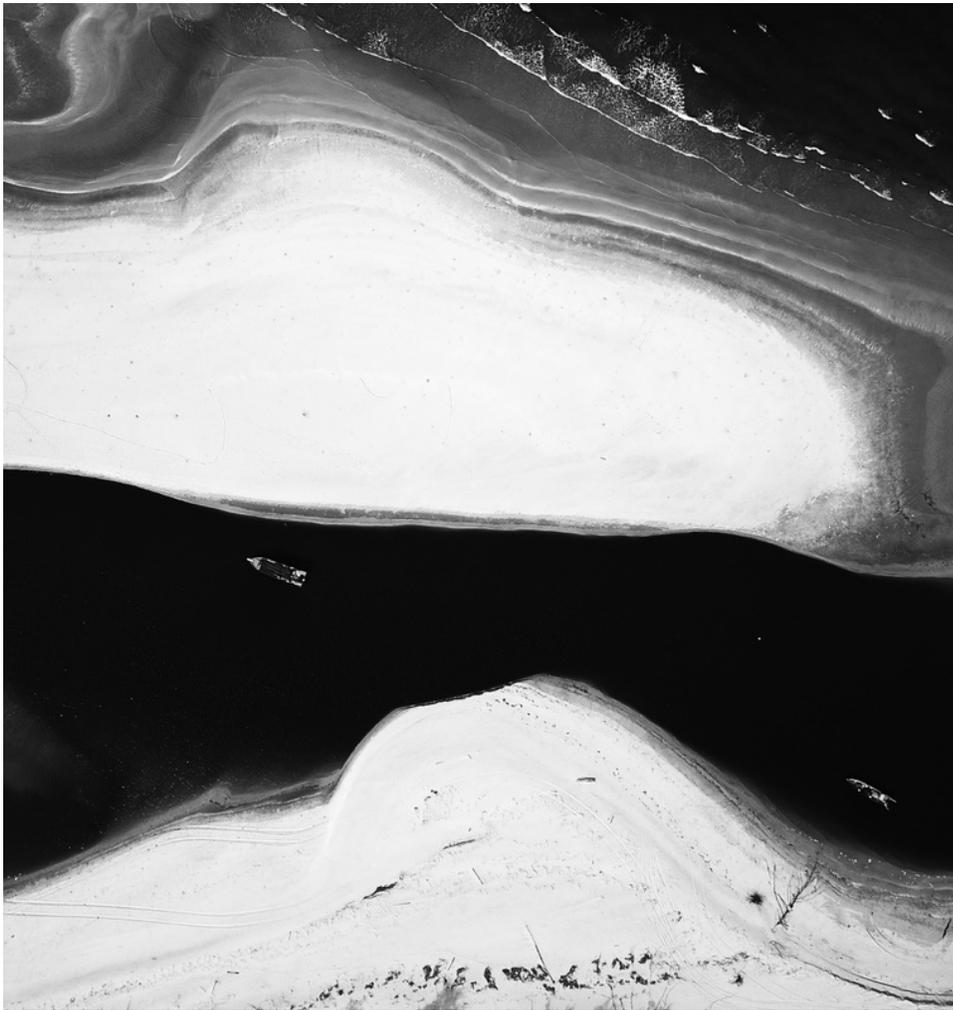


TRACK₃ LIFE TRACK





Our hope for Life Track 4 is to better acquaint you with the language and culture of LC. At the end of this track, we hope you learn the culture and language around Life Center as we share with you more of who we are and what we're about to set you up for when you join our LC Serve Team.

Today at Track 4, we will guide you to learn more about our language and culture and how you can integrate it into your personal life and practice it outside of church. Since we have individuals from a variety of backgrounds, this class is designed to clearly explain who we are and what we believe.

WELCOME



KEEPING YOUR CUTTING EDGE

A MAN WAS IN PRISON AND WAS IN NEED OF SOME MONEY. HE WROTE TO HIS MOTHER AND ASKED HER TO SEND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS IMMEDIATELY. SOON AFTER, HE GOT A PACKAGE IN THE MAIL. IT WAS A BIBLE. ON THE TOP OF THE BIBLE, THERE WAS A LETTER THAT SAID, "SON, I LOVE YOU. PRAY AND READ YOUR BIBLE."

THE MAN WAS TICKED OFF. HE GOT ON THE PHONE AND CALLED HIS MOTHER. "MAMA, I APPRECIATE THE BIBLE, BUT WHAT I NEED RIGHT NOW IS FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS."

SHE TOLD HIM OVER THE PHONE, "SON, PRAY AND READ YOUR BIBLE." HE GOT MORE TICKED OFF AND HUNG UP ON HIS MOTHER.

