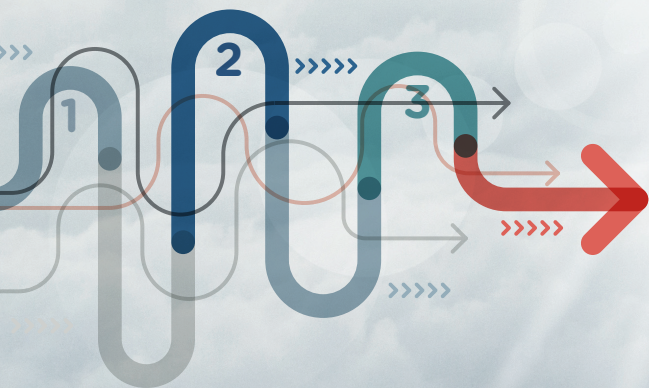




HOPE ROCK
CHURCH
AT LAKE TRAVIS



> > **EQUIPPING**

> > **LEADERS**

"TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN"

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EQUIPPING LEADERS

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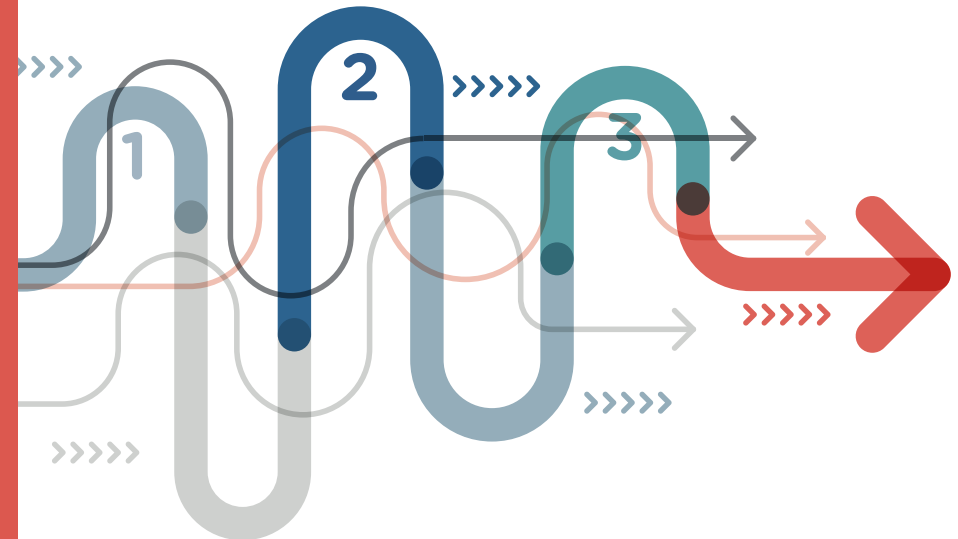
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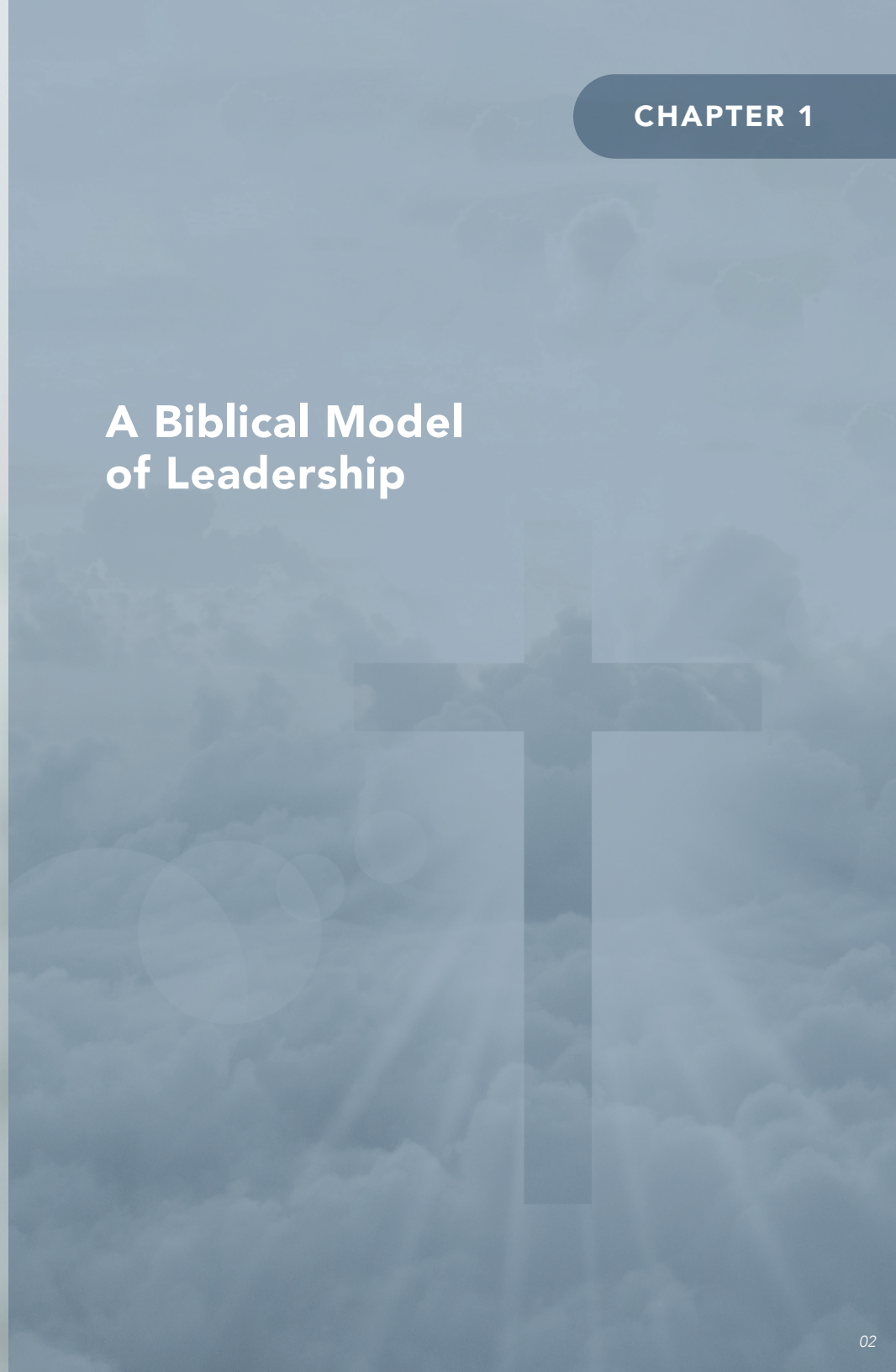
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A Biblical Model of Leadership



