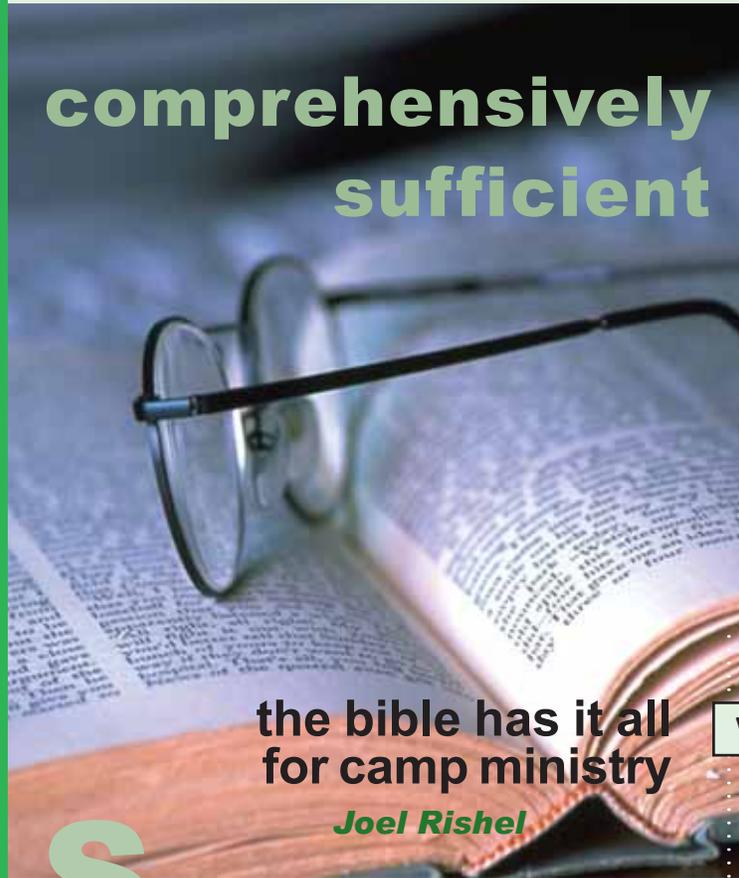




Character Building Ministries
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EDIFY

The Newsletter of Character Building Ministries



**comprehensively
sufficient**

**the bible has it all
for camp ministry**

Joel Rishel

Soon staff members will start arriving at camp. They will nervously glance around as they unload their suitcases, backpacks, and sleeping bags. Of course, as you observe them unpack, you have no idea what all they've brought.

How true this is, in more ways than one. You have no idea what "baggage" your staff members will bring this summer or what issues will "unfold" in the weeks ahead—yet. You will find out very soon. Too soon.

Continued inside ...

This free Newsletter is sent to leaders and directors of Christian youth camps who are concerned about the spiritual growth and development of their staff.

What's Inside?

Word of God

You know that the Bible is God's Word to us, but sometimes it's easy to forget that it really is sufficient for everything that you face in camp ministry.

Study

Sometimes you want to dig into the Word of God, but you're not sure quite how to do it. Inside are four guidelines to get you started.

Resources

Character Building Ministries has been publishing a staff devotional book for 11 years. Why don't you call for a free sample?

SPRING 2007

Character Building Ministries is dedicated to the edification of Christian camp staff by equipping them in the Word of God.

problems

Hidden deep in Josh's backpack is his long-standing addiction. Legislation and "rules refreshers" never seem to help. Halfway through the summer Melanie unpacks and begins to share the hurt and loneliness of a dysfunctional family. Encouraging notes and inclusion in social activities only put a temporary smile on Melanie's face. Abby gets angrier and more frustrated at having to deal with another homesick camper. Rearranging the camper assignments merely put a "band-aid" on Abby's fragile temperament. The quick friendship between Russ and Jon deteriorates in resentment and distrust with the potential to polarize the whole staff. Crisis meetings and staff-unifying initiatives appear to make little progress.

And these are just the problems that demand your immediate attention. You are wise enough to know there are many more hidden issues that no one is telling you about.

