

WHERE MISSIONARIES
Challengers[®]
AND MINISTRY MEET
1 CORINTHIANS
15:58



Challengers Membership Requirements

1. Challengers will review the Challengers Commitment Statement and agree to, and sign a commitment statement they will follow as members of the Challenger group.
2. Challengers will become familiar with the Challenger logo. (Inside back cover.)
3. Challengers will memorize 1 Corinthians 15:58.
4. Challengers will have a personal time alone with God using the Challengers Vigil and show their leader they have completed the vigil.

Challengers Commitment Statement

As a Challenger member, I will . . .

- Gather regularly with other youth for fellowship, mission study, and mission action.
- Encounter God daily through a time of personal prayer and Bible study.
- Discover my own calling to and gifts for service, witness and ministry.
- Participate in ongoing mission and ministry opportunities through my church.
- Give willingly to support missions around the world through the Cooperative Program.
- Become an informed and responsible follower of Christ.
- Celebrate the Christian life through commitment to weekly worship in my church.

The Challenger program provides an arena for meaningful relationships and encourages Christian fellowship. It gives young men a chance to take part in missions and ministry. Challengers is a mission accountability group for young men. Accountability is a necessary element for any group whose members are to develop an on mission lifestyle. Accountability assumes a commitment has been made or a goal is required. The Challengers Commitment Statement sets the goal in the form of a personal and group commitment that each member signs, and then is encouraged, supported, and held accountable to keep.

Challenger Vigil

THE CHALLENGE:

Periodically on the spiritual journey, we need to pause, to withdraw from the flow of life and regain perspective. These periods of reassessment are essential. If the model of Jesus' life is worth following, then spiritual retreats are to be seen as critical. Jesus did this often. One such event is recorded in Luke 5: 15-16.

But the news about him was spreading even farther, and great multitudes were gathering to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

But he himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.

That Jesus would slip away from hurting people did not mean that He did not care. Rather, He cared so much that He had to slip away for spiritual renewal and direction. Then and only then could He continue to give of Himself.

The spiritual journey a Christian travels contains mountain top experiences, as well as some walks through the "valley." It must also include some "wilderness walks." From time to time, we need to see anew the vision of God's majesty and glory, to confess our unconfessed sins, to renew our commitments, to have fellowship with Him restored, to set new goals and to re-orient our spiritual lives.

The Challenger Vigil is a tool to access spiritual maturity and development. Each person will need a copy of this booklet, a Bible, and a pencil. The setting for the vigil is most important. Select a quiet place to avoid interruptions. The time of the vigil should be open-ended so that only God terminates it and not the clock.

The vigil is more than a "checkup" or yearly physical examination. It is the opportunity to fellowship with the Great Physician, a chance to commune and share with Him. Also, the vigil is to provide a context in which new

and deeper commitments can be made. Plan on spending some time at the conclusion of your vigil with your Challenger advisor and share with them some of the commitments that you made during your vigil so that your advisor can continue to be a source of encouragement and accountability partner as they continue to pray for your spiritual growth and development.

THE VIGIL:

As human beings, created in the image of God, we have a unique capacity of self-consciousness. That is, we are aware of ourselves. With that self-consciousness comes self-evaluation. Once we are aware of ourselves, we evaluate ourselves; “How am I doing? What do I think about myself? How do I feel about me?”



A part of this evaluation process has to do with our spiritual lives. This is not to say that spirituality is a *part* of our lives. It is the *center* of our lives if we are Christians. Imagine, if you will, an old wagon wheel. It has a hub, spokes, and a rim. To some, spirituality is like one of those pie-like slices. It is a slice along with other slices representing vocation, family, and recreation. More appropriate to the Christian faith, however, is to see spirituality as the hub – from which spokes reach into all those areas. If it is well at the center, it will be well throughout. If the hub is off-center, life can be a rough ride.