Matthew 20:25 - 28

Jesus called [his disciples] to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever **would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave**, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 9:35

[Jesus] sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

Scripture repeatedly shows us that God's view of leadership is that it is servant-hearted. It is what we call **servant-leadership**.

Jesus himself, throughout his life, modeled this form of leadership. His style of leading was not coercive or domineering. Very often, leaders are motivated by selfish ambition or self-glory, thinking that leadership is ultimately about *them* rather than about those they are leading. But the way of Jesus and His Kingdom is completely different.

Jesus encouraged us to look at his model of leadership and emulate it. Servant-leadership is more effective in forging influence and ultimately creates better leaders, even if it's a far more difficult approach.

MOTIVATED BY LOVE

Leaders are called, not driven. When a leader is driven, all kinds of problems arise. They are driven by acceptance to establish something credible or to be popular. If your motives are not pure, you will be driven, and destroy yourself and your people.

Instead of being motivated by our own self-glory or our need for affirmation (which is rooted in insecurity), leadership is to be motivated by love for God and for others.

John 13:34,35

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

This is true, Biblical leadership.

King David led the people of Israel with "integrity of heart" and "skillful hands" (Psalm 78:72). Leadership is about having the right heart as well as doing things excellently. Both are required. But it does have to start with the right kind of heart, otherwise we become driven by the wrong motivation. Scripture severely warns us against self-centred leaders who are all about themselves.

Ezekiel 31:1-6

The word of the Lord came to me: [2] "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? [3] You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. [4] The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. [5] So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts. [6] My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.

God is serious about this.

So, Biblical leaders:

- Love Jesus first and foremost.
- Seek to love as Jesus loved, serve as Jesus served.
- Serve others.
- Do not lord themselves over others.
- Focus on those following, not themselves.
- Aren't concerned about the appearance of leadership but just lead.
- Aren't worried about the admiration of people, but the actual progress and enabling in the lives of those being led.
- Understand that leadership is a function, not a title. You don't need a title to lead! A leader with a title who does not actually lead others is no leader at all.
- Understand that they must do things excellently, but cannot lean on their skill to make up for a lack of character.
- Understand that they must lead and not back down from doing so.

Characteristics of bad leadership:

- Abusive and dictatorial.
- Manipulative.
- Absent.
- Self-centered.
- Abuses power and privilege with no accountability.
- Micro-manages.

