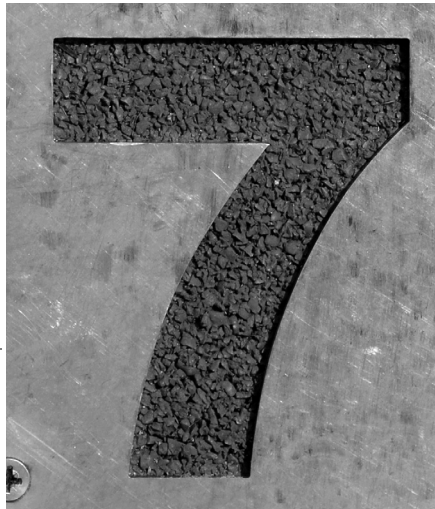
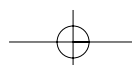


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# About this book

**W**ould you like to build a successful youth ministry? Are you a youth leader who wants to move toward greater excellence? We looked at a number of youth ministries that are growing spiritually and numerically and asked, “Why?” We discovered seven principles that characterize thriving youth groups and their leaders. These principles will help you and your group to grow as well. The following suggestions will help you make the most of this book.

## **1. Read the chapters in an order most helpful to you.**

While we have arranged the Seven Principles logically, each chapter stands alone. So if you need immediate help with planning, begin with Principle Four. If you’re leading an outreach activity next weekend, turn to the last chapter—*Mobilize for Service Evangelism* (Principle Seven).

## **2. Treat this book as a beginning.**

Our purpose is introduce you to the basics of youth ministry. But there is much more to learn! We have left space in the margins for you to write your own ideas or those of a presenter. You’ll find dozens of resources listed at the end of each chapter that will continue to teach you about that principle. You’ll also be encouraged to pray over and live out what you have learned. As you do, God will show you even more.

**3. Make notes in the margins.** We’ve included rules in the margins to encourage note taking. Record your thoughts, memories and ideas for future reference.

## **4. Copy and share the worksheets.**

We’ve created a special section, titled **Important Forms**, where you will find helpful worksheets, such as a parental permission form, a program idea generator, a youth worker application, etc., that can be used “as is” or adapted to your ministry’s needs. You are free to use anything in this section in any way you like—make photocopies, pass them out, share them with fellow youth leaders.

## **5. Use this resource to train others.**

Once you have grasped the fundamentals, why not teach them to others in your church or locality? The section **Interactive Workshop Activities** is especially helpful for planning a number of training sessions. Order a copy of this book for each

**Would you like to build  
a successful youth  
ministry or take your  
leadership toward  
greater excellence?**






workshop participant. And don't forget to share lessons learned from your own ministry. You'll soon *Empower Others* (Principle Five)!

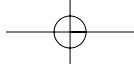
#### 6. Contact us with your stories and suggestions.

We would like to know if the Seven Principles have been helpful to you, and how we might improve them. Is there a topic we should have included? Have you found a helpful resource that you'd like us to add? What successes or challenges have you encountered? Let us know by emailing: [cyfe@andrews.edu](mailto:cyfe@andrews.edu)

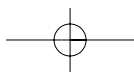
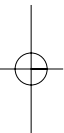
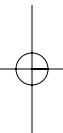
#### 7. Log on to our website at [www.adventistyouth.org](http://www.adventistyouth.org).

