

**A Primer  
for  
Kingdom Leaders**

**100 Reflections for Improving Your Leadership**

by

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Compiled from the Blog –

*Developing Kingdom Leaders:*

*Taking the Mystery out of Leadership*

## **Dedication**

To Paul Stanley and Dr. Bobby Clinton  
who  
taught me much about what it means  
to be a Kingdom leader

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## INTRODUCTION - Understanding Leadership

Leadership is a complex and challenging subject to grasp. By simply looking at the shelves of leadership books in the local bookstore we see that few are attempting to address the entire subject. Many take a slice of this broad subject, dissecting their particular piece of interest, but failing to address where this piece fits within the whole.

Some time ago in a brainstorm session with a colleague we attempted to address the subject of leadership as a whole, breaking the topic down into its major components. After much thought and debate we came to these four big categories as a way to understand and summarize the subject of leadership.

### Leadership Summary

- Leadership Thinking – KNOW
- The Leader – BE
- Leading – DO
- Developing Other Leaders – REPRODUCE

The US Military Academy (West Point) has three of these components in their outline of the subject described in the book, *The West Point Way of Leadership*. Their outline of Know, Be, and Do is a great model for overall leader development. But as Kingdom leaders we must add one additional topic – Reproduce. That is, part of Kingdom leadership is developing more leaders.

By looking at the perfect Kingdom leader, Jesus, we see the complete outline of the subject of leadership and leader development. Jesus spent a great deal of His leadership developing the next generation of leaders who would carry on the movement after He was gone. It is the responsibility of Kingdom leaders to develop more leaders. As you think about your own growth and developing others, you will want to focus on these four general areas of leader development.

Emerging leaders often say that their felt need is for leadership skill development. Perhaps the primary reason for this felt need is that new leadership responsibility often comes with deadlines. Thus, there is pressure to grow in a previously unknown skill in order to meet our deadline. That's why the leadership bookshelves are full of 'how-to' leadership topics, for the authors are often addressing the felt needs of the readers.

While leadership skills *are* important, we must not neglect the other three areas of a leader's development. For example, we can have wonderful leadership skills, but no character to support them and end up with tyrants or dictators. All four areas are necessary for good leaders and leadership.

How's your thinking about leadership? Can you identify where Jesus demonstrated these four areas of leadership? Can you also see where He addressed these same areas as He developed The Twelve?

## Leadership Thinking - KNOW

Using the simple outline of *Know – Be – Do – Reproduce* we can categorize the important functions of this vast subject called leadership. Let's begin by addressing the category of *Know – How a Leader Thinks*.

How we think and what we believe about leadership directly influences how we act. Here are some practical ideas for thinking well as a leader.

1. Take personal responsibility for your development as a leader
  - Focus on developing your strengths, not weaknesses, unless your weakness is a 'career stopper'
  - "Maximize your strengths and staff to your weaknesses."
  - Find a mentor to help you grow in specific areas
  - Ask your mentor to help you in a specific area for a specific time
  - Guide your mentoring from them with good questions on topics you are interested in
2. Communication is key to good morale – your morale and those you lead
  - Ask questions of your leaders – know 'why' you're doing what you're doing; know the next 6 months of events that you will be expected to attend and plan accordingly
  - Keep those you lead informed about upcoming events, organizational changes, and personnel changes
  - Keep your family informed of your schedule and know theirs as well
  - Help your children communicate what you do in easily remembered ways
  - Help your extended family communicate what you do
  - Help your children feel special regarding the Kingdom work of their parents
3. Relationships are key to the breadth and depth of your influence
  - Spend individual time with those you lead and don't just discuss 'work'
  - Seek to get individual time with participants at meetings
  - Make phone calls just to say 'Hi' and catch up with them
  - Birthday cards or hand-written notes show you care for them as a person
  - Get into the Bible together
  - Pray together
  - Listen much, talk little; seek to understand, rather than to be understood
    - Be an active listener; give feedback and ask thoughtful questions to really understand what God is doing in their lives
4. Bring intentionality to your leadership
  - Pray, Teach, Model – 3 primary means of influencing another
  - Never underestimate the power of your own example; you are being watched!
  - Take someone with you – the 'apprentice model' for developing others
  - What you speak on or write about is what you will become known for; therefore choose your

topics carefully!

- Remember, as a leader you speak at a volume of 2, but are heard at a volume of 10!
- Be sure you're setting a spiritual tone for the work of the ministry!

## If Laborers are Few, the Leaders are Fewer

Jesus states a simple fact in Matthew 9:35 – the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers (workers) are few. This reality was true when Jesus stated it, is still true today, and will be true when He returns. Why would there be ‘few’ laborers? Why are laborer-leaders in short supply?

First, the laborers are few because it is costly, hard work to labor for Christ. Most of us, if we are honest, have the ‘gift’ of being served, instead of serving others. It is this tendency that encourages many to let the few serve the many. It takes a lot out of us as we serve, lead and help others. This intense effort is wearing and personally depleting. Work is still called ‘work,’ even in the Kingdom.

Second, the laborer-leaders are few because it is a volunteer workforce. Just as we can opt in or out of salvation, we are also given the opportunity to opt in or out of spiritual serving. Yes, making disciples of all the nations is a command, but we have the choice to make of whether we will obey or not. We are incentivized with the promise of rewards for faithful service (1 Cor. 3) and reminded of the potential loss of reward, but it is not conscription in the Lord’s service.

Third, there must be a transformation within us in order to labor and lead in the harvest. We must change from being self-focused to being others focused. This is a spiritual work that the Holy Spirit does within our heart and mind as Christ is formed within all those who follow Him. We can ask for a new heart (Ezekiel 22:30) and He promises to change us. But the transformation is truly a miracle of His grace as we grow out of our own ego-centric worldviews to become others-centered.

The amazing thing about Matthew 9:35-38 is that Jesus is not complaining about the lack of laborers. He is simply stating the reality. God’s purposes will be accomplished, even though there are only a few laborers entering into the harvest. The harvest will be reaped. God’s plans will be completed, with us or without us.

It’s a volunteer outfit. Is your hand raised?

## The Need of the Hour

The world is in crisis today. It is not a political crisis, though it has political implications. It is not an economic crisis, though economies are affected. It is not a social crisis, though all levels of society are impacted. It is a spiritual crisis brought on by the people of God themselves. There is a spiritual poverty, a lack of vitality in the believer's walk and talk that has led to mediocrity in the Christian world today. This mediocre life of the believer has left the Christian world with a muted witness and an emasculated impact on society. What is needed is a transformation in the Christian world today. What is needed is a generation of believers who will live a radical life (radical in the eyes of the world, but not to God); a life that seeks the world to come, not this world.

The word "mediocre" finds its origin in two Latin words meaning "halfway" and "mountain." Mediocre literally means to only get halfway up the mountain. A mediocre Christian life is one that begins its journey aiming for the top of the mountain, but then settles for halfway to the summit. What is needed today is a generation of young men and women who will commit themselves to reach for the summit in the Christian life and settle for nothing less until they reach it. There will be no compromise along the way. There will be opportunities to bow out, to give into the undertow of the world. But this generation will set its face like a flint and go all in for Jesus. They will be satisfied with nothing less than God's best—serving Him with their whole heart until He calls them home!

Many will begin life's race well, but few will finish well. As we race through life, we will find the enemy of our souls placing opportunity, compromise, and temptation in our path. These diversions will be attractive and we will be tempted to believe that they will not impact our life's run. We will think that we can have it all and still finish well. It will only be near the end of our race that we find that we can't reach the summit, God's best, because we chose a different path other than God's, along the way. We thought it was only for a moment, that no one would know or care. But a moment's compromise will lead to a mediocre, half-way life.

What the world needs today is a new generation of believers who will say "no" to this world's pathways and values and live for the unseen world promised by Christ. The reality of heaven will so impact the lives of this generation that they will not compromise or settle for anything less than God's best for themselves and those around them. They will give themselves unreservedly to Christ—a generation whose watchword will be, "Anything, Anywhere, Anytime—for Christ!"

## God's Preparation of a Leader

Paul was raised the son of a Pharisee and sent to study under Gamaliel, the best education available for an aspiring young Jewish leader of his day. He progressed well in his education, eventually becoming an expert in the Jewish Law and demonstrating zeal beyond most of his peers as he sought to persecute what he believed to be a Jewish sect called the Way.

About the age of 30, Paul was on his way to Damascus to find members of this new sect and bring them back to prison in Jerusalem. Along the road, Jesus appears to him in a vision and tells Paul that he will now become a messenger to carry the gospel to Gentiles, their kings, and the Jewish people. What a life-altering, paradigm-shifting experience that must have been!

But, all of Paul's training and zeal did not prepare him to begin immediately to carry out this calling. God needed to prepare him for this mission. Here's a chronology of Paul's life from his conversion to the first of three missionary tours as outlined in Frank Goodwin's *Harmony of the Life of St. Paul*.

| Paul's Conversion and Early Christian Life     | 36-45 AD | Acts 9:1-30; 11:19-30        |
|--|----------|------------------------------|
| 1. Conversion at Damascus                      | 36 AD    | Acts 9:1-9                   |
| 2. In Damascus and Arabia (3 years)            | 37-39 AD | Galatians 1:17               |
| 3. Escape from Damascus                        | 39 AD    | Acts 9:20-25                 |
| 4. First Visit to Jerusalem – vision in Temple | 39 AD    | Galatians 1:18; Acts 9:26-29 |
| 5. In Tarsus and Regions of Syria & Cilicia    | 39-43 AD | Acts 9:30                    |
| 6. In Antioch with Barnabas                    | 44 AD    | Acts 11:25-26                |
| 7. Second Visit to Jerusalem with alms         | 45 AD    | Acts 11:27-30                |
| 8. 3 Missionary Journeys                       | 14 years |                              |

Note that Paul was nearly 40 years-old before he began his life's work, his destiny as described to him by the Lord when he was converted on that road outside of Damascus. It was nine additional years of personal preparation before "the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (see Acts 13)

We sometimes get impatient with our own spiritual growth or the development of those around us. The destiny may be clearly fixed, but we are struggling with the process and length of time needed to 'get on with it.' "Why is it taking so long," we ask?

Yet, it seems that one of the ways of God is a long preparation time for His leaders, enabling them to become His instruments for accomplishing His plans. Yes, Paul was nine years in preparation from conversion to his first missionary assignment. It may seem like a long time, but how many Apostle Paul's have there been in history?

How's your attitude when you consider your own growth and development? Are you patient with His timing as He develops you? Or, are you straining under God's timetable that is taking longer than you are comfortable with?

## Qualified to Lead

But select *capable men* from all the people—*men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain*—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens... Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose *capable men* from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

Exodus 18:21; 24-25 (NIV 1984 italics added)

Choose some *wise, understanding and respected men* from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you... So I took the leading men of your tribes, *wise and respected men*, and appointed them to have authority over you—as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials.

Deuteronomy 1:13, 15 (NIV 1984 italics added)

In Deuteronomy we have several messages from Moses to the people of Israel before they were to cross over the Jordan River into the Promised Land. In these words, Moses reminds them of their journey out of Egypt – how they arrived at this point in time. In the first chapter he reviews the change of leadership structure that occurred some forty years earlier. This structural change came from the advice given him by his father-in-law, Jethro, (see Exodus 18).

Jethro saw that Moses was being worn down by the daily leadership demands of the people, and thus needed some help. Jethro's advice given and heeded was to set up a hierarchy of additional leaders to help carry the leadership load and thus free Moses to focus on teaching the people the Law of God and only handling the most difficult issues.