A LIST FROM PROVERBS

For your reference, here is a good list of examples of good and bad leadership from the book of Proverbs.

Good leadership:

- Knows wisdom and instruction [discipline]; Proverbs 1:2
- Receives instruction in wise dealing in righteousness, justice, and equity; Proverbs 1:3
- Gives knowledge and discretion to the youth; Proverbs 1:4
- Listens and increases in learning; Proverbs 1:5
- Obtains guidance; Proverbs 1:5
- Fears the Lord; Proverbs 1:7
- Walks in the way of righteousness; Proverbs 8:20
- Embraces God's instructions; Proverbs 8:32-33
- Walks with integrity; Proverbs 10:9
- Gives thought to their steps; Proverbs 14:15
- Acts cautiously and turns away from evil; Proverbs 14:16
- Their prayers are acceptable to God; Proverbs 15:8
- Speaks with divine wisdom and never judges unfairly; Proverbs 16:10 (NLT)
- Commits their work to the LORD; Proverbs 16:13
- Acquires and seeks knowledge; Proverbs 18:15
- Sifts out the wicked from the good; Proverbs 20:26 (AMP)
- Conducts themselves with purity and righteousness; Proverbs 21:8
- Possesses strength and their knowledge enhances their might; Proverbs 24:5
- Has an abundance of counselors; Proverbs 24:6
- Leads their land [their territory] towards stability; Proverbs 28:2
- Understands justice; Proverbs 28:5
- Builds up their land [their territory/the people]; Proverbs 29:4
- Knows the rights of the poor; Proverbs 29:7
- Possesses self-control; Does not listen to lies; Proverbs 29:12a
- Faithfully judges the poor; Proverbs 29:14
- Not hasty in words; Proverbs 29:20
- Does not drink excessively; Proverbs 31:4b
- Judges righteously; defends the rights of the poor and needy; Proverbs 31:9

Bad leadership:

- Despises wisdom and instruction; Proverbs 1:7
- Hates knowledge; Proverbs 1:22
- Lacks discipline; Proverbs 5:23
- Has crooked speech; Proverbs 6:12
- Has lying lips; utters slander; Proverbs 10:18
- Trusts in riches; Proverbs 11:28
- Is ensnared by the transgressions of their life; Proverbs 12:13
- Utters deceit; Proverbs 12:17
- Is reckless and careless; Proverbs 14:16
- Has a quick temper; Proverbs 14:17
- Has pride; Proverbs 16:18
- Seeks rebellion; Proverbs 17:11
- Accepts bribes; Proverbs 17:23
- Takes no pleasure in understanding, but only wants to express their opinion; Proverbs 18:2
- Have haughty eyes and a proud heart; Proverbs 21:4
- Put on a bold face (rely on charisma rather than character); Proverbs 21:29
- Does not understand justice; Proverbs 28:5
- Are cruel oppressors; Proverbs 28:16
- Give full vent to their spirit (i.e. lack self-control); Proverbs 29:11
- Listen to falsehoods; Proverbs 29:12
- Are hasty in their words; Proverbs 29:20
- Drink and forget what has been decreed; Proverbs 31:5a
- Pervert the rights of the afflicted; Proverbs 31:5b

(This list courtesy of [greenepastures.org](https://greenepastures.org/qualities-of-a-bad-leader-from-proverbs-part-ii/) <https://greenepastures.org/qualities-of-a-bad-leader-from-proverbs-part-ii/>)

WE NEED LEADERS

Luke 10:2

“He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

We need more godly leaders in the Kingdom. There is more than enough space for everyone to function! We do not need to jostle for position. God has made us all unique (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12) and each of us brings something special to the table, as we work together as a team for the advancement of God’s Kingdom.

Acts 13:36

“For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption.”

We all have a purpose to fulfill in our generation—so let’s do it well!

“A leader is a man who knows the road, who can keep ahead, and who pulls others after him.” - John R Mott

Scripture encourages us to lead strongly, without becoming overbearing and coercive, but understanding that we must lead. **God expects us not to shrink back from the task.** Some of the worst examples of leaders in the Bible (Ahab and Saul, in particular) were weak leaders, worrying about what others thought and not what the Lord wanted. This led them to allowing sin to reign in their Kingdom (as in the case of Ahab, see 1 Kings 16:1–22:53) or to making rash, unhealthy decisions (which we see Saul do again and again—his story is chronicled in the book of 1 Samuel).

