

## Session Twenty-one: Priorities

**Note:** After using these tools with a variety of congregations, a different order has developed in the use of the material in the Key Concept Section. As a result, please use the slides on the DVD in the following order:

- Strategic Pace (slide 12)
- Strategy Step Four (slide 21)
- Instructions for Priority (18)
- Strategic Priorities Table (19)
- Strategy Step Five (slide 22)
- Strategy Integration (slide 20)

**This material is at the heart of the Strategy Section. More than likely it will take more than one session to work through these tools. The key here is to work through this process.**

The *Implementation* Section that follows *Strategy* is designed as flex time to keep working through the material, to check your progress in developing other L<sup>3</sup> Leadership Incubator Groups, and to hold you accountable to the implementation of the strategic plan. As a result, you have more time to work through the material than has been designed for the L<sup>3</sup> Incubator. This allows you to go at your own pace as you develop your Incubator Ministry Action Plan.

**Please review the Strategy Scenario before you facilitate this session.**

### [Strategy Scenario](#)

**Overview:** The next step in developing your strategy is identifying your priorities. Congregations and ministries tend to be very active. Leaders and participants attend meetings, plan events, create worship experiences, and design classes and educational experiences, not to mention providing ongoing care for people in emergency situations, providing care for those experiencing grief, and celebrating weddings and the birth of children. Congregations are complex organizations that place multiple demands and expectations upon leadership. As a result, there is a desire to want to do it all and to meet the needs of everyone equally. But this comes at a price. When you try to be everything to everyone, you can become nothing to no one. Why? Because when you try to do everything you lose focus and energy and people become burned out.

Prioritizing allows you to leverage your energy by putting your focus on those things that have the greatest potential for improvement. An old maxim in the business world is the 20/80 rule. Twenty percent of your effort will give you eighty percent of your results. Think about your congregation. Twenty percent of your membership probably gives about eighty percent of the financial support. Twenty percent of your participants probably provides eighty percent of your leadership. The question to ask is what twenty percent of our ministry will give us eighty percent of the results we are looking for? Prioritizing helps you identify the twenty percent.

### **Session Setup:**

- One guidebook for each person
- A copy of your assessment results from the assessment tool you used in Session Fourteen: Assessment.
- Copy of your values, mission, and vision statements for each person
- DVD player hooked up to a TV or LCD Projector with screen
- Flip chart with paper and markers, or a large white board or chalkboard to take notes for everyone to see
- As people enter, have music from the DVD playing "You Are Worthy".

### **L<sup>1</sup> Love: Incubate Your Heart & Formation Que**

As you begin, use slide 2 to show the group where it is in the process, and slide 4 to remind people of the expectations of the Incubator.



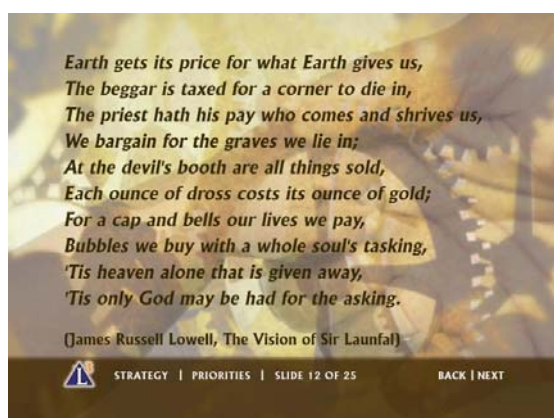
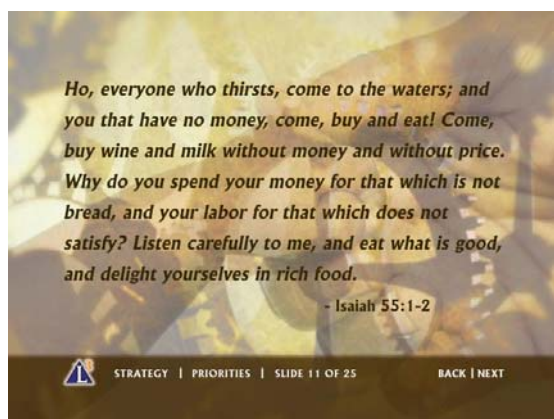
**Principle:** Jesus said, “Where your treasure is there is your heart also.” A quick look at the synonyms for desire gives us this list: wish, want, longing, craving, yearning, need, aspiration, and passion.