Note the selection criteria for those who were chosen to judge the people: *capable men who feared God and were trustworthy* (Jethro's advice). Moses' summary forty years later was the choosing of those who were *wise, understanding, and respected*.

Note who was considered qualified to lead. First, they were to be *capable, wise, and respected*. To determine if someone meets these criteria, they must have a track record of their leadership. We need to be able to assess the results of their decisions and evaluate the outcomes of their choices. We are to select based upon demonstrated, realized potential, not just personal potential. We are looking for proven leadership ability, not just raw potential. Competency counts!

Secondly, they were to be men of godly character. They were to be – *men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain, wise, and understanding*. They understood leadership as being a servant and steward of God. They must be people of integrity. And they must have wisdom and discernment to see solutions to problems; able to discern root issues. Character counts!

When selecting leaders for Kingdom responsibilities, we are to choose those with both proven competency to lead and Christlike character. Competency and character are the two wings of the leadership airplane. We need both for it to fly!

## The “Overseer” Leader

In 1st Timothy Paul lays out a very clear list of qualities for Timothy to use in appointing overseers for local leadership. This list is both descriptive and prescriptive, depending upon our application of it, as we think about the qualifications for Kingdom leadership.

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap. 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (underline added)

### The Role of Overseer

Overseer; Bishop – Gk = ‘episkope’ – one who inspects, oversees with the aim to help

- note that one can set their heart on becoming a spiritual leader; godly ambition vs selfish ambition
- “task” = “office” – emphasis on the work of an overseer, not upon the position
- Acts 20:28 – Holy Spirit raises up overseers for His Church
- Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5 – elders were appointed
- 1 Peter 5:1-5 – elders functioned as shepherds
- 1 Timothy 5:17 – elders are rulers; functioned as preachers and teachers

### The Characteristics and Qualities of Overseers

1. Above reproach
  - blameless
  - not just clean, but clean enough that they can’t even be accused of wrongdoing
2. Husband of one wife
  - probably refers to not having more than one wife at a time; that is, not polygamous
  - note that this assumes the overseers are men
3. Temperate
  - not controlled or influenced by intoxicants
  - this could relate to drug use of any kind (i.e. alcohol or other intoxicating drugs)
4. Self-controlled
  - sober-minded, sensible, prudent
  - not controlled or influenced by anything other than a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7)

5. Respectable
  - having good behavior, modest, admired by others
  - someone who is a good example for others to look to
6. Hospitable
  - able to make guests feel comfortable and at home
  - good EQ (emotional intelligence)
7. Able to teach
  - a skilled teacher of the Word
  - ability to pass on truth in a simple, easy to understand manner (2 Timothy 2:15, 24)
8. Not given to drunkenness
  - not addicted to wine or intoxicating drinks to the point of loss of self-control
  - seems to imply a repeated pattern of drunkenness
9. Not violent
  - not pugnacious or quarrelsome
  - not a fighter – probably related to physical violence (see #10 and #11)
10. Gentle
  - patient with those who oppose
  - kind in dealings with others
11. Not quarrelsome
  - not divisive or contentious
  - a builder of harmony rather than divisions or factions (2 Timothy 2:24-25)
12. Not a lover of money
  - not covetous or pursuing a life built around temporal values
  - content with their economic station in life (Hebrews 13:5); able to move up or down in standard of living as God directs
13. Manages his own family well
  - engages with diligence the oversight of his family
  - “family” = wife, children and household
14. His children obey him with proper respect
  - children are not rebellious or contentious
  - children demonstrate respect for authority
15. Not a recent convert
  - not immature in their faith and therefore easily deceived
  - maturity helps ensure they are not pursuing position or power (1 Timothy 5:22)
16. Has a good reputation with outsiders
  - well thought of by others not yet in the faith (compare with #5)
  - a good witness by word and deed

Note that these qualifications for leaders are both character qualities and behavioral qualities. Kingdom leaders need both internal and external qualities to lead – character and competency.

## **Ridiculous Prayer Requests**

I once did a personal bible study that I titled the ‘ridiculous prayers’ of the Scriptures. These were prayer requests that from a human viewpoint may seem outlandish or overreaching, but God saw fit to say ‘yes.’

This study included Moses asking to see God’s face, Solomon asking for wisdom (even though a very young man), and Jabez asking for God’s blessing. I was humbled by this study when I thought of my own prayer life and my meager requests. I was challenged to consider asking God for something “big” - something that may seem ridiculous, but a possibility from God’s perspective.

The following list of five prayer requests are items I have been asking of the Lord for many years now. After each of these requests are references for others who either requested the same thing or promises related to the request.

**1. Power of the Holy Spirit when Preaching and Teaching**

1 Samuel 10:6; 1 Peter 4:11

**2. God’s Blessing on My Life and Ministry**

1 Chronicles 4:10; Isaiah 45:2-3

**3. Teach me Your Ways Lord – Knowing Why God Does What He Does**

Exodus 33:13

**4. See God’s Glory**

Exodus 33:18

**5. Wisdom for Life and Leadership**

1 Kings 3:9

Having consistently pursued these prayer requests for years, I can say that the Lord has answered and continues to answer these in the affirmative. He does not show favoritism and will do for you what He has done for others. We do not have because we do not ask!

What ‘ridiculous things’ are you asking Him for?

## Worldly vs Godly Wisdom

And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; *but God was with him and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom* before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. Acts 7:9-10 (ESV)

*And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, and he was mighty in his words and deeds. Acts 7:1, 22 (ESV)

There are two sources of wisdom for Kingdom leaders: wisdom that comes from the world and wisdom that comes from above. In Stephen's testimony before his accusers, he distinguishes between these two as illustrated in the life and leadership of Joseph and Moses.

Joseph was given wisdom and favor from God when he was brought before Pharaoh and interpreted his dreams. Having explained that the dreams meant 7 years of plentiful harvests followed by 7 years of drought, he volunteered a solution. He suggested constructing huge granaries to store the surplus grain during the first years in order to feed the hungry during the years of famine that would follow.

Pharaoh and his counselors recognized the wisdom of this plan and Joseph was elevated to a position of number two in Egypt. He executed the building, gathering, storing, and eventually, the distribution of the grain in the years of famine. All of this came from the godly wisdom that was given to Joseph as the Lord sought to accomplish His purposes in and through Him.

Years later Moses was raised in Pharaoh's court, having been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter when she rescued him from the River Nile. He was 'instructed' in all of the wisdom that the Egyptian culture had to offer. He got the best education and training possible during his day. But we note that he was not ready to lead God's people yet.

He was powerful in speech and deed according to Stephen. But his training, education and natural ability did not make him qualified to lead God's people out of Egypt. He tried on his own strength and failed, eventually ending up in Midian caring for sheep for his new father-in-law Jethro.

Now, one can imagine that the sheep management system implemented by Moses was quite the setup, given all of his background. But it was simply a training program for God to humble him and shape him into the man God could eventually use to lead over 2 million of His people out of bondage. Forty more years of managing sheep would bring Moses to the point where he was now ready to meet God in the burning bush.

Kingdom leaders need wisdom to lead. Worldly wisdom based upon collective wisdom from experience can have some advantages. But it will not be enough to fulfill our God-given mission. We will need godly wisdom, given to us from Him, to see His work accomplished in His ways.

Are you trusting in the world's wisdom only or are you pleading with God to give you His wisdom as you lead out in the task He has called you to?

## Common Bonds in Leadership

A leader who looks with vision into the future sees by faith those who God will give us to influence. It is essential that these people are unified and aligned around a common purpose or mission. They must also have common bonds around their devotion to Jesus, the hope that the Gospel is truly the power of God to change lives, and that they are personally called to help fulfill the Great Commission.

Remember that unity of purpose and conviction does not mean uniformity. We will be diverse in our applications of these commonalities, but we will be united in our similar convictions. Yes, there are many more things that we will have in common other than these three things, but as we grow and expand into the future that God has for us, these three bonds will have to remain strong.

By “devotion to Christ” we mean our commitment to Jesus above all else in life. This is manifested in a willingness to put Him first in all areas of our lives—a willingness to sacrifice for Him. It also is seen in a willingness to take risks for Jesus’ sake. As we move into many new ventures of faith, God will ask us to live with some uncertainty and ambiguity for a while. We can do this because we are confident He has led us and our devotion to Him overcomes our feelings of unease.

A second common bond is our “hope in the Gospel.” We believe that the Gospel can and does change lives and that it is the power of God at work in those who believe. With all of the crying needs of this hurting world, we believe that the primary need is spiritual and that need is met through responding to the Good News. Therefore, we must seek to share the Gospel with those that don’t know Him.

As we seek to bring the Gospel to the lost, we believe that we will see fruit (in our respective seasons) as we faithfully scatter the spiritual seed. We sow expectantly, trusting that God will bring forth growth as we faithfully labor. But whether we sow or reap, we believe in the hope of the Gospel for those around us.

Our third common bond of unity is the “Great Commission.” We must always remember that the Great Commandment to love God is of higher priority than the Great Commission. But it is our passion for helping to fulfill the Great Commission task by multiplying the number of spiritual laborers (disciplemakers) that also binds us together. We plan, organize, and lead out in our respective spheres with the desire to see people reached, discipled, and equipped to become spiritual reproducers. These spiritual laborers will be raised up and then sent to the nations to do more of the same.

The scope of the Great Commission is “all the nations.” Acts 1:8 reminds us that the progression is to begin at our own “Jerusalem.” But our local ministry is always done in the bigger context of seeking to impact the world for Christ! It is the bifocal vision of acting locally but seeing globally that marks us.

Are you bonding with those you lead?

## A Calling to Indirect Leadership

One of the most difficult transitions to make for young, emerging leaders is the move from ‘doing the ministry’ to ‘leading the ministry’. Church growth experts refer to this as a shift from ‘shepherding’ to ‘ranching’. Many leaders are asked to move from a grass-roots ministry (direct ministry) to leading others in the ministry (indirect ministry) because they have been faithful and ‘successful’ in their local responsibility.

The transition from doing the ministry directly to leading others as they do the ministry is a challenge for some. This is not to say that indirect leaders don’t continue to ‘do ministry’, but now their primary contribution will be overseeing and shepherding others, perhaps a ministry team, whose primary role will be direct ministry. What are some of the difficulties in this transition and how can we overcome them?

To overcome one of the primary difficulties in a transition to indirect leadership, we need to have a sense of calling from the Lord. If a person is not convinced that God has called them to leave their current role in order to assume a larger responsibility for overseeing others, there will be multiple opportunities for second-guessing the wisdom of the decision. We must have a clear calling from God that He wants us to serve in this capacity at this time. There should be a sense of destiny, that God has been preparing us for this role and responsibility. We must be convinced that our greatest contribution to the Kingdom at this time is in leading others, rather than doing the ministry directly.

When doing direct ministry we often receive affirmation and ‘strokes’ from those we serve. We help them know Christ and grow in their walk with Him. But in indirect leadership we often hear of the problems from those we lead and affirmation for our contribution as a leader can be lacking. A leader must find his/her strength and encouragement from the Lord and not from people (1 Samuel 30:6).

For those who serve with organizations whose members live from gift income, the financial challenge can be shattering. When doing direct ministry we are constantly expanding the base of new people in our ministry who perhaps eventually will become part of our donor support team. But in indirect leadership we are now leading others who are living from gift income and we can’t expect them to join our donor team. It takes great faith to trust that the God who calls us to leadership will also provide for us as we serve. One of my favorite promises in this regard is Mark 10:29-30.

Leadership is challenging enough without adding to our stress load. Have a clear sense of calling from God and trust Him to provide and care for you and your family. You’ll find Him faithful and your leadership will be used to further His Kingdom!