Where do we lead those that are following us? We don’t lead them to ourselves, we don’t lead them to their dreams and desires, we don’t lead them to nowhere. We lead them to Christ.

NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Everyone carries some level of leadership. We’re all leading someone, whether we like it or not. When we were younger we might have had a younger sibling; or we have to lead our children; or have to lead people at the workplace. Our level of functioning might differ, but nevertheless, God puts us all into places of leadership.

There are different functions of leadership in the church as well—not everyone is called to be an elder in the local church but all are called to lead someone in some way.

This tells us that we all need to learn to be better leaders.

Good leadership is a blend of the natural and spiritual. Many people are naturally gifted to lead, but sometimes they might rely on their natural gifting and not improve spiritually or with their character, emotional health etc. (Note: not all natural leaders are charismatic, even though many are.) But there must be the spiritual component; God must have also called them to lead in a particular function, and they must have active, healthy spiritual lives of faith in Christ.

P.T. Chandapilla, an Indian student leader, described Christian leadership as *“a vocation where there is a perfect blending of qualities that are both human and divine, or a harmonization of working of both God and man, given over to the ministry and blessing of other people.”*

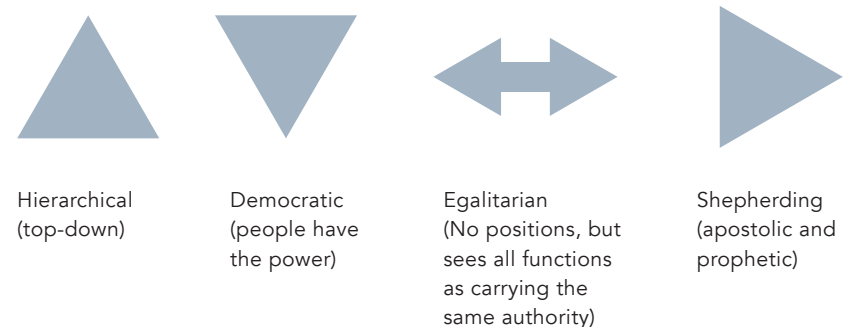
D.E. Hoste, a director of China Inland Missions, said: ‘It occurs to me that perhaps the best test of whether one is a qualified leader, is to find out whether anyone is following him!’

A BIBLICAL MODEL FOR LEADERSHIP

Throughout history and in the world today there are many styles and types of leadership. Unfortunately, all of it is not good, and at best, systems of control have to be introduced to protect followers from abuse and manipulation. In a fallen world, Biblical servant-leadership is scarce.

Bad leadership happens across cultures and periods of history. It is ultimately the heart of man that is the problem. If the heart is bad, then the leadership style and authority will be bad. Even systems of leadership that are popular and seem effective in some context may be critically flawed or vulnerable to abuse.

The following diagrams provide a good picture of many different forms of leadership, with a focus on what we believe to be the closest to what we see in the Bible.



This last model of leadership (Shepherding / apostolic / prophetic) is what we believe best illustrates a Biblical view of leadership. We call this a 'shepherding' model as it is about guiding people toward a vision to fulfill the purposes of the Great Shepherd, Jesus. It is about discipleship, moving from "glory to glory" (Matthew 9:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

1. This model honors the concept of 'equal in value, different in function'

"Follow me as I follow Christ." - 1 Corinthians 11:1

We are all made in the image of God (as Genesis 1 and 2 so clearly state) and that is without question. But this does not mean that we all serve in the same function and neither does it indicate that some functions have more value than others.

An obvious example is that while our children will grow up and lead their own homes, while they are children, we are still to lead them. This does not take away from their value, nor even their function as children in the home!

Different functions carry different levels of authority. God has called elders in a local church to govern it with authority (1 Timothy 5:17) but this does not take away from the value of all of God's people, who are all equally saints in His Kingdom. (Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 2:9.)

Likewise, if you are a leader of a business, you carry an authority in that business which does not make you a more valuable member than another in the team, but simply highlights how you have a particular function to fulfil (to lead the team).

2. The model honors team

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken". - Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12

It's often been said that to go somewhere quickly, go alone; but to go far, go together.

Team is a concept we see so often endorsed in scripture. From the beginning, God created male and female, a team! Team maximizes the strengths of the individual and minimizes their weaknesses. It multiplies the capacity of the individual and increases efficiency.

A biblical approach to leadership must be all about team. One person leads the team (otherwise you get two visions, ie. "di-vision") but this role is functional, not positional. This creates space for healthy relationships to form as the whole church (or an organization) becomes the "team" and must practice grace, acceptance of each others' gifts, and commitment.

