

RECORD KEEPING

INTRODUCTION

The topic we are going to cover now is not popular, but it will build your good name. It is not inspirational, but will build character in your life as you submit to this discipline.

I. WHY KEEP RECORDS?

Records provide a frame of reference. For instance, they may show what was done last year so that we can see what you should be doing this year. They show what somebody else has done so you can see how a new person can fit in.

Why keep records?

1. for accountability
2. for accomplishment
3. for assessment
4. for accreditation

I think you will see immediately that, if your records are not accurate, you will have a problem in each one of those areas. If somebody comes to you and asks for a telephone number and you look for it, but you can't find it, or he asks how many **students you have or what** groups you are leading right now and you say you can't remember, he will think that you don't really know what you are doing. Your credibility falls down. But an organized person can just say, "Just a moment, look over here." He can show his ministry or his work, so he receives credibility from other people.

A. Accountability

1. *You need to be accountable before God.*

2 Tim. 2:15 says, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." That's a very important issue. If God approves, others approve. If everybody approves there will be partners to help you in ministry: with clothing, with money, with materials, with many different things. It comes down to whether you need to be ashamed or not. Are you ashamed because you get up at four thirty in the morning? I don't think so. But if you were getting up at nine thirty you would be. Having God's approval and being able to stand before Him without shame is important.

2. *You need to be accountable to others.*

Records set standards of quality for both students and coaches. A while ago I shared a new idea with brother Pavel. He was going to have an accountability session for his missionaries. I said, "Brother Pavel, maybe it won't be like that. Maybe they are going to hold you accountable." Pavel had thirteen missionaries. If thirteen said, "'A' and 'B' were good, but 'C' was terrible," we know brother Pavel didn't prepare them quite properly for 'C'.

Do you see what I am saying? If a group of people has the same problem, it would show that the coach didn't give them a lecture or didn't warn them or didn't prepare them. Records help both students and teachers.



Records set standards for coaches. That's why many coaches don't like them. For instance, I know one schoolteacher who gives an exam to the children and then says, "Now you know what to do. Excuse me for a moment. I need to be in a hallway." Fifteen or twenty minutes later she comes back, and for some reason her students are always very successful on the exams. She appears to be a very good teacher because the students have good grades on the exams. Now of course, while she is gone the students are busy comparing notes. One student knows the answer to this question, another student knows the answer to that question, so they all help each other.

Records also set standards for students. We had an interesting event not long ago. A group of our leaders were taking a special video course, and of course they had been given homework assignments. Now they are all very busy men. And what's the normal thing to do? To just leave that homework till tomorrow or till the next day. So, we phoned them and said, "Be prepared for an exam and be sure you have all your homework done." When they came for the meeting, it was a success because they had been thinking about the records. They found out that there was going to be an exam, and immediately their energy and their motivation went up. It was not that they were bad brothers; they are wonderful men. But that's human nature; if nobody ever checks, we just let things go. That's why we need records.

***Records set standards
of quality for both
students and coach.***

3. You need to be accountable to yourself.

Here's a very interesting thought: we need to **measure output, not input**. That's a very big difference. Results are what count. This is very typical of New Life for Churches' ideas or requirements.

In most educational programs they want to measure input. Do we have good buildings? Is there a sports hall? Do we have good equipment to teach? Do our teachers have PhDs? They are measuring what they put in.

In Canada I have some friends who started some Christian schools. The government wasn't very happy about the methods they used, so the minister of education said, "If you will not stop, we'll put you in jail." In one school that was taken to court the students did super and it was much, much better than the government school. Do you know what the judge said? "I don't care about results. I only care about input. You have no good teachers with higher education. You don't have a nice building. You don't have a gym. You don't have a film projector and other technical equipment. You don't have a big, nice library. You have hardly anything, so I'm closing down this school." People responded, "But the students are doing great!" But the judge's decision was the same, "I'm not interested in results. In our province we have standards. You don't meet those standards. Close down the school."

New Life for Churches measures output not input. We measure output on several levels. Of course, if you lead two groups and somebody else is leading seven groups, yes, it shows a difference, a big difference. But NLC is specifically interested, not in your output, but in the output of your students. If you have only one group, but in that group ten students are having Bible study groups with unbelievers, I think that's better than if you have five groups and only two students are having a ministry with unbelievers. Do you understand? There is a vital difference. In a stationary program it is very difficult to measure the output of a student. Yes, he was here today, he was here yesterday, and he's going to be here tomorrow. Someday he'll graduate and then we'll say goodbye. How do you measure the output of a resident student?! We are working with church leaders. If a pastor that you are training doesn't do anything different after the lesson series than before the all the lessons, there is not much output. You may tell me you've led a lesson series, but I'll be asking the students, "Is it changing your life? Is it helpful? Have you grown? Is your ministry better? Are you now doing things in your ministry that are easier or better than before?" Results are what count in this situation.