## Transitioning from Direct to Indirect Leadership

One of the biggest challenges facing a leader is the change from direct to indirect leadership. By this we mean the move from directly leading ministry to guiding others who are doing the direct leading. Some leaders can make this transition well, while others struggle with letting go. They can tend to stay too engaged, micro-managing or seldom fully delegating to others important responsibilities. Here are several keys for making the move from direct to indirect leadership both fruitful and healthy for all involved.

Foundational in this transition to indirect leadership is the clear conviction that at this time, for the good of the work and for maximizing our own contribution, the best thing to do is let others do the direct leading. This means that we assume a coaching-oversight role for those who are now taking the primary leadership role. This change will greatly increase the influence of our leadership as we multiply other leaders who are now doing direct leadership. This move must be made with the conviction that the demands of the work (usually due to success and growth-related problems) require more leadership capacity. The one who has been doing the direct leading now becomes the bottleneck to future growth unless they make this transition from direct to indirect coaching and supervising of other leaders. Being convinced that this is our best contribution at this time, having a sense of calling from the Lord about this move, is essential. If not, confusion can happen for all involved.

When leading directly, we frequently have clear titles, roles and jobs. There is a sense of security that comes from this clarity and outcomes of our leadership can be easily measured. We meet with a person and their lives are impacted by our influence. They then tell us how grateful they are for our leadership influence. The feedback loop is clear and direct – we lead and see-feel-know the impact in the lives of others. But when moving to a more indirect role those feedback loops are longer and not so clear. Indirect leaders are often thinking and leading with a much longer time horizon and thus the feedback based upon their decisions can be years ahead.

In an indirect leadership role we are coaching and supervising other leaders who are receiving that kind of clear feedback. Our indirect leadership influence is often hidden behind those in direct leadership roles and many of those being impacted will never know of our roles as we coach and guide others.

Instead of receiving the positive feedback from our leadership, we can find ourselves continually dealing with others' problems. Without intention, we have become "one of them" – those leaders who sit in many organizational meetings, often criticized for being out of touch or questioned about overall importance of their contribution. This is why it is so very important to be convinced that the Lord is asking us to do this and thus, out of obedience to Him, I will serve in this role.

Without this conviction it will be easy to seek some connection again with more direct involvement. We justify it by saying to ourselves, "Oh, this is too important to let others lead." Or we can mistakenly think it is serving those we lead by taking a more direct involvement rather than delegating to them. We justify it by saying we are serving them, lifting a burden from them or even that I will do a better job on this than they will. And in reality, we often can do a better job due to having more experience and maturity. But we forget that we were once in their position and someone trusted us with responsibility knowing that we would learn valuable lessons and grow as a result. And if we were truly honest with

ourselves, it is our ego or personal insecurities that drive us to seek those compliments, clarity of impact or hands-on involvement once again. The ambiguity of indirect leading can be a threat for some.

Is it time to step out of your direct leadership role to make room for other leaders to emerge and grow into their own leadership? Are you the bottleneck to growth by clinging onto your direct leadership role? Making this move to indirect leadership is a great privilege and a high calling, especially if it is needed due to God's blessing on the work.

May you take this courageous step and do it with grace, as you empower the next generation to grow into the yoke of their leadership.

## Facing Our Fears

**Fear is an emotion** in response to a perceived threat that we think could be harmful

- Fear can be protective as it warns us of something that may be dangerous
- Fear can be paralyzing and destructive causing us not to act; i.e. fear of the unknown future
- God has no fear, for nothing is a threat to Him!

**“Do not be afraid...”** - Jesus said multiple times to His disciples

- We are not to deny our God-given emotion of fear, but rather, don't be controlled by fear
- John 16:33 - "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
- Matthew 8:26 - He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" - that is, why were you so fearful that it took control of you. Jesus had led them into the boat and was with them in the storm.
- Hebrews 11:7 - By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.

### Opposite of fear?

- For those of this world, confidence in their own ability experience or resources, is the response to fear
- For Kingdom people - God's children – faith is the opposite of fear; but our faith is based upon God, His promises and power to never leave us or forsake us in our trials; He will see us through every trial that He allows us to pass through
- Acts 27:23-25 - Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.
  - We must avoid presumption, which is sin, for presumption acts based upon zeal or worldly wisdom, without God's direction = foolishness – see Psalm 19:13

### Courage

- The strength and ability to act in response to a perceived threat; not denying our fear, but acting with faith in God in spite of our fear and not being controlled by our fear
- Faith and courage can grow over time as we know God and grow in trust of Him
  - 1Sam 17:37 - “The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

### God's Purposes and Ways

- Matthew 7:24-27 - the storms of life come upon both houses; only one house stands the test
- 1Peter 4:12 - Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

- 1 Corinthians 1:8-11 - We were under great pressure; far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life itself... But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 – He gives us a ministry to others who face similar trials

## Reaching the Nations

Dawson Trotman said, “World vision is getting on your heart what has always been on God’s heart.”

Christ’s Great Commission commands us to make disciples of all the nations. By ‘nations’ we do not mean geo-political units on a map, but rather peoples. We see the world as the Lord does – peoples with common cultures, languages, and affinities. It is within these peoples that the gospel moves and spreads.

There are currently 78 unreached people groups within our own U.S. borders, requiring no visa to reach them and few government restrictions. Immigrants and refugees are pouring into our country at unheard of rates. And we know from history that when people are in transitions, they are more open to the gospel.

International students are also coming to study on our campuses at unprecedented rates. They too are in times of change and thus are very receptive to new ideas and relationships. And when they return to their home of origin, they become leaders and influencers for a lifetime. These too require no plane ride or language school experience to engage. But they do require a huge heart, sustained commitment and great perseverance to see the gospel take root and bear fruit!

The world today still is 40% unreached. There remain 6,600 unreached people groups totaling nearly 3 billion people. These peoples will be reached if someone leaves their home and intentionally crosses cultures to plant the gospel among them. The remaining groups are historically the most resistant to the gospel – those with Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist background. It will require long-term effort and much sacrifice for the gospel to go to these ‘nations.’

Our Lord said, “Go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:18-20). Paul reminds us, “And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?” (Romans 10:14).

Are you praying for the nations to come to know Him? Are you listening to how He would have of you to become the answer to your own prayer?

## A History of US Revivals

The history of America has been marked by multiple great movements of God's Spirit. These intense periods of the Spirit's activity begin with a deep work in the hearts of believers and then moves outward into the hearts and lives of those that don't know Christ. Christians are "revived" in their walk with God as they confess sin and their renewed heart gives boldness in their witness to the unsaved.

Most church historians would agree that there have been six periods of revival in America. Let's examine these revivals and draw some parallels for today.

### **1730-40 Revival      The Great Awakening**

The first movement of the Spirit of God in America occurred before American independence. The Great Awakening saw many of the colonists touched in a profound way. There were few colleges in the colonies during this time, but those that did exist were profoundly visited.

### **1805-06 Revival      The 2nd Great Awakening**

The 2nd Great Awakening began around 1805 and lasted for more than two decades. Though historians differ as to the exact dates, none doubt the profound work of God in the lives of many, especially the college students of the day.

At small Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, three students met in dorm room for prayer and Scripture reading. A student mob gathered outside the door swearing and shouting threats to stop the meeting or suffer the consequences. College president John Blair came to investigate the uproar and after discovering the cause, was vexed in his spirit at the moral state of his student body. The next week the meeting met in the president's parlor with one-half the student body present. Revival swept the college and the country.

At Yale College "a spiritual revival took place that shook the institution to its center" In a letter from a student to his mother he wrote, "Yale college is a little temple: prayer and praise seem to be the delight of the greater part of the students while those who are still unfeeling are awed into respectful silence."

### **1857-58 Revival      The Prayer Revival**

The third movement of God's Spirit began with a noon prayer meeting in New York City on Sept. 23, 1857. Six people gathered to pray for the city and their neighborhoods. Within six months 10,000 gathered daily for noonday prayer in New York and the revival moved to campuses across America. The YMCA came to America from England, expanded into collegiate ministry in 1858, and was on 180 campuses by 1884.

### **1905-06 Revival**

The fourth visitation of God occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century. Influenced by the Great Welsh Revival of 1904, revival came to America too. “Never in the history of universities have there been so many genuine spiritual awakenings among students.” The seeds of this revival were found in the 1886 Mt. Hermon student conference with D.L. Moody with 250 students. The Princeton Covenant was created by a handful of students at the conference and later signed by thousands, pledging themselves to foreign missions.

### **1949-50 Revival**

Two students from Los Angeles drove 2,300 miles to Minneapolis to pray with Dr. J. Edwin Orr and Dr. Billy Graham for campus revival. Orr preached at Bethel Chapel soon thereafter and, “there was much prayer in the dormitories, followed by intense conviction of sin among the students in chapel and in classroom... Conviction was relieved only by outright confession, restitution, restoration or conversion to God.” In October 1955, the NY Times stated, “more than 1,200 of the nation’s 1,900 colleges and universities now have a ‘religious emphasis week’ of some sort.”

### **1970's                    The Jesus Movement**

Revival broke out at Asbury College in Kentucky in 1970 and moved to many state school colleges and universities. Campus ministers in California were witnessing to the radical students. They began to see many of these hippies converted and baptized in the Pacific Ocean! It is estimated that 250,000 students across America came to Christ during the next few years.

As with all great movements of the Spirit, they have a small beginning, grow large over time and then slowly ebb away. Could we be on the verge of another great movement of God in America? Let's pray and ask God for it to begin with us!

## A Time for Everything!

By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry. Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you..."

Genesis 8:13-17

Noah and family had been on a cramped, damp, and no doubt, stinking ark for a year. He removed the roof of the ark and peering over the edge of the boat he sees dry ground! "Hallelujah! It's time to get off of this boat and put our sandals on that dry turf," he must have thought or even exclaimed along with his family members. But the time was yet to be for the departure from their lifeboat. How frustrating!

A careful reading of the text shows that Noah saw the dry ground on the first day of the first month, but it was not until the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the second month that God instructed them to disembark. 57 more days of waiting and watching—looking over the deck railing to see dry ground as far as they could see—waiting upon God for His release from their delivery ship. I wonder what went through Noah's mind as he waited for God's time to exit the ark.

Leaders are doers. We are all about getting things done—and getting them done NOW! We often have difficulty when God says to wait. Wait for what? It's dry ground out there! Let's get on with this! If not careful, we can miss a great opportunity to stop, reflect, and wait for the voice of God.

We can miss God's perfect timing.

Time is easily spent, never to be recovered. Time is easily wasted, never to be redeemed. Time is always in short supply for leaders! "There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven," the writer of Ecclesiastes (Ecc. 3: 1-8) reminds us. "Yeah, right! He didn't have my schedule," we think.

We are often like the proverbial dog straining at the end of God's leash, straining to get on with the job at hand, looking ahead to our new challenges. Somehow, I don't see Noah anxiously marching up and down the deck of his ark, sighing deeply at his seeming lack of forward movement.

We are all busy people, especially leaders. But busyness is not our enemy. Busyness is a morally neutral state. Being busy is not good, or bad, or purple. It just means that we have a lot to accomplish each and every day. In fact, if you don't want a busy life, don't lead! But our busy lives can become a snare for us. We can allow our full days to lull us into complacency with those things that are incredibly important, but do not have demanding deadlines.

How many Kingdom leaders are coasting upon past bible studies, memory verses, or messages preached long ago because they have let their busy lives crowd out personal time with God? How many families are neglected because we are unwilling to say ‘no’ to enticing invitations? God continues to speak, but our smartphone volume drowns out His still, small voice. We fail to recognize the voice of God because we don’t stop long enough to listen.