Thus, evaluative questions like: “How am I doing?” and “Where am I headed?” are conditioned by “How am I doing at the center?” This is why the experience of this vigil is so very important. You need to access the kind of person you actually are. You need to focus on the kind of person you want to be. You need to start becoming *now* the person you want to be someday!

God has a grand and specific design for your life that will bring ultimate fulfillment as you discover it. God has His dreams for you! This is the purpose of your vigil with God.

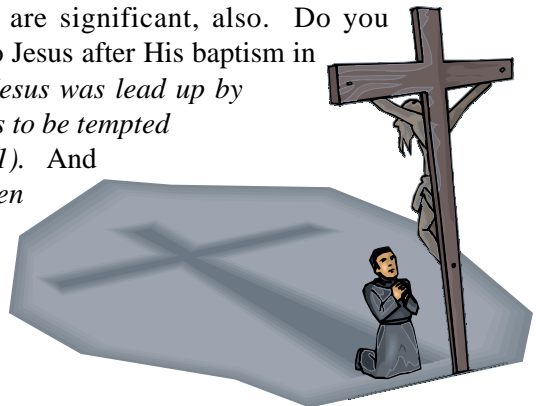
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ALONE WITH GOD?

Throughout the Bible are accounts of persons alone in the wilderness or in a quiet room thinking about themselves and their relationships to God and to others. Possibly this kind of experience began when God made Adam and placed him alone in the Garden of Eden. *“Then the Lord God formed man from the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he has formed” (Gen. 2:7-8).* There they had fellowship.

Then you recall that God spoke to Abraham in some quiet place and said, *“. . . Go from your country and your kindred, and your father’s house, to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing . . .” (Gen. 12:1-2).*

- Jacob was sleeping on the ground with rocks for a pillow when God spoke and commitments were made. Read Genesis 28:10-22
- Moses, another great servant of God, was a shepherd when God called him in Exodus 3-4.
- And, David, a man after God’s own heart, probably came to know and trust God during his long days and nights in the wilderness tending sheep. Read Psalms 8 and 23.

These examples of being alone with God do not end here. There are many other instances that are significant, also. Do you remember what happened to Jesus after His baptism in the River Jordan? *“Then Jesus was lead up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matthew 4:1).* And after His temptation: *“Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him” (Matthew 4:11).* He, too, had His vigils.



THIS IS WHAT YOUR VIGIL IS ALL ABOUT.

The dictionary says that a vigil is a “watch,” a *definite* time of *special* attention. It’s when the heart pays attention to God. This is your time to “watch” with God. Are you ready? Then be alert and listen! He will speak to you. “*Be still and know that I am God*” (*Psalms 46:10*).

God speaks to us through His Word, circumstances, other individuals, and through prayer. The Bible is God’s record of revelation of Himself to other individuals. When we read about their experiences, it tells us what God has meant to their life. God often uses His Word to speak to us.

Take your Bible now and turn to Psalm 139. Slowly read verses 1-12.

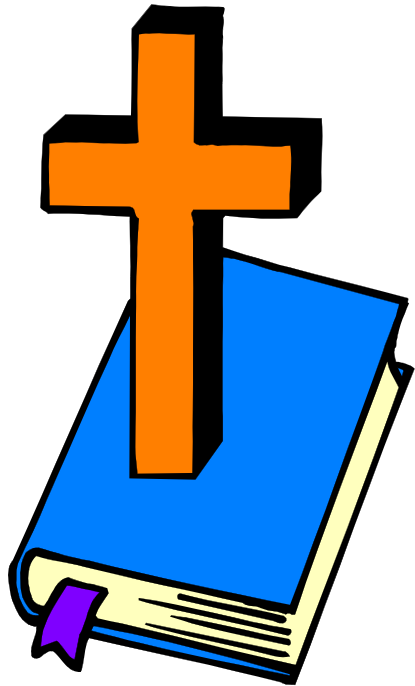
Have you finished? Good. Now, read the same verses again. But this time read them aloud. Do not be embarrassed by the sound of your voice. Go ahead. Speak right up as you read.