B. Accomplishment

Grades and records provide student motivation by setting goals. You have probably seen lots of sport activities like running or cycling. You know what happens when the participants see the finish line. They are already exhausted, but then he sees the finish line. And all of the sudden he gets a burst of energy, and he begins to go faster and faster. That's what goals do for students. That's what happens when they see grades and records. They have something to strive for, something to accomplish. After all, these goals and records serve as a reward for diligently finished work. If you have been married for a while and have been studying during that time, I am sure there have been times when you said to your wife, "Well, we are going to have an exam tonight." And what was one of the first questions she had when you came home? "What about the exam? Did you get a good grade? Was it easy? Did you do well?" If you can say, "Oh, I got a very high

mark," it's like a reward. It's like bringing home flowers for your wife. She is proud of you because you are a good student. So, after they have been received, good grades and records serve as a reward for diligent work completed.

That's an important fact, and you should use it. I know one man who always passes out little gifts to the students after exams, a pencil, some sweets, or something else small like that. When they go home, they are thinking, "I did well!" You may be thinking, "For adults?" Yes, it works for adults. Everybody feels good when he knows, "My coach was happy with me." That's why you need to tell your students, "Boy, I'm so glad almost all of you had good grades." That's an encouragement to students.

Records serve as an indicator. How far am I on the road to achieving the goal of these lessons? How close am I to mastering this lesson? They show a student track record. For instance, we have technical materials and practical materials, and it's interesting to note which student personality-types like the technical lessons and which personality-types like the practical lessons.

It is interesting that a student usually does well in the same area, and it begins to show on his records. After several training sessions it begins to give a picture of his character or his capabilities. Several records show the quality of work a student is capable of doing.

You need to have accurate records about your ministry. Here is a question, "*How will those in authority evaluate my ministry?*" The answer is: by checking on various records and comparing them with reality. If you know the record system, then you can be comfortable that you know what to do and that you are doing it correctly. You know that everybody works according to a system; everybody has his own records. And that provides peace and quiet.

"*What is expected of me?*" Every student has that question. When you begin a new lesson series, that's the first thing you as a leader must deal with when you meet with the group. Each student has questions: "What should I attain? Do I need to preach? Do I need to visit with unbelievers? Do I need to write a paper? At the end of this series, what should I be able to do?" If he knows, then he can go towards that goal. And soon the records will show how successful he was in achieving that goal.

A coach may ask the following question: "*What should I expect of my students?*" If there are records and standards, then you know what to expect from your students. Suppose the standard is the exams. Then you know that is what you are supposed to accomplish with your students—your job is to lead your students to have good grades on the exams. Suppose they need to preach twice. Then you would lead your students in what to preach, when to preach, and how to preach, and then you keep a record of their success.

C. Assessment

1. For the student.

They provide a measurement of efficiency. Are they reading too much? Are they doing the writing assignments? Can the work be done in about six hours or is it too much? Are the lessons too difficult or too easy for these students? Records help answer many such questions. They provide a measurement.

2. For your Organization.

They provide assessment of the student and assessment of the coach. Records indicate two-way responsibility. Did we supply the proper information, and did the student apply himself? Are our materials the right materials? Are the students learning what they are supposed to be learning? From that we measure if we have good students. We also see whether or not the materials that we have for the students are good and valuable.

Also, records enable organizational follow up. For instance, leaders Pavel and Sasha use records all the time. Somebody can come and say, "I had a super group in this church. Oh, they love the materials. They found it easy." But when these two brothers look at the records, they see there are seven fourteen-year-old girls and two unbelieving boys there. So, they say, "that's not for us. We are trying to train church leaders." That's a job for one of our trainees to do. So, the records give these brothers the information they need to lead the ministry.

Some lesson series are sequential and based on one another, so you need records to show you how students have done in the past. For instance, if somebody has done very poorly on *Mature Christian Life*, then how is he going to do on *Christian Marriage*? Or, if he did well on *Christian Marriage* but there still appear to be a lot of problems in their marriage, how are they going to do on *Raising Christian Children for God*? So, you can see how the courses are based upon each other.