Elijah, a leader extraordinaire, learned to pay attention to God’s voice, The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper …” (1 Kings 19:11-12).

As Kingdom leaders we must ruthlessly eliminate hurry (not busyness) from our lives in order to sit at the feet of Jesus and wait for Him to speak. He is not in the fierce wind, the great earthquake, or the raging fire (all of our pressing crises or demanding problems). He waits for us to stop, look, and listen. He then gently whispers into our heart and mind His plans for us and our leadership, expecting us to take note and be quick to obey.

So is your leadership walk like one of Noah, patiently waiting for God’s timing—waiting expectantly on Him to guide and direct your path? Or are you more like the dog straining at the end of the leash, pulling hard against a loving Master? May you turn down the volume of your hurried life to be able to hear His voice! And may you have a heart that is quick to obey!

## When God Says “Wait”

I was twenty-nine years old and married with two (soon it would be three) children when I left a career in veterinary medicine to pursue a calling to world missions. I was anxious to get on with the plan for our lives, for God had directed us to accept an opportunity to serve in Indonesia with The Navigators. We moved from Purdue University to Chicago to be involved with several churches while we waited for the visa to move to the country of our destiny. Anticipating a six-month wait for visa approval, so we busied ourselves with fundraising and preparation for departure.

Three years later we were still waiting! People greeted us with comments and questions like, “Are you still here? Are you sure God is leading you to Indonesia? Maybe this closed-door is His means of directing you to stay in America. Have you considered that possibility?” Of course we considered that possibility and many others, but each time we prayed there came a deep assurance from the Lord that He would answer in His perfect timing. After three years the visa was granted and we moved to Indonesia, staying for the next eleven years until once again the visa was denied and we returned home.

During those years of waiting, there were many days of anxiety, questions, and wondering if we would ever get overseas. I wondered about our ability to learn a new language and adjust to a new culture. But during this time of waiting, God was at work, building into me some life lessons that He knew I needed in order to serve Him well in Indonesia and later in life. I chafed under the delay, but God was gracious to keep us in Chicago rather than rushing us off to the far side of the Pacific. I came to learn the important lesson that what He does in us is often more important than what He does through us. God’s purposes will be accomplished with us or without us.<sup>1</sup>

Waiting on God is a quality needed for leaders to experience the touch of God in them and on their leadership. Are you straining at the end of the leash that the Lord has you on? Do you want to run ahead and He has told you to sit and wait? Can you trust Him to do good and give you His best? He knows the time and when the time is right, He will unclip the leash and shout, “Run!” Until then, wait and watch for Him to do what only He can do.

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<sup>1</sup> Yeakley, Tom *Growing Kingdom Character* NavPress Colorado Springs, CO 2011 pp. 128-129

## **Instant is Too Slow!**

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 ESV

Isn't it interesting that our labor for and with the Lord is compared to a pair of oxen yoked together? Not exactly a model for speed or rapid transit.

We have ten-minute oil changes, three-minute microwave popcorn, two-minute ATM transactions, and one-minute news breaks. Fast food is ordered ahead and must be ready when we arrive or we get frustrated. Any line longer than two people is intolerable. Customer service representatives often hear the complaint, "I want it yesterday!" Instant is too slow!

What a contrast God's timetable is to ours. From the time Noah was given the promise about the flood until the rain began to fall, he had to wait a long time (perhaps as much as one-hundred and twenty years—compare Genesis 5:32, 6:3 and 7:6). From the time the rain started until his family left the ark Noah waited another year inside the closed ark (compare Genesis 7:11 and 8:14). Abraham waited 25 years for his promised son, Isaac, to be born. The Israelites waited seven days for the walls of Jericho to fall. And we all have been waiting 2000+ years for the second coming of Christ.

Our problem is patience—or more accurately, the lack thereof. We don't want to wait for anything! We pray and if the answer isn't on our doorstep within a day or two, we give up. But God works on a different timetable. "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness" (2 Peter 3:8-9).

As Noah waited those many years for the first raindrop to fall, no doubt he was subject to times of doubt. But he remained obedient to all God had told him (Genesis 7:5). For God had promised and he took Him at His word. It was not a matter of if, but when.

What answers to prayer are you currently waiting for? Does God seem to take intolerably long to answer? Wait on God. Don't give up. God will answer in his perfect timing.

"You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised" (Hebrews 10:36).

## Foolish Leadership

It was Lorne Sanny who said, “Leaders bring vision, faith, and courage to coordinated effort.” There is a fine line between faith and foolishness and the consequences for one’s leadership can be devastating.

Leading out of foolishness has several origins. Foolish leaders lead from presumption. They assume that since it worked before, then it will work now. Or they assume that because God was with us in a similar endeavor, then surely He will be with us in our current situation.

Foolish leadership plans and acts according to what is seen instead of what is unseen. We fix our eyes on the visible instead of trusting in the invisible God to guide and direct our leadership (see 2 Corinthians 4:18). We plan according to known resources instead of seeking God’s will for us and then trusting Him to provide all resources needed to accomplish what He is asking us to do.

Foolish strategic plans do not have any faith goals or “stretch” that will require the hand of God to be accomplished. They look at needs and apply people to fill jobs instead of aligning people to fit opportunities according to their God-given design.

Foolish leaders trust in themselves and want to control the outcomes of their leadership. Now control is not bad in and of itself. But we must be able to answer the question, “Why do we want control?” Is it to ensure the best outcome we can for Jesus or is it so that we can ensure that we look good to others? Or, perhaps we are on some kind of power trip and just enjoy telling others what to do and want to “micro-manage” them.

Foolish leaders seek the approval of people. They want to be well thought of and liked by others. They do what is expedient for career moves and cultivate relationships that will pay back dividends for their future. They are ego-centric and self-serving.

Leaders who lead from faith can do many of the same things that a foolish leader does. When viewed superficially they may seem similar. Leaders of faith lead out of presumption, but their presumption is that unless God intervenes and blesses, then all of their leadership is for naught. They place themselves in dependent relationship to God as they lead, knowing how absolutely essential He is for their ability to lead well.

Leaders of faith also plan, but their strategies are held in an open hand, letting God direct and guide them as He sees fit. They plan according to faith, seeking what God desires for them in the time horizon they are planning for. They are not limited by what they have, for they trust Him to provide all that they need to finish whatever work He assigns.

Leaders of faith also want to have some control over outcomes, but this arises from a sense of stewardship of their leadership responsibility before God. They don’t micro-manage others out

of need for power or ego stroking, but rather they set others up for success and trust them to accomplish what they have agreed to do.

Finally, leaders of faith seek the approval of God, not man. Their reputation is entrusted to Him who placed them into their leadership role. Relationships focus on what can be accomplished together for the glory of God, not what I can personally gain from others.

Foolish leadership or faith leadership... which one best describes yours?

## Success – A Leader’s Greatest Challenge!

In 2 Samuel 8 we read about King David and how he handled his success. The following are several observations and principles that we can apply to our own leadership when we experience God’s favor on our efforts.

In vs 1-5 we see the listing of David’s initiatives against the Philistines, Moabites, and Arameans. The results are summarized in verse 6 – The Lord gave David victory wherever he went. David experienced great success in his military campaigns against the surrounding enemies of Israel. In fact, he had success in everything that he attempted.

The victories of David’s campaigns led to personal wealth. Remember that this son of Jesse came from a family that raised sheep; not a family wealth. This new-found prosperity came quickly and could have turned the heart of a lesser man. But we see David’s response in vs 11 – King David dedicated these articles to the Lord, as he had done with the silver and gold from all the nations he had subdued...

His successful military campaigns and growing wealth impacted how David was viewed by others. In vs 13 we read – And David became famous... Personal fame is a challenge that many successful leaders face, just as David did.

Note how David led after experiencing successful leadership efforts, growing personal wealth, and increased personal fame – David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people (vs 15). This is one of the reasons why David is a personal hero. He seemed to be able to handle success very well.

Immediately we do remember his low points--his adultery with Bathsheba and his counting of the army – yes, those were huge mistakes with huge consequences for his life and leadership. And yet, through it all, he recovered. He did not let those personal failings derail him. He confessed his sin, humbled himself before God and men, and continued to lead. All failures need not be fatal!

David was real – he had great strengths and some glaring weaknesses. Yet through it all he “did what was just and right for all his people.” How are you handling your success? Are you stewarding well God’s resources that have come your way due to this success? What goes on in your heart when people point out your successes or publicly praise you?

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Proverbs 4:23 NIV

## What's So Bad About Hierarchy?

Much of the 'prevailing wind' today in organizational leadership is blowing towards the 'flat organization' – that is, the fewer the leadership levels we have in an organizational structure, the better that organization will be able to accomplish the mission or task. 'Bureaucracy' is a bad word which implies sluggishness, bloated and wasteful budgets, unmotivated and irresponsible people and a lack of creativity or willingness to adapt and change.

While the above characteristics of hierarchy, as presently practiced, are true in many organizations, it does not have to be so. Hierarchy in and of itself is morally neutral – it's not good, bad, or purple. A hierarchical structure is no better or worse than a flat organizational structure with fewer levels of leadership. Good leaders within a hierarchical structure can unleash creativity, innovation, spawn organic movement, empower entrepreneurs, and stimulate growth. The structure is not the issue, but rather those within the structure who are setting direction and making decisions that make it good or bad.

There are two important reasons for hierarchy: health and complexity. By 'health' we mean the health of the individuals within the organization. We want those we are leading to thrive under our leadership, not just survive. Leadership is not only about accomplishing mission together; it is also about caring well for those we lead. Having a large span of leadership with too many direct reports will not allow us the capacity to truly 'know well the condition of our flocks' (see Proverbs 27:23).

With increasing complexity of mission comes the need for more leadership capacity. A large task, with multiple facets, demands the contribution of many people. These people need a common purpose, clear vision, doable jobs, and accountability for their contributions. This oversight is good stewardship and need not be restrictive. It's how this oversight is done that is key!

We have an example from King David in 1 Chronicles 27 in how he organized his kingdom. 40+ leaders are mentioned in this chapter with their respective responsibilities – army commanders, family heads, property managers, an executive leadership team and spiritual advisers all contributed to David's leadership capacity for Israel. The size and complexity of the kingdom required good leaders with many varied, intersecting responsibilities. They needed alignment and collaborative ability for the nation to function well.

So, the next time you are tempted to criticize your organizational hierarchy, pause a moment and think. Is it the structure or is it the leaders within that structure that makes this a challenge? Mankind keeps looking for better structures, but God keeps looking for better leaders!

May it begin with us!

## Focus for Impact!

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. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demon. Mark 1:35–39 NIV 1984

Jesus had some early recruits – two sets of brothers who were fishing partners in Capernaum. They had been with Him off and on for about a year now, and life was about to take a major shift for all of them. Jesus had recruited them to leave their fishing business and become vocational ‘kingdom’ workers – leaders in training. They had enlisted, leaving family and friends behind, for what would be a two-year training assignment and a new life-long vocation.

Having just ended an inspirational evening the night before, early the next morning they discover Jesus alone, outside of town, spending time in prayer and communion with His Father. They assume that He will want to continue the wonderful experience of healing and miracles that occurred the night before, so they remind Him that, “everyone is looking for you.” They assume that He would return to Peter and Andrew’s home and heal those who were gathering.

But Jesus responded with a risk-taking statement, “Let’s go to the nearby villages...that is why I have come.” It was a risk to disappoint the expectations of his new recruits. What if they insisted on Him coming back to help? There was pressure on Jesus to conform to the wishes of His team and the needs of the masses. But, Jesus boldly and confidently said ‘no.’

