

# REVIVALIST LIFESTYLE

## 1<sup>st</sup> YEAR

When you come to a new place you are often wondering, “What are the rules?” because you need to know them so you’ll know when you’ve scored a touchdown or when you’ve stepped out of bounds. Well, at VSSM our rules are buried beneath the values we are trying to get you to adopt. In other words, you might stumble into our rules but we’re more worried about you breaking our values than our rules. It’s our desire to help you, and the Kingdom you serve, to thrive!

God has called you to VSSM, and our mission is to call out the *revivalist* in you.

**REVIVALIST** (n) a *believer* who is *focused* and *passionate*, *willing to pay any price to live in purity and power* because they are *loved by God and love Him*, whose *manifest presence transforms lives and cultures*.

Over the years, we have learned the important truth that who we are becoming is both expressed and affected by simple choices and behaviors. These choices and behaviors produce a lifestyle. Based on your call to become a revivalist, we have a set of expectations that we want you to adopt.

Ultimately, we want choices to flow from who we are. However, some things are first learned from the “outside in.” In other words, we adopt them before they feel quite natural or necessary because they help shape our inner world. School is often an “outside in” experience. For example, we didn’t know the English language but we imitated and adopted a set of behaviors, principles and exercises and eventually learned it.

The following is a practical expression of choices and behaviors that flow from your core mission of becoming a revivalist. We have found them very helpful in creating an atmosphere that advances the Kingdom. **Let’s break down the definition of “revivalist” and demonstrate the choices and behaviors we believe naturally flow from it.**

“believer” We expect you to grow in the Truth, come to love it, deeply enjoy its value to save and transform, and ultimately, radically live it. So, among other things, being a “believer” in Truth is expressed in the following simple behaviors:

- Do your Bible reading on time in order to be ready to discuss the truth of the Word.
- Read the assigned books on time so that you can discuss them and understand a lecture in order to integrate the truth they contain into your life.
- Memorize the assigned scriptures on time that you might know the Word.

“focused” “*You can have anything you want, but you can’t have everything you want.*” When a person is focused they make a “To Do” list and a “Not To Do” list.

Students with focus have a “Yes” in their spirit so strong that they can say “No” to distraction and compromise. Focus is key in accomplishing all that God has called you to become. So, at the very least, “focus” is expressed by the

following behaviors:

- Come to class on time.
- Quiet down immediately when someone begins to address the class.
- Give whoever is speaking the honor of your full attention.
- Plan your restroom use for the break. Try not to leave in the middle of class. We especially ask that you are mindful of this when our senior leaders and guest speakers are ministering.
- No matter how tired you are, don’t lie down or doze off.
- Always turn your chair and/or body to face the speaker.
- Turn your cell phone ringer off and don’t answer it in class. Return calls at the break or after school. (This radical behavior is actually quite refreshing for everyone.)

“**passion**” When we are passionate about something, our whole being is engaged. Our mind, emotions, bodies and energy are all directed at that thing that has captured us. Obviously, the Lord Himself is the One we encourage you to direct your passion towards. As you love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength you tap into His passion for His Church, the lost, and yourself. There is a “passion continuum” or scale; in other words, you might say, “I’m a 2 on a passion scale of ‘1 to 10’.” Then this year will be a great success if you become a “6” by years end. We don’t expect everyone to be a 10—though many will be—but we do expect growth. At the very least, the core value of passion is expressed in the following:

- Worship with your whole being. Worship is not free time, or conversation time, or necessarily “soaking” time. It is a vital sacrifice we bring to the King every day. It is a step beyond convenience. It does take a purposeful heart to worship every day with joy but He is so worth it! Allowing yourself to become disconnected or uninvolved is not an option and leadership will address it if we see this in your life.
- Allow your passion to be revealed in excellence. Some of the work you are asked to produce is only viewed by you and God. That should be enough for you! If you find yourself trying to cut corners or “beat the system” you are missing the whole point of this school.