Some lessons may need adjustments. For instance, in the *Practical Evangelism* series each student is asked to talk to one unbeliever. That was before perestroika, during the time when all a person had to do was just begin to think about saying the name “Jesus Christ,” and the police would already grab him, and he would be off to a place for interrogation. So, people were very scared and had very few possibilities. If I ask you now to speak to one unbeliever you would say, “That’s not an assignment. That’s not homework. I mean, I do it all the time.” So, courses may need some adjustment from time to time or from area to area.

For instance, our workers in Ukraine realized that 85% of the Ukrainian church consists of women, and they know that there is a big need for male leadership in the churches. Churches will just never be successful with a woman pastor. So, leaders are now working with the students in the *Practical Evangelism and Establishing Disciples* series on ministering specifically to men. They require them to develop relationships with four men. I think that is a fantastic idea! One trainer has about fifty men studying with him, and if they are each going to work with four men, then in two or three years we are going to have two hundred new men in that church region. Hopefully many of them will become leaders.

3. Coach assessment.

Another example, records may show a coach is doing a poor job. Coaches may need additional training. We recently had some brothers come back, and all of them liked it very much. One brother was very excited about his trip, and he wanted to go again. However, some of the students said, “We don’t want to complain or anything, but if you could send somebody else it would be better.” So, we could not send this brother again until he had been better trained. Maybe he had lots of potential, but he had just not been properly prepared yet. So, information also serves as a tool for evaluating coaches.

4. To spot potential leaders.

We would like to give all of our top-quality students special training. The student records show that a student has the potential to become a leader, to become a coach, to become a spiritual pillar. Do you know what goal our missionaries have for this year? They are supposed to do only one thing during the whole year, and that is to find spiritual pillars. We are going to train these special people the 2nd year. Let’s say he will find about twenty such people. The idea is that the next year there will be 20 new spiritual pillars-in-training being prepared for ministry. And when we ask them, “How do you know that these people have the potential to become exceptional leaders?” they’ll show us their records. They have the information. And we can make a proper assessment.

D. Accreditation

Records are needed for accreditation. They are a necessary and acceptable part of communication with other institutions. First of all, we must know each other’s standards. If I know your standards and according to your standards you only use the grades five, four or three, then I understand what five means. Five by your standard may be six according to my standard. Four by your standard may be five according to my standard. Since we each have standards, we can communicate and share information. We sometimes get requests from immigrants to America for student records. Colleges need to know what materials students studied.

Records are a must for students to graduate. One student asked me, “Can you give me a grade?” I said, “Okay, give me your name and address.” But he didn’t want to do that. I said, “Well, if you can’t give me your name and address, I can’t give you grades. I’m not going just to write on some piece of paper that you got a good grade. That’s not the way things are done for students who want to graduate, to receive a degree, or to transfer to another institution.” We have one brother who studied in Xarkov, and he is now working in L’viv. Because they kept records, he can take them with him and can show what lesson series he has already done if he wants to transfer to another institution. Records are one of the best means of recognition by other institutions.



II. PROCEDURES OF RECORDKEEPING

We have a fairly simple system of recordkeeping. There are basically three main sets of records we must keep:

A. The Individual Student Record

The group leader or the director has a record for each individual student. That means there must be a list of all the students who are studying, and on that individual record we keep all his grades from the different lesson series he has done. That record will also include a short testimony of his salvation, some information on his Christian ministry, and also notes about his character development. We would like all of our students regularly to work on a character development point or area. We have identified at least sixty characteristics out of the life of Christ and as a good Christian pillar, as a good Christian leader, you should work on developing all of those.

B. A Group Record

You can call it the *group record* or the lesson series *record*. In other words, it is a record of all the students who are doing a particular lesson series together. The group leader is responsible to fill this out.

This record lists:

1. All the lesson series a group has taken in a certain city and under which leader.
2. Each group record is listed and filed on a separate sheet.
3. Each record must show a) the lesson series title; b) date.
4. The name of the city and the name of the group leader.
5. The names of all the students that have taken this course.
6. This record indicates:
 - 1) student attendance
 - 2) progress in textbook reading and workbook lesson assignments
 - 3) completion of practical assignments
 - 4) exam grades
 - 5) short notes

Out of that one total grade is made for the course. His attendance and the way he studies his material show his faithfulness. Attendance also shows that he had an opportunity to be disciplined—if he is not there, how can you disciple him. The exams measure the academic work that he is doing. And the homework assignments give him an opportunity to minister for God and will show his spiritual success. So, you have academic input, you have personal faithfulness, and then we expect God's blessing and spiritual fruitfulness.