It was His mission – task – purpose that brought clarity to the decision that now had to be made. He was focused on that purpose – the ‘why’ of His ministry. Thus, while the decision may seem difficult, it really wasn’t. Clarity of purpose – mission made the decision an obvious one. He must go to the surrounding villages to tell them the Good News of the Kingdom and not be consumed with the needs in Capernaum only.

Clarity of purpose and maintaining that focus over time is essential for leadership success. Many a leader has started well, having a clear vision for what they want to accomplish. But then in the midst of the ‘daily whiteout,’ they forget why they are so busy. Consumed by the immediate, they succumb to reactive leadership instead of maintaining their strategic intent.

Don’t fall into this trap. Stay focused! Stay strategic!  
Don’t substitute busyness for strategic intent!

## Leading from a Focused Life

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and  
to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

Ezra 7:10

Dr. R.J. (Bobby) Clinton in his masterful work titled, *Strategic Concepts that Clarify a Focused Life*, states the following principles that have proven to be a guiding light for me over the years.

“Clearly some Bible characters led focused lives. There was purpose in what they did. Disciplined minds followed through on decisions that continually led to that purpose. What can we learn about lives that are extremely focused? Do they just happen?

“Leaders must make decisions about life and ministry which flow from their understanding of who God has made them to be and for what God is shaping them. These decisions will lead them to effective purposeful lives, which in retrospect will be seen to have been focused lives. But it is not a self-seeking individualistic choice of life, but a seeking of what a SOVEREIGN GOD is doing—His purposes. All of the focused life thinking must be done in light of a strong understanding of the Sovereignty of God.

“**What is a focused life?** A focused life is:

- a life **dedicated** to exclusively carrying out God’s effective purposes through it,
- by identifying the focal issues, that is, the **life purpose, effective methodology, major role, or ultimate contribution** which allows
- an increasing **prioritization** of life’s activities around the focal issues, and
- **results in a satisfying life of being and doing.**

“**Dedicated** usually indicates that there was some sort of second decision beyond just being a Christian. That decision places all that the leader is or has at God’s disposal to be used by and for God. From that moment on, the leader is on a pilgrimage to discover God’s special purposes, that is, a personal destiny with God.

“**Life purpose, effective methodology, major role, or ultimate contribution** are called the focal issues. That is, they are the major ways that God will reveal that for which we are designed. In a nutshell, life purpose is the driving force behind what we do. Major role is the occupational position from which we accomplish that life purpose. Effective methodologies are means that are effective for us to deliver our ministry that flows from that life purpose. And ultimate contributions are the lasting results of that ministry

“It is the discovery of these focal issues, that is, their movement from implicit to explicit, which provides the possibility of **prioritization** or in other words, proactive decision-

making. The earlier we can discover these issues, the earlier we can proactively act upon them. The leader then makes strategic decisions, which take into account the discoveries. In short, they manifest aspects of a focused life.

“Note the final bold-faced words in the focused life definition, **a satisfying life of being and doing.** Leaders who discover life purpose and any other focal issue, which synergizes with it, will see things happen in their lives. They will become people of character. They will accomplish. When all is said and done and life is drawing to a close, they can look back and say, “Folks, you are looking at a fulfilled person. I am happy with the end product of God’s shaping—who I am, what I have become. I am happy at what God has done through me—what I have done. Life was worth living. It has been a fulfilling pilgrimage. Praise God!” “

How’s your focus?

## Our God, a Recruiting God

The following was done by Doug Nuenke, US President of The Navigators, on the biblical basis for recruiting.

“From the beginning of time, our God has shown Himself to be committed to inviting men and women to join Him in His kingdom enterprise. We don’t need to search further than the first chapter of Genesis to see this method at work in the lives of Adam and Eve. As divine image bearers, they were invited to join God’s work as multipliers, fillers, subduers, and rulers of the earth.

“God is continually inviting His people into a close relationship with Him, and to a task. For example, God invited Abram to a relationship of blessing and to a faith venture of leaving his homeland to go to a place God would show him (Genesis 12). God invited Moses to join Him on a world-changing rescue operation, promising the blessing of His presence (Exodus 3). Jeremiah was invited to join God’s purposes for his life as a prophet to the nations. God assured Jeremiah that ‘I am with you and will rescue you’ (Jeremiah 1:4-10). The apostle Paul was interrupted in the course of his life by a compelling invitation from God. It made no sense, and who would have picked Paul, the murderer, to join God’s task? Yet Jesus appeared to him, promising His involvement in Paul’s life, and inviting Paul to join Him in turning people from darkness to light (Acts 26:12-19).

“Year after year, throughout the centuries, God has been an inviting God, a God who recruits men and women to join Him in His kingdom endeavors. Jesus did the same when He said to potential disciples, “Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). Again, we see God inviting people to Himself and to a task worthy of their lives.

“What do we learn about God’s recruiting of individuals? First, God invites people to join Him in His enterprise, for His glory. His invitation is not so much about us as it is about Him and His purposes. Second, God’s invitations are compelling and have an imperative tone. We can never invite with the same compulsion, yet we can help people discern God’s compelling invitation. Third, God’s recruiting is personal. Though He has plenty to say to us as a community of believers, His invitations are directed to us as individuals. Finally, we see that God’s recruiting involves the promise of His presence and involvement.

“In organizations, we must make the distinction between the task of marketing and the task of recruiting. God models both of these. Marketing is the public disbursement of who we are and what we are about. It involves broad communications of a person or organization’s mission, vision, ethos, and character. God communicates broadly, in this marketing fashion, through His creation, through His mighty acts, and through His miracles and wonders. The Lord Jesus’ life on earth communicated in a broad and public way, the character and mission of God. Recruiting, however is personal. It is more relational and directed to the individual. Recruiting happens most

effectively at a local level, and engages men and women where they live, pointing them toward God's invitations and callings on their lives.

"Our God is a recruiting, inviting God. As God's people and God's fellow workers, we join Him in the recruiting process when we help our student, staff and alumni friends listen for the next step in which God is inviting them to join Him."

## It's About What You Leave Behind

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

Hebrews 5:12 (NIV)

As we all run our individual races laid out before us, we are running hard towards our unique finish lines. But, while our racecourse may be unique, we have a common goal. That goal, to finish our race well and run towards maturity in Christ is common for all who seek to follow Christ.

We begin our race by placing our faith and trust in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord. But that is just the 'starting gun' for the life-long pursuit of growing towards maturity in Him. As the writer of Hebrews reminds us, over time we are expected to reach a maturity in Him that allows us to teach others. The author rebukes the readers for their lack of progress, telling them that by now they should be teachers. Instead, they are still acting like infants in need of spiritual milk rather than feeding on more substantial spiritual meat.

Mature Kingdom leaders are expected to be 'teachers' of those they lead - pointing others toward that same goal and maturity they are running after. It's assumed that mature Kingdom leaders will take it upon themselves to invest in others, especially younger, next generation people.

It's this vision of spiritual generations that must influence all Kingdom leaders. Yes, we do have a mission to accomplish as we lead. But, a key component of our leadership is to be intentionally investing in next generation, emerging leaders who will themselves invest in others.

Successful Kingdom leaders do not just accomplish their calling and fulfill their God-given mission in advancing the Gospel and the Kingdom. They also know that it is their legacy, what happens after they lay aside their leadership, that will be the ultimate judge as to their success or failure. Will there be others who follow our lead, who were invested in, prepared, developed and trained to assume their own individual responsibilities as Kingdom leaders?

It's about what we leave behind, not just what we accomplish now.

It's about legacy, not just activity!

What are you aiming for in your leadership?

## The Battle for Your Minds

Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny. Ralph Waldo Emerson

... clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. Romans 13:14 (NIV)

The battle is raging for control of your thought life. If the enemy can gain a beachhead within your thoughts, that front will eventually expand to control more and more territory, finally expressing itself in our actions.

Often, we tend to minimize what goes on within our thoughts, saying to ourselves, “Well, at least I didn’t do it! Yes, I may have thought it, but I didn’t act on it.” This rationalization can lead to self-delusion, for the Lord Jesus reminds us that even to lust after a woman is the same as committing the sexually immoral act of adultery (see Matthew 5:27-30).

So, what to do when the battle rages for control of our thoughts? Here’s some practical suggestions:

1. Determine to fix your thoughts upon Christ
  - o Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, *fix your thoughts on Jesus*, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. Hebrews 3:1 (NIV)
2. Arm yourself for battle by storing away God’s word within you
  - o How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.... I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:9,11
3. Ask God for help as the battle rages – it is not a matter of our will power, but rather His power
  - o No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV
  - o ... call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me. Psalm 50:15

The enemy is waging war against you seeking to gain a foothold within your thoughts that he might exploit further for corrupting your leadership actions.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7

## **Be on Your Guard! Be Alert! Watch!**

Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ... What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'      Mark 13:33, 37 NIV

The context of these exhortations from Jesus is in regard to the end times. The disciples had asked Him when He will return and what will be the signs of His coming. After answering in much detail, He summarizes with these three exhortations - Be on guard! ... Be alert! ... Watch!

While the context dictates an interpretation regarding the second coming of Christ, there are additional principles that can apply, especially for Kingdom leaders.

As we seek to advance the Kingdom - the rule and reign of Jesus Christ, we must be on our guard against evil and those who would seek to hinder our mission. Our adversary will not yield easily and we should not be surprised by opposition to the gospel or God's purposes. Rather, we need perseverance and steadfastness as we move ahead in our mission.

We must also be alert to the changing times and cultural shifts around us. What has worked for some time may not work now. It's not just a matter of working harder or looking for more committed workers. Perhaps our methods are less and less effective because our audience has changed? We must be alert to these changes. Ask the Lord for wisdom and discernment into how best to further His work at this time and context. What new approaches or methods need to be tried to determine if they are a better fit for our current audience?

Watchfulness is a focus on Him and the certainty of His coming - an anticipation that He will do as He has promised. Kingdom leaders are to keep a watchful eye on the 'horizon' as they plow through the details of the day. Don't get so buried in the daily work that you take your eye off the bigger picture. It is the Lord's work, not ours and He will accomplish it in His way and in His time. He is with us and will never leave us. And He will fulfill His promises!

Be on your guard - today! Be alert - today! Watch – today!

## The Leader – BE

Using the simple outline of Know – Be – Do – Reproduce we can categorize the important functions of this vast and complex subject called leadership. We will now turn our attention to the category of “Be – Who a Leader Is.” Here are some introductory thoughts on leading from the inside out.

### 1. Develop personal depth in your walk with Jesus

Lead from an overflow of your walk and intimacy with Christ

- Your intimacy with Jesus grows as you spend time with Him in the Scriptures. Seek to know God’s ways, not just His actions.
- Develop depth in the Bible by simply reading and re-reading your Bible!
- Bible reading plans can be very helpful as repetition is the key to learning.

Read more and read selectively.

- Read and re-read good books!
- Good books are tested by their continued influence over a long time.
- Read critically – always compare what you read with the Scriptures to ensure alignment with Kingdom truth.
- Just because a book is popular today does not mean you should spend your precious time reading it.
- Often our egos drive us to want to seem “with it” by saying that we have read the “cool and current” rather than the “tried and true.”
- Create a “To Be Read” bookshelf and a folder for current articles so that your reading choices can be focused.

We lead more from who we are, rather than from what we know.

- Lead from the inside out!
- Lead from the strength of your God-given design and spiritual gifting.
- Lead from your ‘life messages’ given to you through life experiences.
- Speak truth to those you lead, but always tempered with love.