3. It honors relationships

"Love never fails" - 1 Corinthians 13:8

We are the body of Christ, and we are held together through loving relationships. Accountability and integrity is essential. All people are important and to be treated with dignity. We don't avoid conflict but work things out biblically, with commitment to building covenantal relationships.

In this model, the leader and their leadership team neither dictate nor are dictated to. It's a model of participation and partnership. We can all be involved in achieving the goals and vision of the local church as we fulfill our personal call and function.

4. It honors vision

"Where there is no prophetic vision the people are discouraged."

- Proverbs 29:18 (ESV)

We call this an 'apostolic / prophetic' model. By prophetic, we mean to hear from God, have vision and clear sight for the way forward—and to move toward it.

Leadership happens from the front. People lead by example. It is visionary and allows all to work together. This brings authentic power and authority.

5. It encourages pioneering

In the local church, our leadership model must be apostolic as it is about conforming to the teaching and practice of the New Testament apostles. However, we also use the word *apostolic* to indicate *pioneering*. The believers in the New Testament took the gospel to new regions and cities. The call to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28) is an 'apostolic' call.

A healthy leadership model encourages pioneering, innovation, and forward movement. The triangle above is on its side, like an arrowhead. It is moving somewhere and piercing. Those at the front who serve a leadership function are therefore the first in the pioneering.

But this also shows us that those who lead face the battles first at the 'front lines'. This is why leadership can require tremendous sacrifice, risk, and requires commitment and tenacity.

Furthermore, the key to effective discipleship is to train others to take your place. We've always got to build away from ourselves. This model is 'forward-moving', creating momentum and space for the next generation to take up the baton.

6. It honors the Holy Spirit

We are HIS house (Hebrews 3:1). He is building HIS Church!

This means we must be flexible in our structures, taking an organic approach. Structure is there to serve the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit, not the other way around. As the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, so our structures and processes are there to serve us as we serve Him, and not the other way around. (Mark 2:27.)

Matthew 9:16

"16" No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. 17 Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

The Holy Spirit is dynamic, even though He never changes His character; and God's purposes and plans have still not changed.

THIS IS FOR ALL LEADERSHIP

The Biblical pattern of leadership can resource all areas of leadership: church, home, state and marketplace. The above principles are not good for the church only, but they are leadership patterns that will help us in any arena of leadership. This is because the Bible's patterns of leadership set people free and bring life.

The Character of a Biblical Leader



What kind of person should a leader be? The world has many answers—usually they have to do with skill, charisma, personality, creativity, and so on. These are not what God looks at. Rather, God is interested in our hearts.

1 Samuel 16:7

“Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

We need to be open to God’s leading so that we can lead others. Let him be your Great Shepherd.

Psalm 139:23-24

*“23 Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
24 And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!”*

God wants to also change our minds about how we think of leadership.

Romans 12:2

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

It is imperative for us as leaders to live with our hearts open to God, allowing Him to deal with our hearts, so that we can know and choose God’s will and call for our lives.

PUTTING CHRIST FIRST

In our relationship with Jesus, there can be only one Lord, and it **isn’t you**.

- Philippians 1:21: *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*
- Matthew 26:39: *“And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.’”*

God wants to transform you by transforming your heart. This is his work. Submit to him and let him do it.

A need for acceptance and affirmation

Your human need for affirmation and acceptance are often met to a certain extent by the love and responses of the people you lead. You will be tempted to compromise God’s message to hold people and keep them happy, drawing them to yourself; or you will use people to have your need for affirmation met.

A low esteem or poor self-image needs to be dealt with. Is our focus more on what must be done or on Him who empowers us? We must minister out of a foundation of affirmation in God. A negative self-esteem will sow fear into people. We need to rise up in our dignity, who we are in Christ, and from that position of affirmation comes our confidence.

We have to face the issues of our lives and character

Personal problems, sin, short-sightedness, a lack of self-awareness and domestic conflict cannot be allowed to influence our leadership negatively. The struggles of life give us both a field of experience and also a personal testimony of God’s grace. Both form a very valuable background to our ability to lead wisely.

However, we cannot lead people out of the negative emotions and impure thoughts and values that arise out of these issues if we do not actively look to resolve them in ourselves. People are bound to pick it up. The mature become offended and the weak are led further astray.

We have to be protective and pure in all we do. For example, we must be able to communicate on sexual matters with purity. As Jesus says, a good tree cannot bear bad fruit and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit (Matthew 7:17 – 18).

Do you lead with your heart in a transformational state? If so, then as you lead others, you will see breakthroughs in their hearts too.