Yes, God is present. He sees you. He knows you. In fact, He knows you better than you know yourself. How about you? Can you be honest with yourself? The best way to be honest with yourself is to be honest with God.

This is the time in your vigil to be honest with God and yourself. Look at Psalm 139 again. This time read verses 23 and 24 aloud.

THE CHECKUP:

Now, with God’s help, *search yourself*. Here are some questions to help you honestly examine yourself in private conversation with God. These questions relate to the Challengers Commitment.



Challengers Commitment

**Gather regularly with other youth for fellowship,
mission study and mission action;**

Yes No

- Do I intentionally involve myself in groups and activities with others in an effort to grow spiritually?
- Do I deliberately try to be better informed about the missions programs of my church and denomination?
- Do I give myself regularly to sharing my Christian pilgrimage with others?
- Do I try to help others discover their gifts for ministry?
- Do I try to encourage others to reach their full potential?
- Do I develop friendships with other Challengers in an effort to grow and minister?
- Do I belong to a group of Challengers as a way of gathering for fellowship and spiritual development?
- Will I accept organizational and program responsibilities as a ministry to others?
- Do I take time to regularly read literature devoted to missions?

**Encounter God daily through a time of
personal prayer and Bible study;**

Yes No

- Is Bible reading a part of my daily life? Is my devotional life truly meaningful to me?
- Do I allow the Scriptures to speak to me?
- Do I take time to read Bible commentaries, articles, and other devotional helps?
- Does prayer have a central part in my daily life?
- Do I make regular prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and petition a part of my daily life?
- Do I take time to share my devotional life with others and pray with them?
- Do I pray for others in my family, church, circle of acquaintances? For missionaries?
- Do I close my prayer time with a period of quiet, giving God time to speak to me?

**Discover their own calling to and gifts for service,
witness and ministry;**

Yes No

- Have I sought to discover my spiritual gifts for ministry?
- Do I offer God my personality and skills for His daily use?
- Do I involve myself in Christian activities in and through my church?
- Am I involved in witnessing to others?
- Have I taken training in witnessing or mission action?
- Have I ever participated in a short-term mission project?
- Do I use my gifts in deliberate ways to minister to others?
- Do I enjoy using my gifts and see it as a source of fulfillment?
- Do I take new opportunities for service in an effort to call forth other gifts I may have?

**Participate in ongoing mission projects and
ministry opportunities through their church;**

Yes No

- Am I sensitive to the needs of others at work, home, and around the world?
- Do I allow my sensitivity to produce active witness/mission involvement?
- Do I seek to make my own world a place to minister as I go through daily life?
- Do I allow my family needs to be points of ministry?
- Am I involved in a mission action group?
- Am I willing to share my personal experience with Christ?
- Do I involve myself in efforts to reduce suffering in the world?
- Do I actively promote peace in the world and in the hearts of others?

**Give willingly to support missions around the
world through the Cooperative Program;**

Yes No

- Do I have a concept of myself as a steward of God on earth?
- Do I thank God for the wealth He has given to me?
- Do I tithe my income willingly? Am I selfish with my assets?
- Do I give beyond my tithe to mission efforts I believe in?

- Do I support my church and denomination through the Cooperative Program?
- Do I see my family as a part of my stewardship?
- Do I view time as a gift to be given to my family, church, and others?
- Is the giving of my time done joyfully?

Become informed and responsible disciples of Christ; and

Yes No

- Do I really love others?
- Is Christ the model I use in relationships with others?
- Am I involved in activities and groups designed to foster love and fellowship?
- Is pleasing Christ a sincere goal in my life?
- Do I know what I believe, and why?
- Do I try to see the world through the eyes of Christ?
- Do I follow rules of physical and mental health to help reach my fullest potential as a follower of Christ?
- Do I seek to control my temper and language?

Celebrate the Christian life through a commitment to weekly worship in their church.