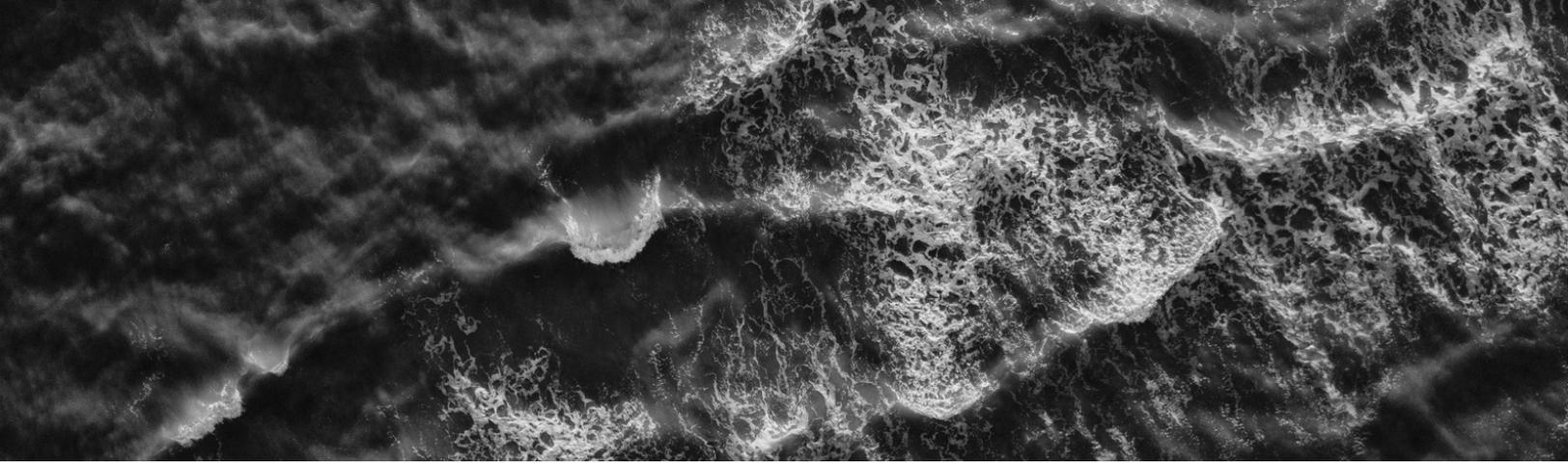
HE THEN WROTE A LETTER. "MOTHER, I KNOW YOU BELIEVE IN GOD, BUT THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH YOU CHRISTIANS. YOU ARE SO HEAVENLY MINDED THAT YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO FUNCTION IN THE REAL WORLD. WHEN I NEED FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS, I DON'T NEED A BIBLE. I NEED A CHECK FOR FIVE GREENBACKS! IF I NEED MONEY, DON'T SEND ME A BIBLE AND TELL ME TO PRAY!"

HE GOT A LETTER BACK THAT SAID, "SON, PRAY AND READ YOUR BIBLE."

HE WAS SO IRRITATED AT HIS MOTHER, THAT FOR THE SIX MONTHS HE WAS IN JAIL THAT BIBLE STAYED IN THE CORNER.

AFTER A LONG WHILE, HE FINALLY GOT OUT. HIS MOTHER WAS THERE TO MEET HIM. HE COULD HARDLY SPEAK TO HER. "MAMA, YOU LET ME DOWN. I NEEDED YOU AS MY MOTHER AND YOU LET ME DOWN."

SHE SAID, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SON?"



"I WROTE YOU. I CALLED YOU. I BEGGED YOU FOR FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS AND EVERY TIME YOU GAVE ME THIS SAME OLD LINE TO PRAY AND READ MY BIBLE."

"WELL, SON, DID YOU PRAY AND READ YOUR BIBLE?"

"YEAH, I PRAYED AND READ MY BIBLE, AND I'M STILL AS BROKE NOW AS I WAS WHEN YOU TOLD ME THE FIRST TIME TO PRAY AND READ MY BIBLE."

"SON, DO YOU HAVE YOUR BIBLE?"

HE REACHED IN HIS BAG AND HE HANDED HER THE BOOK.

"SON, LET ME ASK YOU ONE MORE TIME. DID YOU PRAY AND READ YOUR BIBLE?"

"YES, MAMA. I TOLD YOU I PRAYED AND READ MY BIBLE."

"SON, YOU NEITHER PRAYED NOR READ YOUR BIBLE."

SHE OPENED UP THE BIBLE AND AT EVERY MAJOR DIVISIONAL SECTION WITHIN THE TEXT, THERE WAS A HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILL TAPED INSIDE OF IT. IF THE BOY WOULD HAVE JUST READ HIS BIBLE HE WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE THING HE WAS LOOKING FOR WAS IN THE TEXT.

BECAUSE HE DIDN'T TAKE SERIOUSLY THE WORD OF GOD, WHAT THE WORD OF GOD HAD TO OFFER HE NEVER RECEIVED.