CHARACTER BEFORE CHARISMA

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

“26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

REPUTATION is what we are supposed to be and strive for. CHARACTER is what we are.

REPUTATION comes over one from without. CHARACTER grows up from within.

REPUTATION is made in a moment. CHARACTER is built in a lifetime.

REPUTATION makes us richer or makes us poorer. CHARACTER makes us happy or makes us miserable.

REPUTATION is what people say about us on our tombstones. CHARACTER is what angels say about us before the throne of God.

Both reputation and character are important, but God's aim for our life is *good character*.

Psalm 78:72

"With upright heart [David] shepherded and guided them with his skillful hand."

This is the kind of leader we want to be—shepherds who guide with upright hearts and skillful hands.

Philippians 2:1-13

1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

LEADING YOUR OWN LIFE

Leadership is about all of our lives, not just those parts that are seen. Remember, *you don't have to be flawless* at the following things before you can lead others, but you need to be aware of them and trusting God to make you more skillful at them.

1. Personal life

When we think of developing our leadership skills we often think of principles that enable us to take large groups of people in a desired direction. In God's economy, leaders that he endorses are those who know how to lead themselves.

Jude 1:20-21

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

This is a scripture for all believers, so how much more should leaders take responsibility for their own faith walk with God? There is a direct connection between self-leadership and public leadership.

Leading yourself means to know how to submit to God's leadership of your life.

Know how to take care of yourself. God's sheep have needs, and even in leadership, you remain one of His sheep. If you're not getting your sheep needs met in Jesus, you will begin to get people to meet your needs, which is dangerous and manipulative.

Know your limits and know where you need to stretch yourself.

2. Home life

We all must be engaged in leading in our home life in some way or another, not just those called to leadership. But, those who are called to leadership need to be aware of the importance of leading at home before they can lead others.

If you are single, lead your home by getting it in order, making it a place of hospitality, having your finances in order, and so on.

If you're married, understand God's ways in how the home should be ordered.

3. Work life

We need to understand that Jesus' transforming power will have an effect on all our relationships. If we want to be godly leaders we will have to be those who diligently discharge our responsibilities. It is not about having an official, formal leadership position, but about exercising leadership no matter your public status.

In Ephesians 6:5-9, Paul encourages servants to serve from a place of honoring. In the workplace, we are to be self-starters and not those who only get going with the job at hand because the boss is watching. We must work hard, add value, while not being workaholics, keeping the big picture in mind: the Kingdom of God is coming to your workplace because *you are there, exercising godly authority in a godly way* and building things according to the principles of the Kingdom.

4. Church life

Leadership in the Church is not something that's just up to those who do it full time. We also don't need to be made leaders in a formal way to lead. Rather, we are formally recognized as leaders *because we lead*.

Before any formal recognition, you are to be a contributor, not a consumer; a participator, not a spectator; one who is easy to lead; one who takes initiative; one who adds momentum, and so on.

1 Timothy 3:1-13

1 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. 8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

What we need to notice above is that those who should be considered for leadership in the local church should be those who have a track record of taking leadership responsibility in all areas of life. Once they are formally recognized as leaders, this does not change.

5. Community life

In our individualized age we can easily forget our Christian calling to make a difference in our communities and society. This can take multiple forms. We are to recognize our role in culture forming without being sucked into the spirit of the age when it comes to political posturing and tribalism.

It's difficult to remain committed to so many spheres faithfully. We have to take stock of our own limits, the seasons of life, and the needs of our closest family and friends. Life is often like walking on a tightrope—always having to adjust our balance.

WHAT HINDERS US FROM LEADING?

- **Intimidation**

Joshua 1:9

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

- **Shifting blame**

When Saul didn't do what God commanded, he:

- Blamed everyone else (1 Samuel 15:21)
- Even got all "spiritual" about it! (1 Samuel 15:14,15).

- Tried to soften the truth of his disobedience with boasting and flattery. (1 Samuel 15:13).

Leaders who lead are those who take responsibility and stop shifting the blame and making excuses.

- **Fear of what others think**

1 Samuel 15:24

"Saul said to Samuel, 'I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.'"

John 12:43

"For they loved human praise more than praise from God."

Having an unhealthy fear to please people will cripple us to ever lead out of a place of integrity. It can also pacify us from taking the right course of action in leading. Many times we have a craving to be popular in the eyes of people—but that's not leadership! Leadership will often mean we have to make unpopular decisions, but we have to do it anyway because that's leadership.