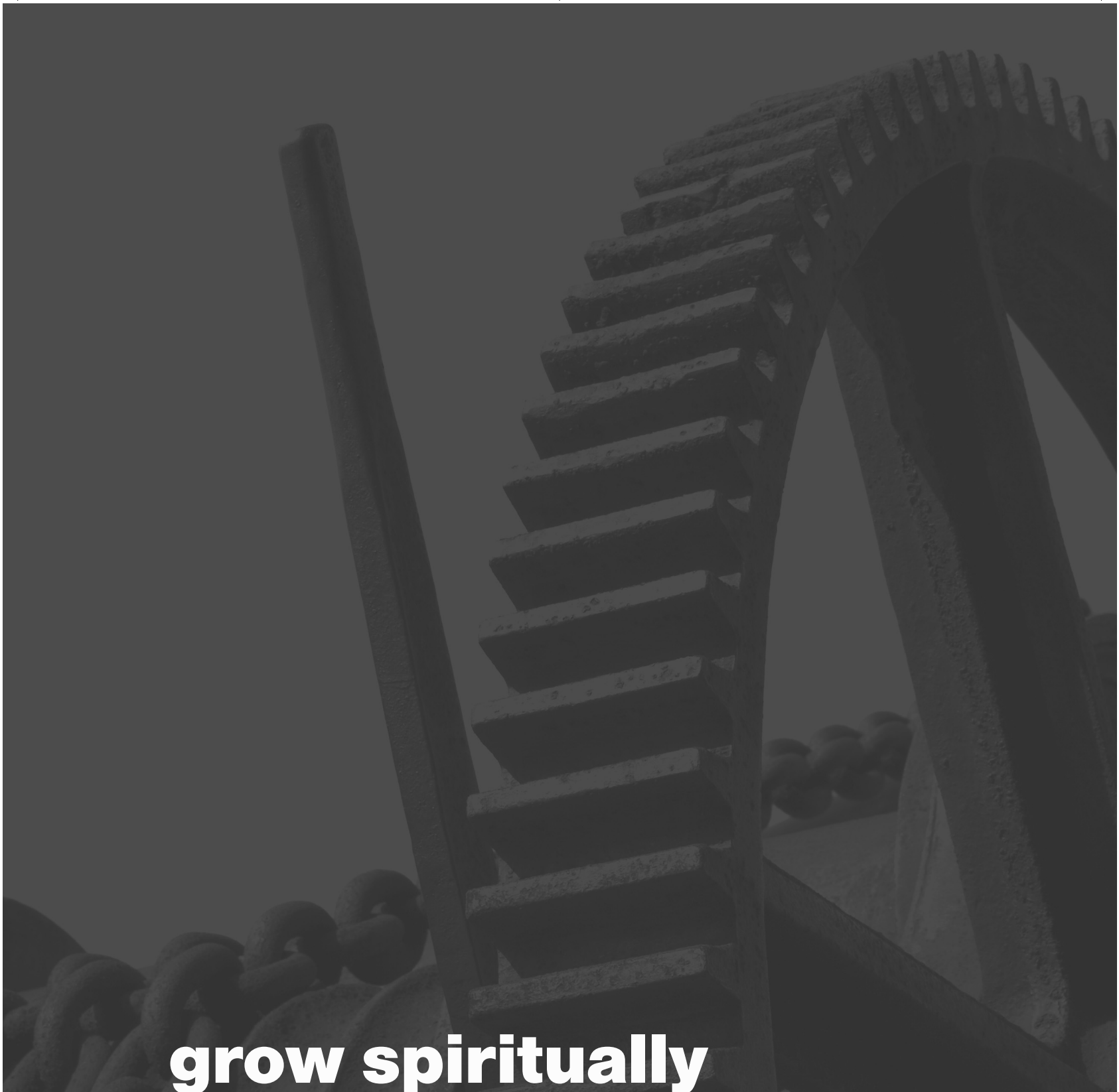
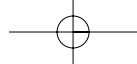
You'll find freshly updated youth ministry news and articles, postings of youth events, and reviews of the latest resources. May God bless your ministry as you apply the Seven Principles and continue your journey toward youth ministry excellence.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN EACH PRINCIPLE	
Each principle is divided into eight sections:	
	<b>ACT IT OUT</b> presents a short dramatic sketch that introduces the principle in a fun way.
	<b>THINK IT THROUGH</b> presents a few simple questions to help you assess your leadership.
	<b>LOOK IT UP</b> brings the principle to life through the story of a Biblical character.
	<b>BREAK IT DOWN</b> explains the concepts behind the principle in detail.
	<b>PASS IT ON</b> suggests ideas for involving youth and developing their leadership skills.
	<b>PRAY IT OVER</b> voices a prayer for wisdom and strength in carrying out the principle.
	<b>LIVE IT OUT</b> offers a few "next steps" for putting the principle into action.
	<b>EXPLORE IT FURTHER</b> lists a variety of resources that explore the principle further.