We normally do not equate desire with spirituality, yet the great Christian mystics talk about this deep-set need of every person to connect to God. Terms like “the dark night of the soul” refer to those times when we feel the absence of God’s grace, while “bliss” refers to those times when we get a glimpse of what heaven must be like.

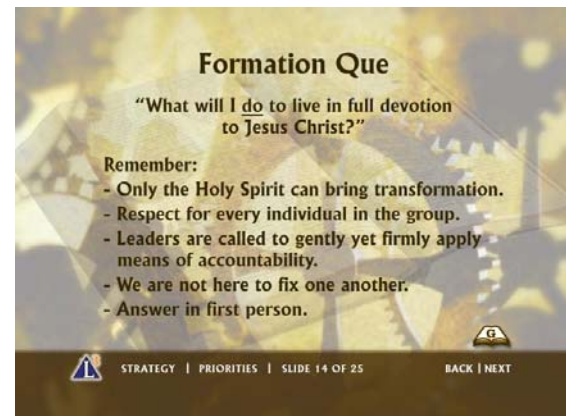
This series of questions asks us to reflect on our desire for God and those things that compete for our affections.

**Facilitate:** As you scroll through slides four through six, invite the participants to share about their desire for God.





**Facilitate:** Silently scroll through slides seven to twelve, inviting the participants to reflect on what they are reading. After going through the slides, invite them to share words or phrases that spoke to them. Conclude by singing, “*You are Worthy.*”



**Principle:** The Formation Que (question) is a covenantal question that all L<sup>3</sup> Incubator participants agree to answer and be accountable to each time the Incubator meets. The question each person is asked to respond to is: “What will I do to live in full devotion to Jesus Christ?”

Before starting the Formation Que, review the basic ground rules that are on the slide. Remind participants to answer in the first person.

As people share, they first will be asked to talk about how they did with the items they talked about the last time. Consult your list (the notes you took on page 87 in the guidebook) as they share. Some may need to be reminded what they said. Invite them to start a new list on page 91.

**Facilitate:** You have ninety minutes for this time.

## L<sup>2</sup>: Learn: Reflection & Key Concept



**Facilitate:** With the whole group, review the measurement you created for each category. Refine as needed.



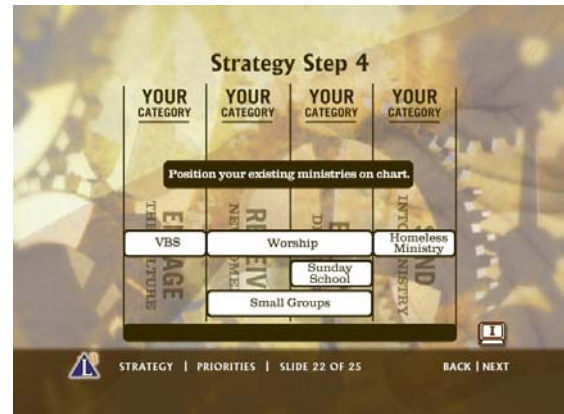
Use these slides in the following order:

- Strategic Pace (slide 12)
- Strategy Step Four (slide 21)
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**Facilitate:** Use this slide as a reminder of the difference between Incremental Change and Radical Change. Help them recapture from previous discussions what kind of change is needed in this ministry.

### Strategy Step 4 (use slide 22)



**Principle:** Organizations lose their power and effectiveness when they lose their focus. Your task now is to identify your key ministries (worship, Christian education, mission, denominational work, community work, etc.) and to place them in one of the categories of your strategic flow. To a certain extent, every ministry needs to pay attention to all four aspects of Engage, Receive, Equip, and Send. For this exercise you will need to place each ministry in one category (yes, the illustration shows two, but in using the tool it is best to force the group to agree on which category each ministry best fits).

**Facilitate:** On a white board or flip chart, have the group identify your key ministries. After making the list, draw the Strategy Step Four Chart with your Categories of Flow at the top of each column and have the group identify where each ministry is best placed. At this point we are looking for current reality. Encourage the group to give an honest appraisal of where each ministry is currently operating.