"USING A DULL AX REQUIRES GREAT STRENGTH, SO SHARPEN THE BLADE. THAT'S THE VALUE OF WISDOM; IT HELPS YOU SUCCEED."

ECCLESIASTES 10:10 NLT

"IF THE AX IS DULL AND ITS EDGE UNSHARPENED, MORE STRENGTH IS NEEDED, BUT SKILL WILL BRING SUCCESS."

ECCLESIASTES 10:10 NIV

Two points to apply for success

1. Have confidence in your own “ax” and keep on sharpening it.

“In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.”

Romans 12:6 NLT

Operate in the favor of your flavor.

“Then the Lord turned to him and said, “Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!”

Judges 6:14 NLT

Imitation is limitation.

I believe it is better to fail an original than to succeed an imitation. When you pick up another man’s “ax” and try to imitate him, you may be attempting to do something you have no ability to accomplish. There is no greater waste of time or energy than trying to display qualities you don’t possess. Conformity to the wrong things can be stifling, because it is the jailer of innovation and the enemy of growth.

Take the time to prepare, or sharpen, your “ax” for greater use.

Someone once said, “The will to win is not as nearly as important as the will to prepare.”

“[Put first things first.] Prepare your work outside and get it ready for yourself in the field; and afterward build your house and establish a home.”

Proverbs 24:27 AMPC

“Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house.”

Proverbs 24:27 ESV





2. Focus on success, not failure.

As you learn how to exercise your “ax,” focusing on success is very important because focusing on failure is dangerous. Karl Wallenda, the famous tightrope walker, fell to his death in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1978. In an interview after the fall, his wife said, “All Karl thought about for three straight months was failing.” With his focus on failing, Karl Wallenda was destined to fall. Broken focus led to his death.

“Finally, believers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable and worthy of respect, whatever is right and confirmed by God’s word, whatever is pure and wholesome, whatever is lovely and brings peace, whatever is admirable and of good repute; if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think continually on these things [center your mind on them, and implant them in your heart].”

Philippians 4:8 AMP



How to keep our cutting edge

“One day the group of prophets came to Elisha and told him, “As you can see, this place where we meet with you is too small. Let’s go down to the Jordan River, where there are plenty of logs. There we can build a new place for us to meet.” “All right,” he told them, “go ahead.” “Please come with us,” someone suggested. “I will,” he said. So he went with them. When they arrived at the Jordan, they began cutting down trees. But as one of them was cutting a tree, his ax head fell into the river. “Oh, sir!” he cried. “It was a borrowed ax!” “Where did it fall?” the man of God asked. When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the water at that spot. Then the ax head floated to the surface. “Grab it,” Elisha said. And the man reached out and grabbed it.”

2 Kings 6:1-7 NLT



Employ the help of a mentor

"Please come with us," someone suggested. "I will," he said."

2 Kings 6:3 NLT

Be honest and humble enough to acknowledge and admit that you've lost your cutting edge

"But as one of them was cutting a tree, his ax head fell into the river. "Oh, sir!" he cried. "It was a borrowed ax!""

2 Kings 6:5 NLT

Be teachable enough to learn how to recover your cutting edge

"Where did it fall?" the man of God asked. When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the water at that spot. Then the ax head floated to the surface. "Grab it," Elisha said. And the man reached out and grabbed it."

2 Kings 6:6-7 NLT

Insight for leaders: Elisha was a servant. With the double portion upon him, he still worked. Titles will derail and demote; servanthood will elevate and promote.

Additional sharpening tools

The Word of God

“For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.”

Hebrews 4:12 NLT

GOD'S WORD CAN FIX ANY PROBLEM IN YOUR LIFE, IT CAN RESTORE ANY BROKEN OR LOST RELATIONSHIP OR EVEN HELP YOU TO PUT A BAD SINFUL ONE BEHIND YOU. IT'S SHARP AND POWERFUL IT CAN HEAL YOU, HELP YOU, AND IT WILL ALSO CORRECT YOU.

Healthy friendships

“As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.”

Proverbs 27:17 NLT

Our connections will determine our destinations.

Your connections will serve either as lid placers or lid lifters. They will place a cap on your potential or uncap your potential.

Your connections will be barriers or bridges to your future.

Friends are like elevators – they will take you up or bring you down. Eagles or chickens? Eagles become flyers...chickens end up in fryers. Choose wisely who you hang with.



NEXT STEPS

01 **Make LC your Home**

Joining Life Center is not about adding your name to a roster; it's about connecting with the people and the vision of the church. We would love for you to be a part!

02 **Join a connect group**

Browse our Connect Groups directory at thelifecenteroc.org/connectgroups. Once you find a few groups that interest you, contact the leaders to learn more and join the Connect!

03 **Complete Life Track**

Thank you!

04 **Join the LC Serve Team**

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