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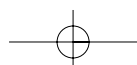




**grow spiritually**



**p r i n c i p l e   o n e**





## INTRODUCTION

■ It is easy for us as youth leaders to become so busy with programs and activities that we neglect our own spiritual lives.

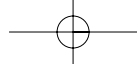
It isn't enough to work tirelessly for other people—maintaining a fresh relationship with God requires effort.

You will see results—both in your own personal life and in your youth ministry.

“But I can't afford to put this much time into prayer and Bible study,” you say.

Hey. You can't afford NOT to.

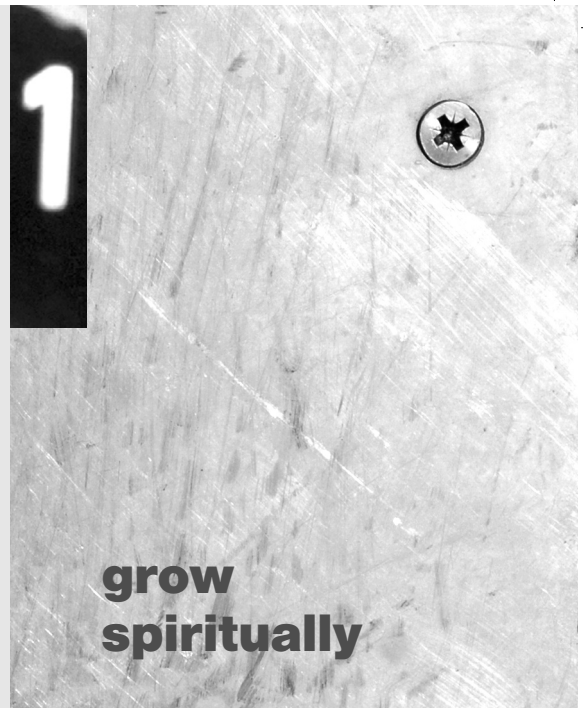
**IF YOU DON'T GROW SPIRITUALLY . . .  
YOU WILL HAVE A YOUTH MINISTRY  
WITHOUT FOUNDATION.**



Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed (Mark 1:35).

Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path (Psalms 119:105).

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ (Philemon 6).



### ACT IT OUT

**THE SCENE:** Alex and Monique sit at a restaurant table across from each other. Alex bows his head discreetly as Monique dunks her fries in ketchup. She looks up and notices Alex is still praying. After Alex ends his prayer he looks up at Monique.

**Monique** Had a lot to say, did you?

**Alex** Yeah, you could say that.

**Monique** Did you manage to bless my food, as well?

**Alex** Sorry, but my burrito needed a lot more prayer than your caesar salad. You're not on one of those new diets, are you?

**Monique** No, just watching what I eat. . . . But about your prayer. Are things okay with you? You seem distracted.

**Alex** What? Sorry, I didn't . . . okay, point made. I guess I've been pretty stressed lately. It seems like there is so much going on and so little time. I barely have time to say grace let alone ask for it.

**Monique** Well, you've been busy doing church stuff. That should count for something, right?

**Alex** That's just it! I feel empty, even though I'm busier than ever at church. You gonna eat that?

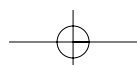
**Monique** Yes, burrito boy! Look, maybe we need to take some time out today. You know, to recoup. Maybe we could even find some time to pray for each other.

**Alex** Sounds great. Let's do it. [Slight pause]. Whoa, look out the window at that car!

**Monique** Nice try Al, but I'm not falling for it again. You've stolen one too many fries from this chica. Come on, let's go.

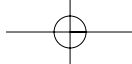
notes

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Seven Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence **GROW SPIRITUALLY**

First, David was a man of prayer. How do we know? Look at the book of Psalms. You'll find many of David's personal conversations with God. He talked to God no matter what the situation—be it good or bad. Bottom line? He remained with God in prayer.