### 2. Develop Christlikeness

Be intentional about your character development.

- Leaders are like toothpaste tubes, when you squeeze them, what’s inside comes out! We default to who we are when we are under pressure.
- Foundational areas for Christlike character development are – love, humility, integrity, courage.
- Remember “The Golden Rule of Leadership” – “Lead others the way you want to be led.” – see Luke 6:31.

3. Recharge your batteries – Take some time to rest!

Get some time away from your leadership responsibilities.

- Ensure that your daily and weekly schedules have margin.
- Turn off your phone – you’re really not that important!
- You don’t have to answer every phone call or text message immediately – seek to maintain your daily work flow and efficiency.

Get a life outside of your ministry / work.

- Develop friendships with people outside of work or ministry circles.
- Get some recreation and hobbies – know yourself and do what ‘fills your tanks’ and refreshes you.
- Push yourself to learn something new!
- Take a break / take a vacation – you’re really not that important.

Lead from an overflow and from a reserve!

How’s your leadership ‘gas gauge?’ Are you running on fumes?

## Becoming Intentional About Character Development

The powerful impact of a model is [a] common tool used by God to help shape us. For many of us, people (parents, teachers, pastors, mentors) will be used to positively model character qualities and subsequently build them into our lives. We will observe how they implement certain character qualities in their lives and then apply these principles in our own. Sometimes this application is conscious, but many times it comes about because we have been around someone for so long that we unconsciously become like them. The writer of Proverbs tells us, “He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm” (Proverbs 13:20) and “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). A modern proverb states the same principle, “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” We become like those with whom we associate.

A wonderful way to learn from the example of others is through reading their biographies. Reading about the lives and trials of other leaders can inspire and instruct us in relevant areas for our own situations. Aside from the bible, I have learned more about life and leadership by reading the biographies of leaders than any other source. Reading the biographies of spiritual, business, political, and military leaders can be a great habit for self-development. Let me suggest that you begin with the biographies of such great spiritual leaders as William Carey, Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, J.O. Fraser, Adoniram Judson, D.L. Moody, George Mueller, Dawson Trotman and Bill Bright.

The teaching and example of a spiritual mentor is another key element in the development and growth of an emerging leader. More than a model, a mentor builds into your life Christlike character and values. Asking God to give you someone who can be a positive example and who actively builds into your life can be a great blessing. Paul selected Timothy to be with him in the work and along the way he built into Timothy’s life what he had learned of Kingdom leadership. He writes to Timothy in his last letter this exhortation, “You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings...But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it” (2 Timothy 3:10-14).

Mentors and other leaders can help develop us in character as well as leadership skills (competencies). Though both godly character and skills are needed for good leadership, the environment in which they are shaped is very different. An environment with accountability is necessary for skill transfer and development, but a more relational environment is needed for character formation. If we mix them up, trying to develop character by imposing accountability, we will not see lasting change. A friend has said, “All accountability does is turn us into good liars.”

[Another] tool that the Lord frequently uses to develop our character is the *life situations and circumstances* that we find ourselves facing. How we respond in our hearts in these situations is often much more important than what we finally decide or do. God is arranging these situations for our continued development and growth. Rather than being frustrated or discouraged by our trials, we can welcome them as tools being used

by God for our good. If we learn to rest in Him and draw strength from Him in the midst of these times, we will benefit greatly. “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

For an emerging leader, one lacking leadership experience, their primary felt need is for leadership skill development. This is especially true because these skill needs often come with deadlines that must be met. We have to turn in a strategic leadership plan, but we've never done that before, so we seek help in how to create a plan. We are given responsibility for leading an event, but having little experience with it, we eagerly seek out help for how to lead an event well. And so it goes, seeking the leadership skills (competencies) necessary to meet the immediate demands of our responsibilities. The result will be more responsibility and greater influence, for this is the reward of successful leaders. Thus, the daily busyness of leading crowds out the time needed for intentional character development.

The final outcome of focusing on leadership skills is frequently a leader who in their 40's has arrived at a pinnacle of influence that is great, but inwardly their character can't stand the load of their leadership.

The pressure and strains of increased leadership responsibility begin to expose character flaws that have been ignored or covered up for many years. But now, with greater responsibility, their impact can no longer be set aside. The ripple effects of their character flaws as manifested in their actions are too great, for they now impact many more people and resources! Many leaders collapse at the height of their influence as a character weakness is finally exposed and great is the collapse thereof! [i]

Don't hope that with the passing of time or with increased experience that Christlike character will develop. Begin today to be intentional about your character development!

[i] Yeakley, Tom *Growing Kingdom Character* NavPress Colorado Springs, CO, 2011 p. 16ff

## Anointed vs Appointed

The following is an excerpt from an article by R. Scott Rodin titled, “Becoming a Leader of No Reputation.”<sup>2</sup>

“I know of few Christian leaders today who were anointed before they were appointed. We have employed the business model of doing careful searches looking for Christian leaders whom we can appoint to office. Once in place, we then anoint them and ask God to bless their work.

“The Biblical evidence seems to indicate that God selects leaders in the opposite order. Samuel anointed David before appointing him King. The selection criterion for leadership was not based on who would most likely get the appointment, but whom God had anointed for this task. And appointment without anointment (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anointing>) always led to disaster.

“Christian leadership requires nothing less than a complete, wholesale sell-out of your life in service to God and God only. It is the ‘losing of your life’ to the work God will do in you to benefit your institution, school, church or organization. And the stakes are high. Nowhere else in the Christian life will the price for divided loyalties be so costly for so many for so long. Ineffective and fallen leaders compromise kingdom work, and the effects are eternal.

“With God’s anointing comes God’s power and presence. There is a special blessing bestowed on God’s anointed. It is the blessing of God’s power manifest in ways only seen through the work of God’s chosen. God’s anointed do the miraculous because they are the servant of the Almighty.

“God’s anointed will do anything God asks... anything. God’s anointed will seek God’s will with a passion. They will not move without it and they will not be diverted from their course once they have it. God’s anointed are servants first, last and always. And God’s anointed have only one passion, to know and do God’s will that He might have the glory. In this way, God’s anointed are people of no reputation.”

So, the next time you are in the process of selecting a leader, what will you look for first? God’s anointing or God’s appointing?

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<sup>2</sup> Rodin, R. Scott Journal of Religious Leadership, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Fall 2002), pp. 105 – 119.

## Are Leaders Born or Made?

One of the common questions asked regarding leadership is this, “Are leaders born or made?” The answer is, “Yes!” That is, Yes, leaders are in fact both born, made, and for Kingdom leaders, born again. Here’s my expanded answer to this challenging question — The 3 B’s of Making Leaders!

**Born** – Some people are hard-wired with God-given temperaments, intellects, and natural abilities that will give them the ability to influence others more easily as leaders. While this God-given ability does allow for easier influence, it does not necessarily mean that the quality of their leadership is better than others who are not so naturally endowed. These “natural leaders” will also need to grow in their leadership skills in order to utilize these natural strengths to their optimum.

**Born Again** - Some followers of Christ have the God-given, spiritual gift of leadership. In Romans 12:6-8 Paul lists several spiritual gifts given for serving others in the Body of Christ. He says, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

It is my understanding that all believers in Christ are given at least one spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit when they put their faith in Jesus as their Savior. These gifts are given that we might serve others (1 Peter 4:10). Those ‘gifted leaders’ who have the spiritual gift of leadership will have ability and capacity to lead in other ways than those not similarly gifted. But these ‘gifted leaders’ also must develop this leadership gift through careful attention to becoming the best leader they can be for Jesus’ sake. Note Paul’s reminder to Timothy, “For this reason I remind you to *fan into flame the gift of God*, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” (2 Timothy 1:6).

**Built** – There are certain leadership competencies or skills that can be learned and developed by everyone. Through practice, feedback, and application everyone can learn to lead to some extent. Husbands can learn to lead their families, parents can learn to lead their children, and employers can learn to lead their employees. Though all can learn to lead, the quality of one’s leadership will depend upon our attention to this development. When compared with others who are the natural or gifted leaders, one’s leadership capacity may be less or one may have to work harder to grow in leadership competencies, but all can learn to lead. In fact, your leadership ability may surpass those natural or gifted leaders who do not work to develop themselves.

So....are leaders born or made? The answer is, “Yes!” Some are born, some are born again, and some are built! Are you taking your development as a leader seriously? Are you seeking to “fan it into a flame?”

## God's Use of Isolation for a Leader's Development

**Isolation:** when God sets a leader aside from their destiny process to develop deeper, heart issues dealing with their inner spirit; our “doing” for God ceases and we are forced to focus on our “being” with God

“God develops our character in community and tests it in isolation.” Bill Thrall

God develops our spirit in isolation and tests it in community.

**Strong in Spirit:** relating to and loving God, rather than doing something for God, it is deep intimacy with God; knowledge and understanding of God, confidence in God, surrender to God

During isolation periods, God develops a leader into a channel for His power to be displayed. We learn to boast in our weakness for we know God will work through our weakness for His glory. Like Paul, we learn, “...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

### Examples of Isolation

Jesus – 40 days in the wilderness Luke 4:1-14; note the contrast of Luke 4:1 and 4:14. “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert.... Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.”

Moses – 40 years in desert tending sheep for his father-in-law Acts 7:23,30

Paul – extended time in the desert of Arabia after conversion; years in Tarsus before recruited by Barnabas to help in Antioch Galatians 1:17, 2:1

David – fleeing for his life from King Saul in the desert ( +10 years ) 1 Samuel 20-31

Kingdom leaders can anticipate times of isolation when God sets them aside from the activities of leadership in order to develop them in deeper ways. Don’t be surprised by this, in fact, know that God is using these hard times to develop you as a better tool for His purposes. Lean into it and don’t rush back to the action. Let God have His way and His timing in your development.

## When Promises Don't Come True

It was another exasperating, faith-challenging confrontation with the government Immigration Office. Our yearly visa renewal was in trouble again. We had experienced this numerous times during our ten years in the country and so, once again, I reminded the Lord of our desire for an extension and recruited others to pray on our behalf. I reminded Him of Philippians 4:19, stating that this visa was a need and He had promised to meet all of our needs. I also prayed over Psalm 37:4, saying that it was our heart's desire to stay and serve Him there, so please grant yet another renewal. We had seen several miracles in previous years regarding visa renewals, so I was confident that God would once again come through.

Imagine my shock and disappointment when the letter that came from Immigration was not our yearly renewal, but a denial of any extension and an "invitation" to leave the country. Why had God not answered? We had prayed over the same request, used the same promises, recruited the same, if not more, people to pray with us. But this time God had said "no." Can God's promises be trusted? Why weren't our prayers answered according to our desires?

Sometime later I was studying Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before he was crucified. In Mark 14:32-42 we see a remarkable exchange between Jesus and His Heavenly Father. Jesus was deeply distressed and troubled by the reality of the crucifixion and taking on the punishment for the sin for all mankind (vv. 33-34). So He came to His Father with a specific request, "Take this cup from me." He based His request upon the reality that, "everything is possible for you" (v. 36), therefore, certainly there must be another way other than the cross. Had not God promised that if we call upon Him in times of trouble, He will deliver us (Psalm 50:15)? Had not Jesus Himself said that if we ask anything in His name, He will do it? He prayed three times; certainly His Father would know His sincerity. Certainly His Father would answer.

But we discover an amazing thing in response to His prayers! The Father let His Son die on the cross the next day, taking upon Himself the punishment for the sin of all mankind. Why did God not answer Jesus' request? But then it hit me—God had answered! But the answer was "no." Jesus Himself had received a "no" answer in prayer! Why? Was it because He had some unconfessed sin? Certainly not—He was sinless! Was He not sincere in His request? No—He repeated His request until he sweat blood (Luke 22:44). The Father did not grant His request because His perfect plan required His Son's sacrificial death. There was no other way!