“**willing to pay any price**” Most of you are already well aware of what it has cost you to attend VSSM. We recognize and value your sacrifice. Still, there is more. VSSM is not a “12:45 to 5:30 Tuesday through Friday” school. Rather it’s an eight-month school and it costs far more than money to attend here. “Willingness to pay any price” at least looks like the following attitudes and behaviors:

- ❑ Attendance at services, outreaches, conferences and other events is a large part of our school experience. So, we expect you to faithfully attend on time, and we check-in on your faithfulness.
- ❑ Leading with a king's heart and a servant's hands is one of the core values of a revivalist. So, we ask you to serve a whole lot. Be quick to volunteer whether it be tearing down the room or serving at a banquet. Your leaders have been setting an example in this area for years. One important lesson they have learned is that "the seat of service often turns into the throne of destiny."
- ❑ VSSM is dependent upon your faithful payment of your school tuition. None of our money comes from the church's general fund. "Paying any price" looks like getting a job, diligently getting support, or giving up something important or pleasurable (like a latte or a Christmas trip home) in order to keep your school tuition and housing current.

“purity” A good definition of grace is “the power to change.” The Lord gives us grace to walk in purity. Holiness is really wholeness. The Lord asks us to walk in purity because it is life-giving! Sin hurts you. It hurts other people and it hurts God. Not only that, it makes people crazy. Really, sin makes people crazy. They find themselves doing things would never had thought of doing in a million years.

You may hear it a lot when we apply discipline because we believe it so deeply, but your leaders will say something like “What were you thinking? You are way too awesome to be behaving that way!”

At the very least, purity looks like the following:

- ❑ Deal with your spouses with absolute integrity and service.
- ❑ Don't mark down that you finished your reading if you haven't.
- ❑ Let your sexuality be expressed in a way that pleases God. The Father has blessed marriage with the gift of sex and married couples are obviously expected to be faithful in body, heart and mind. All of us who remain unmarried are expected to honor God and one another with our sexuality. Jesus never used another person for His own gratification and called it love. Rather, His sexuality was a blessing to Himself and others around Him.
- ❑ VSSM's environment of freedom requires a high level of self-management. We are creating an ordered culture, but not a controlling one. We are calling out the royalty in one another, not just trying to abstain from sin. In the area of alcohol, we don't make a strict rule concerning its use because Scripture doesn't (except to never be drunk—Eph. 5:18). Our government does have strict rules (no alcohol under 21 and you are legally considered drunk with a “moderate” amount of alcohol), which we expect you to obey. But mainly we don't have a firm rule because we want to see what's in your heart so we know how to pastor you. In Galatians 5 we are told our freedom is given so that we may serve one another in love. The following concepts are very important to us as we fellowship together.

First, we disagree totally with the core value that alcohol is the key to fun, a party, a mood swing, to relax, distract or ease pain. Especially at these times alcohol is a counterfeit of something the Holy Spirit has for us. Secondly, we never take a “break” or “vacation” from our character or the above core value. Grace gives us the power to change and stay changed. If you find in your heart the thought that you need a break from holiness, it reveals a dangerous condition that Father is ready and able to heal, and into which you should invite your mature friends and leaders.

“**Power**” The Good News without power is not good news. Paul was glad in I Cor. 2 that his preaching wasn’t with persuasive words but demonstrations of power. Throughout the year, you will have lots of opportunities to allow the power of God to be demonstrated through you. One of our goals for you is the same as Christ’s assignment for the twelve disciples in Luke 9 - that every student would know how to drive out demons, heal the sick and preach the kingdom.

- ❑ Make the most of your opportunities as an Altar Worker, Prayer Servant, Children’s Minister, outreach team, mission trip, etc.

“**loved by God and love Him**” All of this we do **because we are loved**, not to earn the love of God. Pastor Kris is fond of saying, “We work *from* love, not *for* love.” Jesus died so that He might have relationship with us; don’t let go of this in the swirl of activity that is VSSM.

- ❑ Let all other motives, be they a desire to change the world, to be a person of vision who’s “great for God,” or the drive to please leaders and classmates, be secondary to our connection with Him.

“**transforms lives and cultures**” Christ’s mandate to us is that we make disciples of the nations as we are “going.” All of us should graduate with a humble confidence that we can reproduce ourselves by “teaching them to obey everything Jesus Christ has commanded us” (Matt. 27). Like Paul says, “Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.”