



## Seminar in Basic Youth Conflicts

# Institute in Basic Life Principles

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### A Special Thanksgiving Letter to All Past and Present ATI Students,

I am writing this letter out of a deep love and gratefulness for each one of you! I am also writing this letter because I need to share my heart with you.

When I dedicated my life to work with young people, it was not just any young people. It was with those who wanted God's best for their lives and who could be trained up to be "world-changers." The Apostle Paul stated, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). Over the years, God has raised up many of you to be world-changers. As a result, we now have unprecedented opportunities to work with entire nations.

To be a world-changer requires even greater disciplines and sacrifices than are embraced by Olympic champions. When Jesus called His disciples, He required them to forsake all, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. Those disciples "turned the world upside-down." I have had the privilege of meeting thousands of you. When I do, it is my joy to picture how you can be dynamic for the Lord and His Kingdom.

### A Missing Factor of Wisdom

When the first 102 families came to the Northwoods in 1984 to launch the Advanced Training Institute, the focus was on wisdom. This was based on the fact that all wisdom is centered in Jesus, and Scripture states that in Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). Solomon writes, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7).

For this reason, we developed Wisdom Booklets, Wisdom Quizzes, and Wisdom Searches. However, there is an aspect of wisdom that I failed to emphasize—leading others to Christ. "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

Paul's entire ministry was based on discipling those whom he led to Christ. His churches were made up of his converts, and his epistles were written to edify and encourage them. (See I Corinthians 4:15.)

### The Real Reason to Be Different

God calls us to be different than the world and to have a higher standard than the world. (See John 17:14-16, Romans 12:2, and I John 2:15.) However, if we are not leading others to Christ and discipling them, there is little or no motivation to be different than the world.

One of the reasons Paul was willing to sacrifice personal freedoms was to avoid causing any of his disciples to be weakened, offended, or to stumble. It will be our disciples who will motivate us to maintain a higher standard. They will say to us, "I did not think Christians went to movies or listened to the world's kind of music or did dancing, drinking, etc." James points out that if we are teachers of others, we will be judged by a higher standard. (See James 3:1.)

During the past four years I have had the joy of personally interviewing over 3,000 of you who have gone on a Journey to the Heart. Based on the responses, we have a serious situation! Only a few out of every hundred young people have ever led anyone to Christ! Almost no one has been systematically discipling anyone in the commands of Christ. This is a major concern and it explains why some have reacted to standards and rejected the training they received.

We have taken steps to remedy this situation. Training on soul-winning is being given to all the Journey teams and at Regional Conferences. One effective approach to leading people to Christ is explained in the booklet *The World's Greatest Question*. I would be happy to send you a copy of this as a gift.

### The Underlying Battlefield

I have talked with many former ATI students who have reacted to the way of life that their parents have taught them. In almost every single case the root cause has been their acceptance and involvement with unclean music. Unclean music is taking the music of the world and adding some Christian words to it and concluding that it is then clean music. However, the prophet Haggai asked the priests that if something which was clean touched something that was unclean, would the unclean become clean. The priests answered "No." Then the prophet asked if the unclean would make the clean thing unclean. The priests said, "Yes." (See Haggai 2:11-14.)

To think that we can add "clean" words to the world's unclean music and have clean music is like believing that we can add some drops of pure water to a glass of poison and have a healthy drink.

We are having one of the most devastating developments among today's Christian youth. It is the addiction to pornography and other forms of immorality. What we are really dealing with are unclean spirits that are controlling the minds, emotions, and wills of believers. A major doorway for these unclean spirits is unclean music. God states, "What fellowship hath . . . light with darkness? . . . come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean" (II Corinthians 6:14, 17). Scripture also warns that if we even desire to be a friend of the world, we make ourselves the enemy of God. (See James 4:1-10, and I John 2:15.) I would plead with you to recognize this fact and renounce all such music.

### The Definition of Grace

The definition of God's grace has always been a major battlefield. There is no way that we can live the Christian life, keep the commands of Christ, or do the great works that Jesus speaks of in our own energy. But this is the purpose of God's grace. Paul declared, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). The power of this grace is explained in Romans 5:21: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Many who do not choose to live by God's standards twist the definition of grace so that it simply means an attitude of God's unmerited favor when we sin but leaves out the power to keep us from sin. This interpretation turns grace into a license that God warns against: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:4).

Even the Westminster Confession affirms the definition of grace that we have been using for nearly fifty years—it is not only God's unmerited favor, but is also the desire and power to do God's will: "When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage under sin; and, by His grace alone, enables him freely **to will and to do** that which is spiritually good."

Because the definition of grace is such a critical point for Godly living, we have done a study on grace and found that every time it is used, it is in connection with the power of God in one of nine



categories. This is explained in the book *The Exceeding Great Power of God's Grace*. I would be happy to send a copy of this to you as a gift.

Paul explains that grace is given to every person to receive Christ as Savior and to live a Godly life: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11). He also describes the power of grace in his own life: "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (I Corinthians 15:10).