**Be sure to save the final copy for future reference!**

For example, Greeters may be more focused on the *Equip* function than on *Receive*, because they give a friendly welcome to current members and engage in long conversations with them at the door but say little to visitors as they come in to worship. The

original function of the greeting ministry was to *Receive* newcomers, but now it is focused on *Equipping* current members. Honest reflection will place it where it currently is, in *Equip*. When you do Strategy Session Five, you will be able to move this to *Receive* if the group decides that its primary focus needs to be in this area.

Your Strategic Flow			
Your Category	Your Category	Your Category	Your Category
<b>Step Four: Position Existing Ministries</b>			

**Setting Priorities:**

**Instructions for Priority**

- In the first column, place the areas that your assessment (CVI or other assessment tool) suggests to work on first.
- In the second column, under each area place the specific strategies that you believe will affect change (don't forget to do research).
- In the third column, prioritize each strategy in the order of importance. You can't do everything at once – see idea chart.

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ASSESSMENT RESULTS (END OF CHAPTER 14)	STRATEGIES THAT YOU BELIEVE WILL AFFECT CHANGE (NEW OR EXISTING)	PRIORITY (WHEN DO YOU START FIRST?)
Experiential Worship	Ancient Future	2
	Morning Communion	5
	11am Sunday Service	4
Biblical Literacy	Disciple Bible Study	1
	Beginnings	3

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**Principle:** Effective organizations know when to refocus current ministries, when to innovate,

and when to create brand new ministries. In the excitement of looking to the future, organizations can be overwhelmed by the multitude of available options. The Strategic Priorities Table gives you a way to capture the new to allow you to focus on what needs to be done first and what can wait.

This is where the results from your Assessment tool become important. Like most Assessment tools, the *Church Vitality Indicator* will give you a focus based on your assessment of where you need to concentrate your time and energy to have the maximum improvement. The result of the CVI is a Focus Area made up of two Indicators of Church Vitality. Other tools will give you a specific area of ministry to work on like worship or spirituality. It's at this point in the process that this tool will guide your strategic planning. In effect, this points you to the twenty percent that will give you eighty percent of the results.

Working with your assessment results from Session Fourteen: Assessment, you will now create those strategies you believe will affect change. In the example below, the Focus Area for a congregation is Experiential Worship/Welcoming & Inviting. One of their greatest needs for improvement in this Focus Area is in the greeting ministry. Listed below are three typical kinds of improvement strategies:

**1. Refocusing of a current ministry:** For example, the Greeting Ministry that has been focused on *Equipping Disciples* could be moved to *Receive Newcomers*. Using the *Team Template* from the Team Section, a Greeters team could be formed. This would require retraining of the greeters and perhaps recruitment of new people for this work. By refocusing a current ministry they would give it new purpose and life.

**2. Innovation of a current ministry:** Typically, innovations are based on a current ministry that offers an enhancement to what is being offered. An innovation to the Greeting Ministry could be the addition of a welcome desk where brochures, books, CDs of worship services, and information about the church could be displayed. Visitors would now have a place to easily learn about the church.

**3. Creation of a new ministry:** In some cases, a whole new ministry needs to be created to meet current needs. While you could expand the work of the Greeting Ministry to cover the parking lot, a better idea would be to create a new team and a new Parking Lot Ministry. It would be this team's responsibility to assist people in finding parking, to help out in case of emergencies, to have umbrellas ready when its raining, and to assist in traffic flow.

**Facilitate:**

On a white board or flip chart, draw out the Strategic Priorities Table, placing your Assessment Result at the top of the left-hand column. On another section of the board or on another sheet of newsprint, write down:

- Improvement of a current ministry
- Innovation of a current ministry
- Creation of a new ministry

Before you begin developing and envisioning priorities, talk about the different kinds of improvement strategies your organization can create.

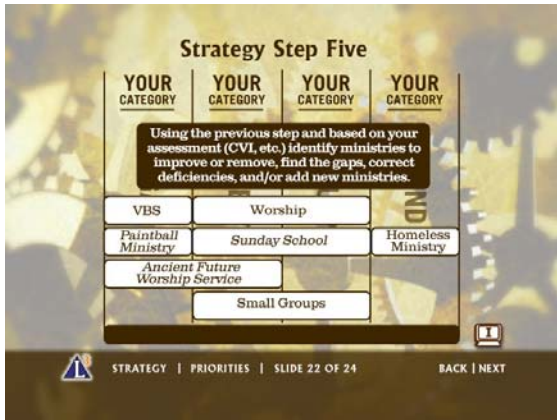
Work together to develop your strategies and place them in the center column. Finish by prioritizing them as to which ones have the greatest potential for improvement and numbering them with 1 as the highest in the right-hand column.

