1. What we would ask them in the interview
2. What we would tell them about being a leader

After a period of time have each group present their lists, justifying them in the light of what they have been learning about the call.

Bible Study

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Examine the call to leadership of various Bible characters. Suggested people and passages would be:

1. Moses (Exodus 3:1-4:17)
2. Gideon (Judges 6:11-7:25)
3. Jonah (Jonah 1:1-3:10)
4. Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1-2:20)
5. Mary (Luke 1:26-56 and Matthew 1:18-25)
6. Paul (Acts 9:1-28)

You could do a whole Bible study on each one or you could assign each to a couple of leaders and have them research the character and report their findings back to the whole group.

Ask the following questions, adding further ones if you wish that may be pertinent to any one of the above Bible characters:

1. What were the circumstances surrounding the person's call to ministry? What mix of Conviction, Choice, Circumstance and Coercion was evident?
2. What was the person's initial reaction when God called them? What specific doubts and fears did they have?
3. What did it seem was God's response was to their reaction? What did He do to confirm the call to serve Him?
4. What evidence later unfolded that confirmed to the person that they were called?
5. In hindsight, and based on what you have read or what else you know about the person, why do you think God called them? What qualities did He see in them that He liked, or what growth was He wanting to bring into their lives through having them serve Him?
6. In what ways do you identify with the Bible character, and in what ways do you find it hard to identify with them?
7. How do you think you might have responded had it been you who was called? In what ways might your response have been the same and how might it have been different?
8. What is God saying to you through this story? What lessons do you need to take and apply as you look to serve Him in youth ministry?

Personal Reflection

These exercises and questions are designed to encourage leaders to share about the personal implications of what they have been learning and to think about what areas of their life and leadership need to change.

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

Have each leader reflect on the statements below that are also found in the Participant's Workbook, ticking the box that best represents their response. Explain that there will be an opportunity to share their answers but there will be no compulsion to do so.

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Often	Always
1. My passion for God is evident to those whom I lead.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My passion for young people is evident to those whom I lead.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am very aware of my own weaknesses and inadequacies as a leader.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I have a real sense of God's adequacy to work through me to minister to young people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Youth leadership gives me a genuine sense of fulfilment and satisfaction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My sense of call has been confirmed by those in leadership over me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Young people seem to appreciate my leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I can see evidence of growth in the lives of the young people whom I lead.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. God is using the challenges of leadership to grow me as a Christian.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PERSONAL SHARING

Discuss the following questions, asking them in whatever order you prefer. The first five questions are found at the end of chapter one in the booklet “Growing in Leadership”. It would be valuable to have all the leaders read this booklet before discussing the questions.

From “Growing in Leadership”

1. Why did you decide to become a youth leader? Which of the four categories of call most apply to you?
 2. What are the situations or areas of leadership in which you feel most inadequate?
 3. How has God helped you cope with the challenges of leadership? What further help would you like Him to give?
 4. What or who has helped confirm your call to youth ministry?
 5. How has being in leadership helped you to grow?
-

Additional Questions

6. If God could say to you one thing about your call to leadership what do you think He would say?
 7. What would be the thing that would most likely take you away from the call God has placed upon you?
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Application Question

8. What is at least one practical thing you will do to put into practice what you have been learning in the session on “The Call to Leadership”?

Note: This question will have already been posed to those who attended the YouthTRAIN P4 seminar. For those who attended ask the following question instead or as well:

8. What progress have you made in putting into practice what you learnt in the session on “The Call to Leadership”?

Scripture Memory

Each session in the Participant's Workbook includes a memory verse on the Summary page. By learning each verse the leaders will have memorised twenty verses by the end of the training programme. You may decide you want to add another one or two for each session. Continue to revisit these verses, checking that they are being remembered and applied.

The verse for this session is:

“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” – 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT)

You might like to consider the following questions as a group in order to impress upon your leaders the significance of this verse, helping them to apply it to their life and leadership.

1. What does this verse mean by the word “grace”? Read the context of the verse to get a better idea of what it is saying.
2. When you think of your “weakness” as a leader what comes to mind?
3. What do you think it means for you to receive His grace in these times of weakness? What do you need God to empower you to do?
4. His grace is all you need. What might you be tempted to rely on instead of His grace when struggling with weakness?

Prayer

Conclude each training session with a time of prayer encouraging leaders to support and minister to one another as needs and prayers are shared. Below are some suggested themes.

- Thank God for the privilege of the call and the responsibility that comes with it.
- Confess your inadequacy to God and ask His help and enabling. If you doubt your call, ask Him for a clearer sense of confirmation.
- Ask God for faith to take on those tasks that seem difficult or beyond us.
- If you still have questions regarding your call ask God to confirm your call or otherwise through His Word, through people, through circumstance and through the peace of your own heart.
- Ask God to help you grow through leadership, learning the lessons He is teaching you through the challenges you are facing.

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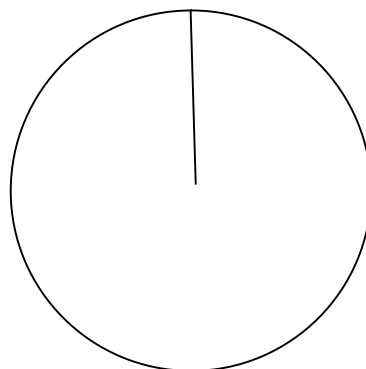
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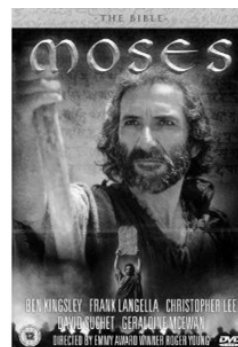
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INTERVIEW

Have the leader's imagine that they are going to conduct an interview for a prospective youth leader. Their aim is twofold: to determine whether or not the person is called by God to lead, and to help *them* to see whether they are called or not.