- **Abdication of authority**

As leaders we must delegate our authority to others, and learn how to do that, but not abdicate our authority to others. That will always end in disaster! The story of Ahab (1 Kings 16–22) is always a good example of how leadership is not done. In this case, he frequently abdicated his authority to his wife, Jezebel, which resulted in chaos as that was not her role and calling.

- **Cultural persuasion**

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The culture we grew up in or now find ourselves a part of might not see authority and leadership as a God-given value. If you are not persuaded by God's Word that leadership is indeed a God-given means for blessing and grace into various contexts, you will not rise up as a leader!

Authority and Team



All authority is God-given and is meant for our good. Here are the different kinds of authority we find in life:

- Authority in the home and marriage (parents and husband). This is imposed/invited leadership. (See Ephesians 5:22; 6:1.)
- Civil authority or the authority of the State (members elected into office). This is imposed leadership over our lives. (See 1 Peter 2:13-14.)
- Spiritual authority or the authority of the local church (elders and deacons, called and ordained). This is voluntary and invited leadership. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17.)

You cannot overstep your boundaries of authority. For example, on a macro scale, the State should not impose its authority on the Church (or vice versa) even while there should be some interdependence. On a personal level, an elder cannot impose their authority into your marriage.

A proper understanding of authority releases faith and freedom. Godly government in all spheres is given to release life!

In all leadership positions, we are called to exercise authority responsibly, and in turn to submit to the relevant authorities. This releases *life*.

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY HAS THREE APPLICATIONS

Luke 7:1-10

1 After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. 2 Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. 3 When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, 5 for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." 6 And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. 7 Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. 8 For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 9 When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." 10 And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well.

1. Being in authority

This authority is:

- God given.
- Recognised and endorsed by the leaders in authority.
- Motivated by a servant heart.

2. Being under authority

- If you are in authority, without being under authority, you will be a dictator, not motivated by faith, but by the flesh.
- Being under authority involves accountability!

3. Exercising authority

Where authority has been given, there is a necessity to exercise authority, and to exercise that authority properly.

These are the following ways we could exercise our authority.

- **Through false or no authority**—counterfeit authority, imposed and demanded.
- **Through abuse of authority.** Taking things too far, and setting yourself up as important or all powerful; or going to people for your needs rather than Christ. Submission does not imply inferiority, and exercising authority does not mean superiority. As we exercise authority, we must remember this very important distinction.
- **Through not exercising your authority.** Where you have authority, not exercising it is as bad as overstepping your sphere of influence.
- **Through exercising your authority in integrity and love.** Jesus set this example— He only ever did what the Father was doing and commanded Him to do (John 5:19-20; John 12:49). Even those in authority should be under authority.

Don't shrink back!

Romans 13:1-2 (NET)

"For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves."

All authority comes from God. If you are a leader, you are under God to exercise His authority. Therefore, you must do it and not shrink back. Step up and step out!

THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD

1 Timothy 3:16,17

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

The Word of God actually does the correcting, not us. People must decide for themselves whether or not they will listen to the Scriptures. We cannot do that for them.

This also means that when we are correcting and reproofing others (which, as leaders, we will have to do) we must do so on the basis and authority and direction of God's Word. Our opinions are of very little, if any, consequence. We don't correct people

because we might do something differently. The scriptures say very little about style and methods and strategies. Learn how to separate your opinion from the Word of God and correct from the Word, nothing more. They, then, ultimately have to deal with the Word, not you.

Colossians 4:6

“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

Learn to separate style and personality from exercising authority as you lead.

The Scriptures are clear that we lead and speak with humility, gentleness, love, and so on, while being firm and not backing down on what Scripture says. If you have an abrasive personality, you need to ask whether Jesus did. If you have a timid personality, you need to ask whether Jesus did. Jesus was gentle yet firm. He knew how to respect others without compromising on the truth. This is how we must learn to be.

When leaders exercise godly authority:

- People are inspired and enthused
- People receive knowledge and wisdom
- People gain experience and skill
- People find direction and action
- People receive protection and joy

Leaders will lead us in God’s will, and therefore in His protection. They are also there to keep us on track, and as we submit to their authority, we joyfully work out our way forward together.

Hebrews 13:17

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

AUTHORITY AS A TEAM

1. TEAM BEGINS FIRST WITH THE NATURE OF GOD

A leadership team is meant to reflect who God is to the world. God is “agape” - sacrificial, unconditional love! (1 John 4:16.)

Out of *agapé* come relationships, which are a top priority.

Therefore He desires to work with those who are in relationships, which equals “team”.

2. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO WORKED IN TEAM

A. God works in team (the Trinity)

It never was His idea for us to be completely independent and individualistic. That is the result of rebellion, and the kingdom of self.

B. God instituted a team in the beginning with marriage—male and female working together as one (Genesis 1:27,28).

Husbands and wives were meant to work in team and also with their children. Team must work in the home first and then in the church.

As God is love and works in team, marriage is covenant love and is the first great example of team on earth. (Ephesians 5:31-32.)

C. Moses & Aaron, Joshua, David and Nehemiah all worked in teams

D. Jesus worked in team

The disciples = team

It took patience and wisdom to involve them and train them to work in team.

Jesus did not send them out alone but in teams of two! (Luke 9:1, Luke 10:1) They could have covered a greater area alone, but as teams of two they were more effective. Jesus wants us to work in team with Him. (See John 15.)

E. Paul worked with teams

Some of those on his team were:

- Barnabas (Acts 14:14)
- Andronicus and Junias (Rom. 16:7)
- Silas (Silvanus)
- Timothy (to whom Paul gives instructions to carry out apostolic correction – (1 Thessalonians 2:6 / 1:1)
- James (Jesus’ natural brother – Galatians 1:19)
- Possibly Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:9, 6)
- Titus (he had to appoint elders in every city – Titus 1:5)
- These were all apostles and then there were others too: “Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers”. (Philemon 24.)

JOSHUA AND MOSES AS A TEAM

Exodus 17:8-16

8 Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. 9 So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. 14 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner, 16 saying, "A hand upon the throne of the Lord! The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

The objective here was to defeat the enemy. This was done within the context of a team. Many players worked towards the one purpose with different roles to fulfill:

Moses (on the hill) saw the big picture – THE VISIONARY

Joshua (in the valley) leading the army – THE GENERAL

Aaron and Hur held up Moses' arms – MOSES' SUPPORT TEAM

Some chosen men fighting in the Valley – THE FIGHTING PRIESTHOOD

The rest of Israel, praying and supporting – THE SUPPORTING PRIESTHOOD

Victory was ensured as long as there was team.

- i. Insight – they had heard God
- ii. Oversight – the leader and the whole team had the responsibility to implement what God said.

Each part did what was required:

- Trust in God (faith)
- Trust in each other
- Celebrating the differences
- Giving glory to God

Who won the battle?

- Joshua won the battle against the enemy in the valley with the sword.
- Moses won the battle on the mountain top with his hands raised.
- Aaron and Hur won the battle as they supported Moses by finding a rock for him to sit on and holding up his arms.
- The nation of Israel triumphed in battle because God was their banner, Jehovah Nissi.

So they all won the battle – a victory given to them by God Himself!

3. TEAM CONSISTS OF MEN AND WOMEN

One of today's global problems remains the war of the sexes. Discrimination, feminism, competition... this is the result of failure to work in team. The fact that God calls men to lead as elders in a local church and to lead their wives and family does not negate the fact that a leadership team must involve women. It was so from the beginning. God is much wiser than men and He said, "It is not good for man to be alone." (Genesis 2:18.)

There are many Biblical examples of the involvement of women:

- A. God called both men and women to rule over all of creation together (Genesis 1: 27, 28).
- B. Because of Lydia's business, Paul was able to establish a base in Macedonia.
- C. Check out Romans 1:1-16 and see how many women Paul affirmed that were part of what God did in that time.
- D. The fallen nature always tends to take advantage of any weakness or opportunity offered by tradition, culture, or circumstances. We must realize this.
- E. It was God's idea from the beginning for there to be a vision of shared values, where everyone feels that he or she has a part to play and a stake in the ultimate outcome.
- F. Men and women will never be able to achieve what God wants of us without each other.
- G. We do not need to rob ourselves of the richness we will find when we join together as co-labourers in the Kingdom as men and women. God is calling men and women back to Biblical truth, to work in team in these days, to bring in the fullness of His glory.

4. THE WHOLE CHURCH IS A TEAM

- An eldership is a team
- Eldership and deacons are a team
- Leadership and the rest of the people are a team

We see team in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4—the key scriptures that highlight the different gifts in the Church. However, as we read Acts and the New Testament epistles, we see team is frequently eluded to and showcased through the quality of the relationships in the early church.

APPLICATIONS THROUGH ALL OF LIFE

The principles of team and authority and leadership we have discussed in this small study can be applied into business and organizations to great fruitfulness!

We trust you will continue to explore what Scripture says about leadership and apply its many-faceted wisdom on the topic. God has called us to lead so let us lead with His wisdom, His grace, His power, His call, and His Word!



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