A leader should keep a separate sheet for each group and for each lesson series. When a lesson series is finished these sheets should be turned into the director. The director will probably have this information entered into a computer system.

III. EXAMS

Exams are a way of learning.

A. During the exam

Students should leave one chair between each of them for privacy. That's a very good system. Once answers are written down, they should be covered with a blank sheet of paper right away. We really want to encourage that. Why? The purpose of an exam is to measure the knowledge of the individual, not the collective knowledge of the group. Everyone knows this, but society has taught people that dishonesty is acceptable. Because of this standard of dishonesty, nobody trusts anybody.

For instance, you go to the market, and you buy coffee. Now the saleslady knows that you don't believe it's brand new, so she takes the jar of coffee, takes the lid off, and she shows you that there is no hole in the paper, it is actually brand new. If you buy something electric, they plug it in and show you it is working. If you buy something that needs to be assembled, they count all the parts: twenty of this, ten of this, five of that. If you buy a light bulb, they check it out to see whether it is burnt out or not. What does that tell you? Nobody believes anybody. In some countries I just run into the store, buy something, I pay for it, and I run back out because of course it works. Of course! He wouldn't sell it if it wouldn't work. If he was a clerk in a store and he sold something he knew wouldn't work, he would be fired.

Does God know what a student knows? Yes, He already knows. So, you don't need to have an exam for God. It is not necessary. Now we all want to look as good as everybody else, right? We want to do well on the exam so we can show God how much we know. "God, look at this! I have all of this on this paper here. Look what I know." God says, "Yes, you know this part, but this part came from that other student over there." God already knows. You need to remind your students about that. God knows they only know enough @to get a average on this exam, and He also knows that if they look over there at someone else's work they'll get a better grade, and if they keep looking around at other people's work, they'll get high grade. They may get a high grade, but God says, "You have a average grade, because that's how well you knew the material for this exam." We often try to portray what isn't true. We can't fool God, but we still like to try in front of each other or for the leader. We simply want to know the same thing God knows. God knows you are prepared to get a average grade for this exam, and that's what we want to know. I want to have the same information that God has. This student has prepared himself minimally, and not any further. And to do that we ask our students to not talk, not to look around, to cooperate, and to help other students by covering the answers they have already completed. We simply want them to say, "I want to show the other students and my leader what God knows I know about this material."



B. After the exam

There are four things that you need to do after the exam.

1. Have each student give his exam to the next person to be checked.

Exams should be checked simply right or wrong without explanation for discussion. So, each student simply checks what is written there. Normally you will read the answers out loud, and they simply write correct or not.

2. Collect and mark the exam results in the appropriate column for each student on the group record sheet.
3. Review the exam with the whole group.

You are not repeating anything, now is the first time you review and discuss the exam. The first time you didn't make any comments, you just gave the correct answer, and they marked the answers in the exam right or wrong. This time you explain both the questions and the answers. You review the exam as a group.

4. Solicit a discussion.

Through discussion you are really going to learn what they should have understood about the lesson. This makes discussion very important. Instead of you giving the answers, students who have a correct answer can share their answer with other students who don't understand.

C. Missed exams

If a student misses an exam, be sure to have him take it as soon as possible. There are several reasons why it is not fair to him if he has to wait a long time.

1. He starts doing another lesson, so his mind is now concentrated on new material.
2. He forgets the old material.
3. He has to get ready for other new exams.
4. An absence of student grades and information gives a negative student picture. For instance, let's say some provincial church leaders visit a church . If somebody shows them a group record that is supposed to contain information about four exams, but one of the students has only done three exams, what do you think they'll say? "Oh, he must have done all four." No, they will immediately say, "Hmm, why did

he do only three?" That will be their first impression. The absence of a student's grades gives a negative student picture because records are helpful and talk.

Listen to this! Write it down where you'll see it often! **It is the leader's responsibility to make his students successful.** That's your job. Of it's easy when you have a bright student. Yes, it's easy when you have a diligent student. But it's a little harder when you have a struggling student. This is a very important element for you to remember.

IV. STUDENT NUMBERS

Each student must have a personal number. As the leadership training ministry grows you can't just have someone known as 'Ivan.' There are probably at least seventeen Ivans studying. It is best to have a number for each city, a number for each group, and a number for each student.