In small groups encourage them to begin by compiling two lists on newsprint:

1. What we would ask them in the interview
2. What we would tell them about being a leader

After a period of time have each group present their lists, justifying them in the light of what they have been learning about the call.

Bible Study

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Examine the call to leadership of various Bible characters. Suggested people and passages would be:

1. Moses (Exodus 3:1-4:17)
2. Gideon (Judges 6:11-7:25)
3. Jonah (Jonah 1:1-3:10)
4. Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1-2:20)
5. Mary (Luke 1:26-56 and Matthew 1:18-25)
6. Paul (Acts 9:1-28)

You could do a whole Bible study on each one or you could assign each to a couple of leaders and have them research the character and report their findings back to the whole group.

Ask the following questions, adding further ones if you wish that may be pertinent to any one of the above Bible characters:

1. What were the circumstances surrounding the person's call to ministry? What mix of Conviction, Choice, Circumstance and Coercion was evident?
2. What was the person's initial reaction when God called them? What specific doubts and fears did they have?
3. What did it seem was God's response was to their reaction? What did He do to confirm the call to serve Him?
4. What evidence later unfolded that confirmed to the person that they were called?
5. In hindsight, and based on what you have read or what else you know about the person, why do you think God called them? What qualities did He see in them that He liked, or what growth was He wanting to bring into their lives through having them serve Him?
6. In what ways do you identify with the Bible character, and in what ways do you find it hard to identify with them?
7. How do you think you might have responded had it been you who was called? In what ways might your response have been the same and how might it have been different?
8. What is God saying to you through this story? What lessons do you need to take and apply as you look to serve Him in youth ministry?

Personal Reflection

These exercises and questions are designed to encourage leaders to share about the personal implications of what they have been learning and to think about what areas of their life and leadership need to change.

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

Have each leader reflect on the statements below that are also found in the Participant's Workbook, ticking the box that best represents their response. Explain that there will be an opportunity to share their answers but there will be no compulsion to do so.

	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Often	Always
1. My passion for God is evident to those whom I lead.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My passion for young people is evident to those whom I lead.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am very aware of my own weaknesses and inadequacies as a leader.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I have a real sense of God's adequacy to work through me to minister to young people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Youth leadership gives me a genuine sense of fulfilment and satisfaction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My sense of call has been confirmed by those in leadership over me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Young people seem to appreciate my leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I can see evidence of growth in the lives of the young people whom I lead.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. God is using the challenges of leadership to grow me as a Christian.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PERSONAL SHARING

Discuss the following questions, asking them in whatever order you prefer. The first five questions are found at the end of chapter one in the booklet “Growing in Leadership”. It would be valuable to have all the leaders read this booklet before discussing the questions.

From “Growing in Leadership”

1. Why did you decide to become a youth leader? Which of the four categories of call most apply to you?
 2. What are the situations or areas of leadership in which you feel most inadequate?
 3. How has God helped you cope with the challenges of leadership? What further help would you like Him to give?
 4. What or who has helped confirm your call to youth ministry?
 5. How has being in leadership helped you to grow?
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Additional Questions

6. If God could say to you one thing about your call to leadership what do you think He would say?
 7. What would be the thing that would most likely take you away from the call God has placed upon you?
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Application Question

8. What is at least one practical thing you will do to put into practice what you have been learning in the session on “The Call to Leadership”?

Note: This question will have already been posed to those who attended the YouthTRAIN P4 seminar. For those who attended ask the following question instead or as well:

8. What progress have you made in putting into practice what you learnt in the session on “The Call to Leadership”?

Scripture Memory

Each session in the Participant's Workbook includes a memory verse on the Summary page. By learning each verse the leaders will have memorised twenty verses by the end of the training programme. You may decide you want to add another one or two for each session. Continue to revisit these verses, checking that they are being remembered and applied.

The verse for this session is:

“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” – 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT)

You might like to consider the following questions as a group in order to impress upon your leaders the significance of this verse, helping them to apply it to their life and leadership.

1. What does this verse mean by the word “grace”? Read the context of the verse to get a better idea of what it is saying.
2. When you think of your “weakness” as a leader what comes to mind?
3. What do you think it means for you to receive His grace in these times of weakness? What do you need God to empower you to do?
4. His grace is all you need. What might you be tempted to rely on instead of His grace when struggling with weakness?

Prayer

Conclude each training session with a time of prayer encouraging leaders to support and minister to one another as needs and prayers are shared. Below are some suggested themes.

- Thank God for the privilege of the call and the responsibility that comes with it.
- Confess your inadequacy to God and ask His help and enabling. If you doubt your call, ask Him for a clearer sense of confirmation.
- Ask God for faith to take on those tasks that seem difficult or beyond us.
- If you still have questions regarding your call ask God to confirm your call or otherwise through His Word, through people, through circumstance and through the peace of your own heart.
- Ask God to help you grow through leadership, learning the lessons He is teaching you through the challenges you are facing.