David also loved God's Word. You can sense its value to him when he said, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalms 119:105). But David did more than proclaim his feelings for God's Word. He also did what it said. God says in 1 Kings 14:8, "But you [Jeroboam] have not been like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my eyes."

So was David's behavior perfect? No. He messed up many times. Did David really do everything God wanted him to? Yes. He responded in each instance to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. He fell on his face with sorrow and repented. As he confessed his sin, God was faithful to forgive him (1 John 1:9). That's what made David a man after God's own heart. He made some terrible mistakes, but he always returned to the heart of God. And that, in the end, is what it means to remain with Him.



**BREAK IT DOWN**

**WHAT'S THE POINT?**

There's a reason why *Grow Spiritually* is the first chapter of this book. If you're not growing spiritually as a youth leader, you're cheating yourself and your youth. The purpose of leading young people isn't to keep them out of trouble. It isn't to provide them a place at church where they feel comfortable. There's a much

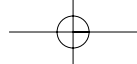
greater purpose to youth leadership.

**The purpose of leading young people isn't to keep them out of trouble. It isn't to provide them a place at church where they feel comfortable. There's a much greater purpose to youth leadership.**

It is, of course, all about Jesus. Through our lives, our words, and our actions, we lead. If we believe we're clever enough or good enough to lead young people to Jesus without spending time with Him, we're fooling ourselves. We're not likely to fool the youth around us, though. They have an

Horizontal lines for writing notes.





Seven Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence **PRINCIPLE ONE**

uncanny ability to spot hypocrisy. They can tell if we've been with Jesus.

So how can we make sure we're living our Christianity to the core? How can we be certain that what we say and do has deep roots in a personal relationship with Jesus? Let's not guess—let's go to God's Word.

**STAYING WITH JESUS TAKES TIME**

We can only influence our youth for Christ if we remain in Him ourselves. John 15:5 says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Without Jesus, we can do nothing. This is the attitude we must have as youth leaders. If we don't spend time with Jesus, we will not be successful in God's terms. We might appear to have things under control. We might even dream up an extremely creative youth program. But in the eternal plan, those things don't matter much.

What does it mean to "remain in Jesus"? The Greek word used in this verse means, "to continue in a relationship." To remain in Jesus means to stay with Him at all times. It means consulting and yielding to Him minute-by-minute. It means making your relationship so real that, by faith, you can sense His presence with you. Are you there yet?

There's only one way to make this happen—time. Time with Jesus in His Word; time with Him in prayer and silence; time letting Him speak through you to others. It doesn't happen any other way. When Jesus said to remain with Him, He meant staying by His side *every second of your life*. For better or worse, for richer or poorer. When you do that, you can't help but love Him.

**REAL LIFE**

George and Elsie had been married for sixty-two years when Elsie died of cancer. As the pastor talked with George a few days after the funeral, he wondered how the two had stayed connected all those years.

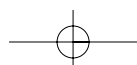
"George," he said, "How did you and Elsie keep it together? You must have been so compatible."

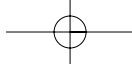
George looked off into the distance and chuckled. "Oh, we were compatible, but that doesn't mean it was always easy.

We had our share of disagreements and a few really hard times."

"But you made it," the pastor said.

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**Seven Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence RESOURCE DIRECTORY**

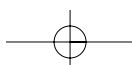
*Christian Outreach International:* 1-800-451-3643, [www.coiusa.com](http://www.coiusa.com)

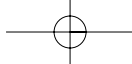
*Confrontation Point Ministries:* 1-800-884-8483, [www.confrontationpoint.org](http://www.confrontationpoint.org)

*Global Mission:* 1-800-648-5824, [www.global-mission.org](http://www.global-mission.org)

*Group Workcamps:* 1-800-774-3838, [www.groupworkcamps.com](http://www.groupworkcamps.com)

*Mission Discovery:* 1-800-767-8720, [www.missiondiscovery.org](http://www.missiondiscovery.org)





Seven Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence RESOURCE DIRECTORY

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