### A Time to Rejoice!

I am deeply grateful to the Lord for the many ways that He has deepened and widened the message of this ministry. One of the long-awaited results is the launching of Embassy University. I only wish I would have known many years ago what is contained in all the unit studies and also that we would have been able to teach them to all of you who have gone through the ATI program.

Because of my sincere gratefulness to you for your involvement in this ministry, I would like to give you further gifts of appreciation that I believe will strengthen your walk with the Lord. The first is a pictorial autobiography titled *The Amazing Way*. It describes the ongoing development of this ministry and also your important part in it. It is also a powerful answer to our critics. The second is a free one-month subscription to Embassy Institute. This will allow you unlimited access to the Basic Seminar, the Advanced Seminar, the Financial Freedom series, the unit studies that teach the principles of life, the forty-nine commands of Christ, and many other vital topics that explain how to be successful as a person, provider, persuader, partner, and parent. More than three hundred messages from past ATI conferences are also available to you with this subscription.

I rejoice in all that God has taught us since ATI began twenty-six years ago. However, in the process I know various ones have been offended in different ways. Over the years, I have made many personal contacts or phone calls to ask forgiveness, yet I know there are others whom I have missed. Therefore, I would be extremely grateful if you would contact me directly if you have been offended. I do not want our past failures to hinder you from experiencing God's blessing on your life. You can reach me by my direct phone number: 630-323-1428, or by e-mail at [bill@billgothard.com](mailto:bill@billgothard.com).

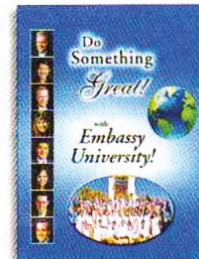
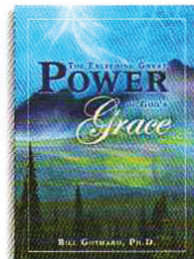
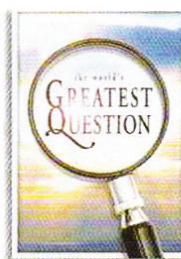
There is no question that God has raised you up during the most important time in world history, and we have an unimagined opportunity to make a difference in our nation and in the world. Let's keep our focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is worthy of all our praise, worship, and loyalty.

Love in Christ,

*Bill*

### My Thanksgiving Gifts of Gratefulness to You:

Turn in the enclosed card by January 15, 2012 to receive your free gifts!



## INSTITUTE IN BASIC LIFE PRINCIPLES

Thousands of youth impacting nations!



### 1. Passion to Train "World Changers"

At the age of 15, Bill Gothard saw fellow teenagers making unwise decisions that would damage the rest of their lives. He longed to find ways to teach them God's wisdom. This was done through Bible clubs with high school students, a weekly radio program, summer camps, reaching Chicago street gangs, etc.



### 2. The Basic Seminar

In 1964, the first Basic Youth Conflicts Seminar was presented at Wheaton College. It explained the principles of life that Bill had learned during the previous fifteen years of youth work. Its success can be traced to the fact that it explains, illustrates, or refers to all forty-nine commands of Christ.



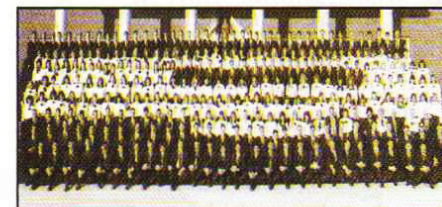
### 3. Advanced Seminar

The Advanced Seminar was developed to help Basic Seminar alumni apply to their marriages, families, finances, courtships, and other vital areas of life the principles they had learned at the Basic Seminar.



### 4. Advanced Training Institute

In 1984, 2,400 families applied for the ATI home school program. Ultimately, 102 families were selected, and a 3,000-page curriculum was developed that built all academic studies around the profound wisdom in the Sermon on the Mount. The young people in this program began attracting the attention of world leaders.



1. Passion for Youth  
(Finding Answers)

2. Life Principles  
(Basic Seminar)

3. Principles Applied  
(Advanced Seminar)

4. Way of Life  
(ATI)

5. Character Qualities  
(ALERT, EXCEL, etc.)

6. Commands of Christ  
(Power Teams)

7. Discipling Nations  
(Embassy University)

### 5. The Character Curriculum

Wisdom and success in life are rooted in Godly character. Forty-nine qualities were identified and taught in many special programs such as ALERT, EXCEL, EQUIP, COMMIT, Life Focus, Counseling Seminars, Children's Institutes, and others.



### 6. Commands of Christ

About five years ago we identified the key to becoming a disciple—by learning all Christ's commands (see Matt. 28:19-20). We discerned forty-nine general commands and then discovered the one accord power that comes by living them out. This power is the basis of a successful marriage, family, church, and school system. The commands also resolve seven deadly stresses that cause sickness and disease.



### 7. Discipling Nations — Teaching All Christ's Commands

After serving nations since 1990, we were given an unprecedented opportunity to help Peru become a model nation. This will involve restructuring their school system, their healthcare system, their approach to helping the poor, their way of working with abused children, and transforming street gangs and their leaders.