A key insight is found in Mark 14:36b where Jesus says, "Yet not what I will, but what you will." Though Jesus made a specific request, His underlying attitude was not a demanding of His own will, but rather, a surrender to the will of the Father. We too must assume this attitude when we pray. Not a fatalistic attitude in which we subliminally say, "I know it isn't going to do any good to pray, but just in case..." But rather a prayer life that is bold in its specific requests, yet surrendered to our Heavenly Father's higher will, knowing that His will is best. Someone has said, "God's will is what you would choose if you knew everything that He knows."

Kingdom leaders pray over and plead the promises of God as found in Scriptures. It is a wonderful means of prayer that inspires and motivates others. But the promises are given as anchors for our hope when times of pressure come, not levers to make God do what we want Him to do. We make specific requests related to specific Scriptural promises, but we also submit to the good and perfect will of our Father. We trust Him even when we don't get the answer we expect, when it does not feel so good, and even when don't understand 'why.'

## A Sacrificial Life

Sacrifice means, “to give something up for the sake of something of higher value.” Sacrificial living is to give up our own lives for the purpose of following Christ. Jesus modeled the perfect sacrificial life by giving His very life for the sin of mankind. It is this type of lifestyle, one that chooses to live for others instead of self, that models real love for people (John 15:12-14).

Sacrificial living is a daily decision, not a onetime event. Paul urges us to, “.... offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship (Romans 12:1).” We continually offer ourselves to God as living sacrifices as an act of worship to God for all He has done for us. He died for us! Living for Him is the least we can do!

Jesus reminds us that being His disciple means, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). To follow Christ means that we must first deny ourselves. That is, give up all rights to our own plans, desires, dreams, and hopes for our lives and let God determine our future. It is an abandonment of self into the loving hands of God who is good and always does what is good. Secondly, we must take up our cross daily. To the first century audience, the picture of a person carrying a cross meant that they were condemned to death by the Roman government. They had no future—only death. Jesus uses this word picture to illustrate that this death to self is to be daily, not just a onetime decision. Each and every day we must choose to live for Christ and not self.

Sacrificial living goes against the wisdom of this world. The world says to seek self-gratification. “If it feels good do it!” The implication being, if it doesn’t feel good, then it should not be acted upon. To choose to deny self in order to gain the opportunity to serve God is something that will be hard for others to understand.

Kingdom leaders are called to model a life and leadership that demonstrates sacrifice of self for the sake of others. Are you living for self or dying to self? It’s a daily, moment by moment choice and lifestyle.

## Sacrificial Leadership Hurts

Sacrifice is painful! It cost God's Son His life! There are no guarantees we will live a pain-free life. God does not apologize for asking much of His followers. It is His right. We are His for He bought us with His own blood. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

But God also promises us that whatever cost we are asked to pay in denying self and following Him, He will repay multiple times over. "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30). Therefore, whatever has been sacrificed for Christ, when compared with what has been gained in return, will not seem to be too great a cost to pay.

Leaders who model this type of sacrificial leadership entrust themselves and their leadership impact to God. They model the same type of leadership that Nehemiah did in Nehemiah 5:14-19: "Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall...In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, because the demands were heavy on these people."

Nehemiah states his primary motivation is the sacrificial decisions he made not to take compensation previous leaders had. For twelve years he used his position as governor to serve the people he led, not to further a goal of self-enrichment. Rather, he states that it was 'out of reverence for God' that he acted the way he did. Further, he used his daily food allotment to feed others at his own table.

Sacrificing leaders will pray as Nehemiah did, "Remember me with favor, my God, for all I have done for these people." They choose a heavenly reward, not one in this life. Their eternal value system causes them to choose behavior that blesses others rather than promotes self.

## **Sacrificial Leadership is Costly**

C.T. Studd came from a wealthy English family and was a 21-year-old student at Cambridge University when he trusted Christ as his personal Savior. Studd was an outstanding athlete, with a possible career in professional sports, in addition to being a good student. After his conversion, he dedicated his life and wealth to Christ.

He and six other Cambridge students offered themselves to serve with Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission in 1885. Nine years later he returned to England with a wife, but broken in health. After recuperating, he gave away his home to the mission and traveled throughout America for two years recruiting young men and women to give themselves to world missions. In 1900 the family moved to India for six years when once again they had to return to England. In 1910 he left his family in England to pioneer a new mission into the heart of Africa. This ministry eventually became Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (WEC International) which continues to this day.

Studd personally had a ministry on four continents and through those he touched, the entire world. But this adventure began with a decision to deny fame and fortune in this world in order that he might follow Christ.

Jim Elliott was martyred by Latin American Indians as a young man. While a Wheaton College student he dedicated his life to following Christ, whatever the cost. The cry of his life was this, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

May the Lord raise up a new generation of Kingdom leaders who model the spirit of Studd and Elliott. May these men and women be mighty in His Spirit. May it begin with me!

## Servant Leaders and Sacrifice

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45 ESV

Kingdom leaders often refer to the above statement of Jesus as a defining text for servant leadership. They define a servant leader as one who maintains humble values and does certain servant-like activities. But we often miss the import of the statement by ignoring the final phrase – “... and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

It was sacrificial leadership that He was pointing the Twelve to as He contrasted Kingdom leadership with the world’s way of leading. Yes, the world’s leaders used power and influence to ‘lord it over’ others and promote self-serving causes. By contrast, His example was to humble Himself and use His power and influence to serve others, not Himself. But He did not stop there in His explanation of servant leadership in the Kingdom.

He went on to say that His example would end in the great sacrifice – His death on the cross – paying our debt for sin and taking on the punishment we deserved. It is the sacrificial nature of Christ’s Kingdom leadership that truly sets it apart from the benevolent, ‘turn the organizational pyramid upside down’ type of leadership promoted by many as servant leadership.

Kingdom leaders who follow the example of Jesus are called to lead with personal sacrifice as a hallmark of their leadership style. It is this leadership quality that helps set Kingdom leaders apart. Not only are they humble servants, but they are also willing to give up all for the sake of serving others. This is a great, high calling and privilege. Some may even be called to die for their King – the ultimate sacrifice of a servant leader.

The story is told of a band of Moravian missionaries who sailed from Europe to the South Pacific seeking to take the gospel to the native peoples of some scattered islands. While on the long sea voyage they led the ship’s captain and many of the crew to faith in Christ. Finally arriving at their destination, they anchored offshore and saw the local peoples gathering at the shoreline making threatening gestures with their weapons clenched tightly in their hands.

The captain and crew pleaded with the missionaries not to disembark as they feared that they would be attacked and die as they reached shore. To this, the leader of the missionary band replied, “Sir, you don’t understand. We have already died.” They disembarked, landed and were summarily killed on the beach.

These paid the ultimate price of servant leadership. Sacrifice for the cause of advancing the Kingdom – even to the point of death if needed – is the mark of the King and His Kingdom leaders. Jesus modeled it and we are called to follow.

Don’t shrink back if your leadership sacrifice is costly or painful. Embrace it, for it is the way of the King!

## **Serving God with a Good Attitude**

God has a volunteer workforce. We are all invited to co-labor with Him (see 1 Corinthians 3:9). When we ‘raise our hand’ and join up with Him and many other like-minded volunteers, challenges will arise as we work for Him. Our service is called ‘laboring,’ not ‘vacationing!’ Therefore, it is important that we maintain a good attitude as we serve. The following are three key attitudes of a spiritual laborer.

### **Attitude #1 Willing to Respond to a Call to Co-Labor**

The Lord invites us to join up with Him, but we have the option whether we will serve or not. He will accomplish His purposes with us or without us. It is a privilege to serve with Him. We were designed for this destiny.

This calling will be a personal calling – you will know when He is asking YOU! God spoke to Moses from a burning bush, calling him by name (twice). He spoke to Samuel as a young man, calling him at night by name to His service. Mary was called to serve as the Lord’s mother after having a personal visitation from God’s messenger, the angel Gabriel. All received their calling and humbly joined up with God’s unique plan for them.

### **Attitude #2 Willingness to Work Very Hard**

Volunteer work for Jesus is hard work! It requires serving others who may not be grateful. It requires perseverance, for many tasks are difficult and challenging. The illustration of laboring in God’s harvest found in Mat 9:35-38 is one of a common field hand who worked the barley or wheat harvests with a small curved knife. It was back-breaking work that demanded commitment throughout the entire day. Laboring with Jesus is not for wimps!

### **Attitude #3 Willingness to Risk Everything and Sacrifice**

Those who volunteer to serve with Jesus give everything they have. Billy Graham said, “Salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you everything you have.” Volunteers for Christ’s service commit themselves to God for their reward in heaven, not expecting recognition in this life. They put Christ above comfort; living for world to come, not the world that is seen.

In Mark 10:29-30 and Luke 18:29-30 the Lord promises to take note of those who serve Him and He promises to reward them. Your service is not in vain. He is keeping careful records of your work for Him and His Kingdom.

So, how’s your attitude? Have you ‘raised your hand’ to volunteer for service? Are you surprised by the difficulty of the task you have been asked to accomplish? Having second thoughts? It’s time to re-up! Raise your hand – again – for He is worthy!

## Foundational Qualities for Leadership Success

When our children were born, actually even before they were born, we began to pray for them daily. We prayed many things for them, but the main thing was that they would come to know Christ at an early age, never experiencing a time of rebellion or walking away from Him, and that they would serve Him with their whole heart in whatever calling He would have for them. As we got to know them and their personality / temperament, we were also able to add specific prayer requests related to their character needs.

As time passed the lists grew longer and I began to re-think what I was praying for each of the kids. What was it that was really important to pray into their life? What were the essentials that would see them through life's trials and challenges? After much thought, I boiled it down to four things that were needed. Yes, there were other things that I prayed (and still pray) for each of them, but these four qualities are the foundation stones that we have prayed for many years. These four qualities have also become core qualities for me as a leader and for other leaders that I mentor. I remember them with the acronym, "PEWC" (rhymes with 'hurl').

"P" stands for Purity of Life. Many have made shipwrecks of their lives through a moral failure. Certainly the challenges of moral purity are greater today than when I was younger. For young men in particular, with the pervasiveness of pornography on the Internet and other media, sexual purity is a growing challenge. But, purity of life is more than just sexual holiness.

Purity relates to our heart and what grips it. It means we are wholly devoted to one Master. It relates to integrity, being a person of our word who will do what we say. It means we are transparent in our life, not playing games with our relationships or wearing masks that hide who we truly are. What you see is what you get.

"E" stands for Eternal Values. There is much pressure, especially in the Western culture, to become a massive consumer and accumulate all we can. The mantra seems to be, "He who dies with the most toys wins." While not one to feel guilty for being born and living in a prosperous culture, I do have a sense of stewardship of whatever resources God places under my care. We already have much compared to others. And, "To whom much is given, much is required." (see Luke 6:48)

Having eternal values ultimately means that we are living for a world to come, not this present one. These values direct our daily choices, lifestyles, spending, consuming, giving, investing, etc. Our lives are lived in the context of eternity, knowing that we will have to give an account one day of what we did with the resources God entrusted to us. Our lives are lived knowing that a lifespan of 70 years will come and go quickly, and we are but a vapor that soon disappears. And when we exit this planet, we will leave all we have accumulated to others, taking nothing with us.

"W" stands for Wisdom. Here is the secret to much of the challenge of parenting and leading.