Yes No

- Am I an active member of a local church?
- Do I regularly attend the worship services of my church?
- Do I regularly participate in the Sunday opportunities for personal growth at my church?
- Is worship a lifestyle for me or merely a Sunday activity?
- Do I see my study and/or work as a way to worship God?
- Do I seek places of worship when traveling or when vacationing?
- Is Sunday a truly “holy day” to me?
- Do I seek to bring glory to God in all I do?
- Do I participate in all aspects of the worship services – singing, praying, hearing, and responding?

THE CONFESSION:

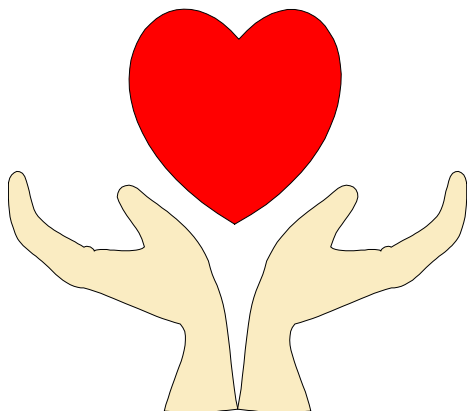
Now that you have completed this exercise, take a few minutes to reflect on your answers. Are there items which you marked YES that pleased you? If so, thank God and ask Him to maximize those areas in your life.

Are there other items which do not please you? If so, then these are to be your immediate focus. As you review these areas for growth, what self-image takes shape? Ask yourself, “How does what I see square with the image I would like to see?” Indeed, what kind of person do you want to be? Notice that the question does not relate to what you want to *do* (or plan to do), but rather what you want to *be*. To become that person involves several definite steps.

The first step is that of *confession* or repentance. To repent is to confess our sins and turn from them towards God. Thus, this segment of your vigil is to honestly face your sins. Take time now to review the above checklist and confess your sins and failures one by one. The Bible says that “*if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins.*” (1 John 1:9) Take your time at this.

Having completed the above, the next step is that of *commitment*. The word, commitment, is an “in” word these days. For the Christian, however, its definition is narrowed. To the Christian, commitment evokes at least two other words: “Lord” and “will.”

A Christian is one who has named Jesus as *Lord*. The Bible says that if we confess Jesus as Lord and believe that He lives, we shall be saved. (Turn in your Bible and read Romans 10:9-10) But, this naming of Jesus as Lord is to be done daily, not just initially. It means to be committed to Him as Lord of our lives, in every area of our lives, at every moment of our lives. Is Jesus “Lord” of your life? Does He have absolute power and authority? Does He have full “veto power” in your life’s decisions?



THE COMMITMENT:

Take time now in your vigil to pray and meditate. Is Jesus truly and fully Lord of your life? Take your time with this segment of the vigil. Do not rush. Eternal things are happening and demand time.

The other word, “will,” has to do with a unique dimension of being human. We have a will. We have the freedom and power of choice. There is also the will of God. One need not be in opposition to the other, but sad to say, it usually is. We are sinners by nature. Our concept of the will of God is often not a biblical one. For whatever reasons, many of us have been conditioned to see the will of God as something unpleasant. That whatever else it is, it is something we don’t want or won’t want to do. In fact, we are supposed to “surrender” to it. The image of “surrender” is that of being overpowered and forced.

The biblical view of the will of God as it relates to our lives is vastly different. The will of God in the Bible is presented as the way to blessing, to wholeness, to fulfillment, and satisfaction. It is the Creator knowing what we are created for and knowing that it will give us the greatest sense of fulfillment. The opposite of following the will of God is expressed in Proverbs: “*The way of the transgressor is hard.*” (Proverbs 13:15) On the other hand, Paul encourages us in Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you brothers, in the view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is our spiritual act of worship. Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

God knows and knows best. To choose the will of God is to choose life – fulfilling, satisfying life. Jesus said, “*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*” (John 10:10)

Usually when we think of commitment to God, our tendency is to commit specific areas of our lives – our work, our habits, etc. While this is necessary, it is not the place to begin. The place to begin is . . . at the *center*.