"All other books in the world, however good and useful in their way, are more less defective. The more you look at them, the more you see their defects and blemishes. The Bible alone is absolutely perfect."
~ J.C. Ryle

Perhaps you feel inadequate to navigate your staff through all these trials. Have you ever been tempted to think that "if only" you had a few more years experience in camping ministry then you could handle it? Or have ever wished there was some sort of "secret manual" that would tell you what to do in each situation? Well, there is no wise old veteran who knows exactly what to do. There is no catalog of "if ... thens" to walk you through the swirling complexity of issues.

What you do have, however, is the Bible, and it is sufficient. I can't overstate this; it is comprehensively sufficient for whatever you will face. Here's the important thing to learn and understand—all the issues, problems, conflicts, trials, addictions, and dysfunctions are essentially *heart problems*. The Bible itself teaches us

this truth (Matthew 15:18-19; Proverbs 4:23; Luke 6:43-45; Jeremiah 17:5-10).

insight

God's Word is comprehensively sufficient to provide honest and accurate insight into your staff member's real problems—their hearts. It is authoritative on this subject because it provides God's point of view on the heart. Do you really believe it?

The Bible is actually a collection of 66 books written by about 40 different authors over a period of 1,500 years or so. One was a lawgiver, one was a warlike king, another a peaceful king, one was a shepherd, one a doctor, one a learned Pharisee, two were fishermen, several priests; most of them never saw each other face to face. Yet there is amazing unity in every detail and they each tell the same story—God's plan of redeeming lost sinners through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. There's only one way this could have happened. Even through the writers of the Bible were men, the Holy Spirit uniquely inspired them when they wrote, so that what they wrote were the very words of God Himself. Listen, God has spoken to us in His Word; this is what Christians mean when they say that the Bible is inspired.

And that's why I can say with confidence that the Bible gives real insight to life's problems. It's not fake; it's not just a book of pleasantries or inspirational sayings. It contains real truth for all people at all times. It provides God's perspective on the heart.

solutions

But it doesn't just show us what's wrong. It also reveals the only answer. The Bible is comprehensively sufficient for showing the real solution—the Son of God became man, lived and died in the place of all who would believe on Him, and rose again in victory over sin and death. The *Christ event* is the message of the Bible.

This message is comprehensively sufficient for Josh caught in the trap of addiction. He needs help to hear and to apply the truth that he cannot break his addiction with his own strength, willpower, or clever substitutes. He needs the power of Jesus Christ who has already met the greatest need of every believer through the forgiveness of sins. Josh doesn't need steps to recovery, more stuff that he needs to start doing, or lists of things not to do. No, he needs the Christ event.

This message is comprehensively sufficient to help Melanie in her loneliness. She needs the reality of the friend who sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

1 Seek the aid of the Holy Spirit

You can't do this on your own. You need the *enlightening* influence of Holy Spirit to understand what you read, and you need the *gracious* influence of the Holy Spirit to be inclined to obey it.

2 Strive to understand the original intent of the author

You want to personally benefit and you want to discover what God is saying to you, but don't just think about yourself. This will help prevent you from taking verses out of context. What does this passage teach about God, about man, about sin, and the way of salvation?