You simply number your students with two digits. A student who has been assigned the number 01 would always have the same number in every course. And number 02 would always be 02. He may sit here or he may sit there, but his number would stay the same. For instance, you might have two Vladimirs in a group. You would have Vladimir 01, and then Vladimir 02.

Everybody has a number that should be a lifetime number. We recommend that you use the same number for a student throughout all lessons. If you don't, the problem is that in the course lead by Ivan a student is number 01, but in another course lead by Kostya he starts counting from a different person, so now he is number 10. The number keeps changing, and everyone gets confused. That's why it's necessary for each student to have a permanent number.

When you start a new course you could say, "All right, are there any new students here? There are two new students here. Okay, do the rest of you remember your student number from the last course? Who had number 01?" All you have to do is write down number 01. Then you carry on by asking, "Okay, who had number 02?" Then you write down his number, and ask the next person what his number was.

This system makes it very easy to enter information into a computer, and it also becomes very easy for you as a leader to absorb all this information.

If 2 groups are being combined together then you will have to make changes in the student numbers. Then you also need to follow up with those changes all the way back to the beginning of those groups. You also need to make a note on your individual records. In the individual record you might need to write a note that says something like this: "In *Galatians/Romans* and *Practical Evangelism and Establishing Disciples*, Volodia was number 01, and in *New Testament Survey* and *Old Testament Survey* he was number 05." But you do need to keep track of that record. It's not always easy, it's not always perfect by any means, but it helps an awful lot. Using the same student number and the same group number helps to avoid many, many mistakes.

If a person leaves studying or goes to another place, don't use that number again. In the individual records there is a record for each student, so that number has already been used. Let's say one student has done two courses, and then you don't hear from him for three years. Then all of a sudden he wants to study more, or another educational center writes, "This man is studying with us now, and he said he took *Galatians/Romans* with you." Now it may be possible that after ten years or so you want to revamp your system, but most colleges keep records like that for a very, very long time. It's surprising how often you get an unexpected request for information about a student.

A student number will typically have two digits for a city, two digits for a group, and two digits for a student. The first number shows you how many cities you are working in. Then in some cities, big cities, there might be two, three, four, five, or more groups. Most of the time you should have less than twelve student numbers per group. If you have a group that has fourteen students, you should split that group into two; pastors and elders in one group and preachers in another group; or men in one group and women in another; or older students in one group and younger students in another group. We don't want you to have large groups. It does not work.

Many recordkeeping systems work by numbers, both in computer systems and in other systems. When you start to use a certain number system, it looks a little bit complicated. But once you have over a hundred students finishing two or three lesson series every year or a hundred students whom somebody needs information about, then student numbers will make things very, very easy for you. These numbers don't affect information about the students; they just make it very easy to find the right information about the right student.

CONCLUSION

James 4:17 says, *“To him who knows how to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.”* Records are a good way of providing information about the type and quality of each student. It is of the utmost importance that students get proper credit where credit is due. If there are no good records, students will not have an opportunity to develop. Somebody will look and say, “Ah, well I guess you don’t have any good students yet.” They won’t give students new opportunities. But if they can see that there are good records that are accurate, honest, and trustworthy, then they can understand what type of people they are dealing with. With these records someone like a provincial church leader can say, “I’m going to phone this student and ask him if he will do some spiritual work for me.”

The way you keep records can deeply affect a student’s life. You are responsible to your students and for them to God. We cannot give credit to somebody for whom we don’t have any records. If we don’t know who this student is, where he began his studies, how many lesson series he has done, or how he has grown spiritually, then we cannot give him a recommendation. And without a recommendation it will be difficult for him to go and serve God in a new way. He will not receive the same new opportunities. You’d better make note of this: poor records may result in damage to the students.

For instance, we may later offer a specialized lesson series to a number of students. Only proven, high-quality students will be allowed to attend. If your records are inadequate, your group will not be allowed to participate. It becomes a matter of life and death. A student should study his very best, and there should be records that show what he has accomplished. Remember: It is **output**, not input that we need to measure. Good records show the results of all the prayers, efforts, money, time, and materials that have been invested in these lives. -

You should have this vision, “I’m going to treat my students well. I’m going to treat them right. I’m going to honor them. And if something happens to me, there is a good set of records that will show everyone who my students are.” Remember James 4:17.

Thank you so much.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

Practical assignment

Bring several copies of your lesson records to your leader for review and discussion.