**Be sure to save your work for future reference!**

<b>Strategic Priorities Table</b>		
<b>Assessment Results</b>	<b>Strategies that you believe will affect change (new or old)</b>	<b>Priority (where do you start first?)</b>
<b>Results from your Assessment Tool</b>		

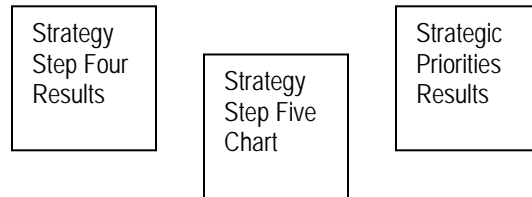
**Strategy Step Five:**

Now that you have placed current ministries on a chart (Strategy Step 4) and you have developed priorities using the Strategic Priorities Table, it is time to bring these together as you use Strategy Step 5 to identify current and new ministries based on your priorities.



**Facilitate:**

Using a white board or a flip chart, put up the results from Strategy Step Four and the Strategic Priorities Chart so the whole group can see both charts.



Draw the Strategy Step Five chart and combine the results from both charts. Share with the group the five things you can do with each ministry:

1. Keep the ministry in the same spot it is shown on Strategy Step Four
2. Move a current ministry to another category of flow with the goal of reshaping this ministry
3. Add an innovation of a current ministry
4. Add a new ministry that has been created
5. Remove a current ministry—this means you will stop doing it

Not to be overlooked is the fifth option. To grow you must be willing to prune. You must eliminate those things that are draining the overall time and energy of the organization so you can use those resources elsewhere. A good rule of thumb is to check ministries against the vision of the organization. If a ministry is not living out the vision, then it becomes eligible for elimination.

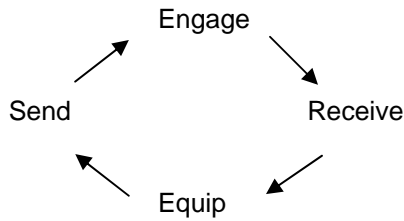
Your Strategic Flow			
Your Category	Your Category	Your Category	Your Category
<b>Step Five: Improvement Strategies</b>			

**Strategic Flow:**

**Principle:** Another key component for improvement is seeing how a specific ministry connects and compliments other ministries. Using the Strategy Integration Chart, think about how people move from one experience

to another. The goal is to see how all the ministries in the organization compliment and enhance each other. Rather than seeing each ministry as being its own thing, finding paths of connection allows you to develop a discipleship process that gives people opportunities to mature and grow in their faith.

**Facilitate:** Using your titles for your Categories of Flow, make a graph on a white board or flip chart showing how these connect with each other. Next to this put up the results from Strategy Step Five. Draw a Strategic Flows Chart (see below). Ask the group to see how particular ministries create natural links to each other and fill in the chart. (See the *Strategy Scenario* to get a more complete picture of how this fits together.)



Strategic Flows Chart			
Your Category	Your Category	Your Category	Your Category
→		→	→
[Redacted]			
→		→	→
[Redacted]			

### Strategy Integration

	ENGAGE THE CULTURE	RECEIVE NEWCOMERS	EQUIP DISCIPLES	SEND INTO MINISTRY
ENGAGE THE CULTURE	X			
RECEIVE NEWCOMERS		X		
EQUIP DISCIPLES			X	
SEND INTO MINISTRY				X

Compare and contrast how each category of flow relates, informs, or complements the other categories.

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The Strategy Integration Chart is another way to picture how the category flow relates, informs, or complements the other categories.

### Assignment I-MAP

- Using the Strategic Priority Table, place your assessment results and begin looking at possible strategies.
- Use Strategy Step Four to position your existing ministries on the chart.
- Using the previous steps and based upon your assessment (CVI, etc.), use Strategy Step Five and identify ministries to improve or remove, find the gaps, correct deficiencies, and/or add new ministries.

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**Facilitate:** Go over the assignment with your Incubator. During the next session they will have time to work on this together.

Close in prayer.