3 Read with self-application

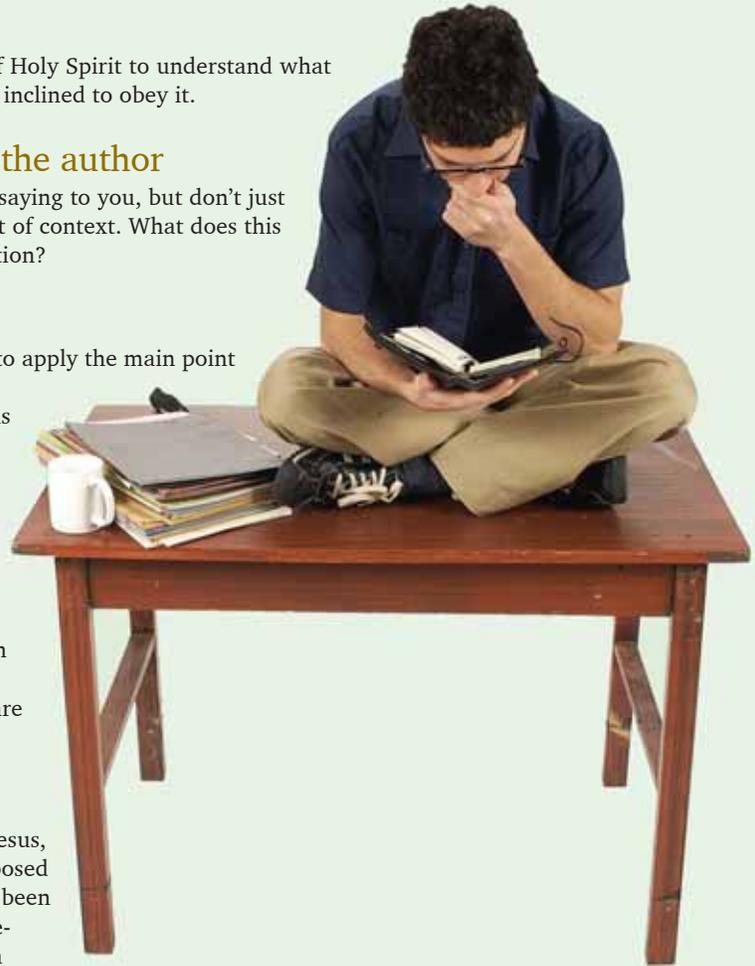
Once you discover the original intent of the author, you are prepared to apply the main point of the passage to yourself.

- God doesn't change, so whatever the passage reveals about God is true to you and for you today.
- Since we are humans created in God's image, whatever the passage reveals about man is true for you as well.
- Whatever the passage reveals about the sinful heart is an insight into your own heart.
- Whatever the passage reveals about salvation should be the object of your only hope.

The Bible is not just about something that God did in the past through Jesus on the cross. It is also about what God wants to do in you today *because of the cross*. The issue is, are you in submission to God, and are you prepared to apply it to your own heart.

4 Keep the main thing at the center

The main thing is the good news of Jesus Christ. If you lose sight of Jesus, you will get lost in the details. Keep Jesus clearly in view. As sin is exposed in your heart, go quickly to the cross of Christ to see how your sin has been paid for by Christ's death. Linger at the cross, reflecting on God's undeserved love for you through Jesus Christ. When guilt or condemnation overcomes you, remind yourself that you are not saved by your own works, but by the works and righteousness of Jesus Christ. When you are tempted to pride or self-sufficiency, remind yourself that you can do nothing apart from Christ, but through Christ you can do all things. When your passion wanes, remind yourself of the glorious good news of the One who is Altogether Lovely.



18:24) and the assurance that if Christ has suffered for her sins, surely He will care for her in her suffering and hurt (1 Peter 4:1-2). Her greatest need is not to be surrounded with affirmation from the staff or to have a close friend to share everything with. Her greatest need is Christ Himself.

This message is comprehensively sufficient for Abby's sinful responses to her circumstances. Christ's finished work on the cross informs her that even if her difficult and challenging circumstances never change (1 Peter 1:6-9), she can bear the fruit of the Spirit through the power of Christ's crucifixion (Galatians 5:22-24). Abby is not in need of a change in her circumstances, she is in need of rearrangement in her heart. She needs the Christ event.

This message is comprehensively sufficient to help Russ and Jon see that their conflict reveals unfulfilled

cravings in each of their hearts (James 4:1-2). The solution is not to get them to try to see each other's point of view or to take a break from each other; what they need is to see their need for the Christ event. Their selfishness can be taken to Christ in repentance to receive His forgiveness and restoration—this is exactly what He died for.

The Bible has it all. No, it won't give you specific step-by-step instructions, but it does communicate the solid answer in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is comprehensively sufficient for whatever it is that you are about to face. Are you ready? 



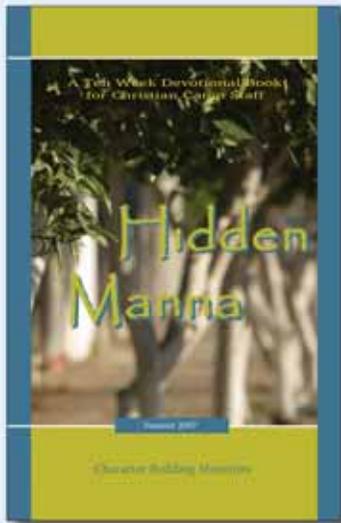
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