(Remember the wagon wheel?) We begin by making a *total* commitment of our lives to Christ as *Lord*. Then, we work out the implications of the commitment day by day.

There is a good parallel to this concept in the act of marriage. At the wedding, we commit ourselves “for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; till death do us part.” This is a *total* commitment. Then, as the marriage progresses, we apply that commitment to things as they arise. It may apply to the ways we behave, chores we assume, task we don’t like and on and on. So, too, is our commitment to Christ. It is total.

How do we do this? Have you ever tried to draw a circle freehand – that is, without a compass to help you? In one half of the space below try to draw a circle with only your pencil.

Now, think for a moment. If you had made a dot in the center of the page and used a draftsman’s compass, or if you had tied a string to your pencil, held one end of the string with your finger at the dot and moved your pencil in an arc, you would have had a perfect circle. You see, it is easy to make a circle in relation to a center.

You glorify God by selecting Christ as the center of your life. Then day by day you seek to put into that circle those attitudes and activities that reflect Christ. The main thing in being a Christian is not what you keep out of the circle, but what you put in it!

- Will you do your best to put Christ at the center of your life?
- Will you remind yourself each day that this is your main purpose in life?
- That you will make your decisions on the basis of the kind of person you will be, putting Christ at the center.

Having placed Christ in the center of your life, committing your all to Him as Lord, the next steps relate to the implications this decision has on the various areas of your life. Take a few moments now and commit those areas to him as Lord, too.

To keep Christ at the center and in charge, there are some helpful things you need to do:

1. Read your Bible carefully and frequently, particularly the New Testament.
2. Pray. Talk with God as you have done during this vigil. Do it every day.
3. Attend church services regularly. Be serious about worship with others.
4. Share with your Christian friends your common problems and solutions.
5. Participate in devotional groups.
6. Share your faith regularly.
7. Involve yourself in missions and ministry activities with your Challenger group.

You will make mistakes, of course. You may find attitudes and activities that do not belong in the circle of your life. But, the important thing is to keep Christ at the center. Make a fresh decision every day to center on Christ. When you do, you'll discover those things that do not fit. Commit these the Christ and eliminate them.

Take time now and do it. Think about your decision for a few moments. Go over the step in your vigil up to this point. Review the decisions you have made. Meditate quietly in prayer. You have come to the final point in your vigil. This should remain a sacred and holy time in your life. Complete your vigil by listing your commitments. Writing these down helps to seal them. You may even share them with a close Christian friend or your Challenger advisor as a final act of commitment. On the other side of commitment is accountability.

***Now, Live Life!
Shoulder to Shoulder with Christ!***



The Challengers Logo

The logo contains the organization name, key verse, and motto. Downloadable image files of the Challenger logo in color are available at: www.studentz.com/challengers



Challengers:

Challengers are those who are commissioned to challenge non-Christians to trust and follow Jesus Christ. They also challenge fellow Christians to be on mission with God.

Mountains:

The mountains on the logo represent the challenges in a teenage young man's life. These are the academic, physical, emotional, social, as well as spiritual challenges of growing up in today's world.

1 Corinthians 15:58:

“Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” (NIV)

“Where Missions and Ministry Meet”:

Our mission is to join God in His Mission of reconciling the world to Himself. Ministry is meeting human needs all around us in obedience to Christ” command to love our neighbor as ourselves. The Challengers motto indicates that we will use ministry as a method of going to the world with the gospel.

Colors:

The colors of the Challenger logo represent four disciplines of the Christian life. They are:

Red = *sacrifice*

Green = *growth*

White = *purity*

Blue = *loyalty*

TEXAS BAPTIST MEN
LOVE
more than words.....
ANYWAY † ANYTIME † ANYWHERE

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