God entrusts children and people to us without an instruction manual on how to raise or lead them. Yes, we have the Bible with great principles (Proverbs is especially helpful) and we have our own upbringing which has its strengths and weaknesses. What our children and those we lead need is “instant” wisdom that enables them to make wise choices that honor God.

When our children were young and disobedient, we would correct them. One of the statements that we would say again and again was, “That was not a wise thing to do.” Or when we would talk about someone’s decision and the consequences, we would point out wise choices and not so wise ones. The point was to reinforce in many ways that a goal in life was to become wise. To obey God and your parents was a wise thing and brought reward. But, to disobey God and your parents was an unwise (foolish) thing that brought punishment and pain. Ouch!

“C” stands for Courage. If our children and we as leaders are to apply the above three things, Purity, Eternal Values, and Wisdom, then we will not be following the norms of the day. We would be swimming against that cultural tide and standing out from the crowd. There will be much pressure on us to conform to the norms of the day, especially by our friends and peers. Knowing this pressure, it will take great courage to stand for what is pure, eternal, and wise in God’s eyes, and not simply go along with the crowd and do what’s easy, instead of what’s right.

Courage, moral backbone, to say and do what’s right is never easy. Sometimes there are real consequences for standing up for right. Some have even had to pay with their lives for this kind of moral fortitude. I pray we never have to make that kind of choice, but should it come, may we have the courage to stand, knowing that eternity waits.

These four areas have formed that foundation of our prayers for our children since they were very young. They are also a foundation that I pray for myself. I’m pleased to say that we have seen these areas demonstrated in our children’s lives over and over again. And now there is the next generation—our grandchildren. They too are now coming under this prayer covering of PEWC.

But for me and those Kingdom leaders who I coach, these core qualities are also the foundation of my intercession. I pray that we become leaders who demonstrate these qualities in our personal lives, families, and leadership. For if we do, we will be change agents who the Lord will use to bring hope and help to many.

## **Qualities for Cross-cultural Success**

Some years ago Marvin Smith did a study on what made successful Navigator missionaries as a thesis for his Master's degree. The result of his study was a list of ten qualities that contributed to those who were able to have long-term, fruitful ministries around the world.

Certainly there are many factors that contribute to the lives and ministries of people beyond this list of qualities, but as I reviewed them and compared it with my own experience and observations, I too could see the wisdom in what Marvin had identified.

I took these ten qualities and made them into a personal prayer list, asking God to help shape these qualities into my life. Whether these are true or not for me is not for me to judge. But I have had many opportunities to serve cross-culturally. I continue to ask Him for these.

### **Here's the Ten Qualities of a Successful Missionary from Marvin Smith:**

1. Dependency on God
2. Love and Compassion
3. Sensitivity
4. Humility
5. Flexibility
6. Harmony Builder
7. Courage and Perseverance
8. Willingness to Sacrifice
9. Emotional Stability
10. Good Family Life

Perhaps you too would see the wisdom in asking the Lord to shape these qualities in you as you seek to grow in Christlike character and your capacity to serve Him.

## Even the Energizer Bunny Needs Recharging Eventually!

You know that sick feeling when you turn the ignition switch to On and instead of the motor roaring to life all you hear is the “click...click” of a dead battery. Yes, there had been some recent warning signs... the slow turning over of the engine on cold starts, but you ignored them because it did start eventually. And besides, you had things to do, important things, and many people were depending upon you.

So, you get on with it... placing the “check out the car battery” on the To-Do List at a ‘C’ priority level and move forward. But now, here you sit, turning the ignition switch again and again, desperately hoping that the battery will find some lost energy reserve to once again move you toward those important items on your plan today. But it’s all to no avail... the battery is totally dead!

Leaders are often like those dying-dead car batteries. We run well for long periods of time giving ourselves to the demands of our role while all the time running lower and lower on our spiritual, emotional and physical reserves. Then one day, we try to “start our daily engine” and it only responds with a “click...click...click.” It’s time for some attention to that long-ignored “personal reserve” if we are to continue to lead from an overflow and serve others well.

Here are some suggestions on how to recharge those personal batteries that may need some attention. Not all will be appropriate for your season of life or personal design, but reflect on these and see if there isn’t something that could put some needed “juice” into your depleted reserves.

Get some time away from your leadership responsibilities – you’re really not that important!

- Plan your daily and weekly schedule with margin for change and interruption. Don’t book each day so full with back-to-back appointments.
- Turn off your cell phone every now and then! You’re really not that important!
- Let incoming calls go to voice messaging so that you can manage when you want to talk on the phone.
- Limit the number of times you check your email and text messages each day.
- Do you really need to post to Facebook, Tweet, or respond to every text message immediately?

Get a life outside of your leadership role!

- Develop friendships with others not directly related to your leadership role.
- Take a break / vacation – put it into your calendar just as you do your other important appointments. And be sure to keep this appointment!

Push yourself to learn something new!

- Learning something new and different will stimulate long dormant brain cells and/or muscles, bringing a new sense of progress and perspective.
- Brain cells and muscle cells both deteriorate without use, so remember, it's 'use it or lose it.'

Do something physically challenging!

- "Challenging" is relative given age, physical condition, habits, etc. Don't feel like you have to do what everyone else is doing just because it fits them. Know yourself!
- Engage in some recreation and hobbies – know yourself and what 'fills your tanks.' Don't just take up jogging because everyone else is doing it, especially if you hate it and are not motivated. Maybe you were made to walk regularly instead of jog!
- You only have one body and it must last you for the entire length of the trip—so take good care of it.

Of nineteenth-century preacher Robert Murray McCheyne: After graduating from Edinburgh University at age fourteen in 1827 and leading a Presbyterian congregation of over a thousand at age twenty-three, he worked so hard that his health finally broke. Before dying at age twenty-nine he wrote, "God gave me a message to deliver and a horse to ride. Alas, I have killed the horse and now I cannot deliver the message." (from Bible.org)

Pay attention to your 'warning lights' and seek to live and lead from an overflow – spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally. Keep your reserve tanks full!

## A Leader's Development Through Tough Relationships

“Character is developed in community, but tested in isolation.” Bill Thrall

It is said of King David that he was a man after God’s own heart ( ). Yet David grew to be this type of person; he was not a ‘natural.’ God brought different situations into his life to grow him into the man he would become and with each new challenge David had to choose to trust God or trust himself. Note when he Goliath he told King Saul that God would help him just as he had seen him do before when David had to face a bear or lion that was attacking his sheep.

One of God’s developmental tools often used in the life of a Kingdom leader is a call to serve under a difficult leader. The emerging leader has the choice to submit and serve well, often suffering injustice or a lack of recognition. David served in the ‘crucible’ of God’s shaping, submitting himself to Saul and trusting that God’s promise to him as a young man that he would be Saul’s replacement would come to pass in God’s way and in God’s timing.

Below are some observations and principles of David relating to Saul. Note God’s blessing on David in the midst of serving a difficult ‘supervisor.’

### Lesson #1 Trust in God’s Care: His Sovereignty and Power

1 Samuel 18:28-29

When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.

1 Samuel 19:9-10

But an evil spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the harp, Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape.

David was approximately 20 years of age when he fled from Saul and for the next ten years, until anointed in Hebron as king, he was on the run from Saul (2 Samuel 5:4).

1 Samuel 19:1-2 – Jonathan warns David of Saul’s plot

1 Samuel 19:4 – Jonathan defends David to his father, Saul

1 Samuel 19:11-12 – Michal warns David of Saul’s plot

1 Samuel 19:23 – God spares David

1 Samuel 20:32-35 – Jonathan again warns David of Saul’s plot

1 Samuel 23:9-13 – David delivered through ephod warning at Keilah

1 Samuel 23:14 – God continually spares David from Saul

1 Samuel 23:26-29 – David delivered because of Philistine attack on Saul

**Lesson:** People, leaders, governments, or organizations can’t frustrate God’s plan for my life (cf. Genesis 31:6-7)

## Lessons #2                    Submit to the Authority God Places Over You

1 Samuel 24:5-7

Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD’S anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD.” With these words David rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way... May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.

1 Samuel 26:9-11

But David said to Abishai, “Don’t destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD’S anointed and be guiltless? As surely as the LORD lives,” he said, “the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD’S anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let’s go.”

1 Samuel 26:22-24

“Here is the king’s spear,” David answered. “Let one of your young men come over and get it. The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness. The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD’S anointed. As surely as I valued your life today, so may the LORD value my life and deliver me from all trouble.”

**Lesson:** Leaders are God-appointed and therefore I submit to them, even if they seek to do me wrong, trusting that God will remove them and/or correct/repay them at the proper time (cf. John 19:10-11; Romans 13:1-2; Hebrews 13:17)

What difficult relationship has God placed you in that He means to use for good and for your development as a leader? Are you embracing this or fighting against it? Trust Him!

If God is for us, who can be against us?      Romans 8:31

## Zeal and the Frenetic Leader

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Romans 12:11 (NIV 1984)

Frenetic = fast and energetic in a rather wild and uncontrolled way. When I think of the leadership of Jesus and His leadership lifestyle, the word ‘frenetic’ never enters into my description. Yet, there were many demands upon Him – “everyone is looking for you,” and “so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat.” But Jesus never seemed to give into the hurry, rather, He took steps to deal with these demands.

He told His disciples to “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” And, “When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake.” He continually made time to pray and spend with His Father amidst all the crushing demands pressing in on Him every day. He had very full days each and every day, but He was never hurried.

Today I see many leaders who seem to draw their significance for their busyness. They fill their schedules with back to back appointments and then complain about not having enough time for rest or relaxation. The reality is this, “You are only as busy as you want to be.” No excuses! No complaints! Own your reality – it’s on you!

This reality is illustrated every time a ‘crisis’ interrupts our packed schedules. Suddenly, adjustments can be made, appointments can be cancelled or rescheduled for later. What makes this happen is that we now have a ‘good excuse’ for making these changes. We are in control of our schedule; we just needed a good reason to make some major adjustments.

The goal is *not* pursuing a life of ease or comfort. Leaders *are* busy people. If you don’t want to be - busy, then don’t lead! But - are you so busy ‘doing for Jesus’ that you have neglected ‘being with Jesus’? Are you pegging life’s RPM meter into the red? It’s not sustainable for a long run. Something with give way – health, relationships with spouse or family members, spiritual dryness, etc. We are not made for it.

The Lord not only modeled a sustainable pace in His life and ministry, but he created a framework for us to thrive long-term. It’s called the ‘sabbath.’ Periodic times of recharging and renewal are essential. God’s design was that we get this sabbath time weekly. And then Jesus also modeled taking an extended break after times of intense service.

For me, the ‘indicator gauge’ of how I’m doing in this sustainable lifestyle is my prayer life. Am I making the time for real prayer or is my prayer life often hurried, rushed, and superficial?

Are you a frenetic leader or are you a leader who lives within your God-given boundaries? How’s your prayer life these days?

## Character Counts

Some time ago I found myself in a conversation with a man who was the chief headhunter for a Fortune 100 company. He and his team hire 2000 new graduates each year. I thought this was a great opportunity to gain some insights into university students from a new perspective, so I began to ask him some questions.

“What are you finding when you recruit these graduates?” I asked.

“Tom, we can hire those with top GPAs, work experience and internships, and resumes’ that are outstanding. We offer them top salaries and benefits and place them in stimulating, cutting edge job situations.”

“Well, sounds interesting. How’s that working for you?” I inquired.

“It’s a disaster!” he replied. “Their focus is on the next holiday or how much vacation time they get. They struggle to put in a day’s work for a day’s pay. They have conflicts with their co-workers and supervisors. They take the great salaries we give them and spend it on addictive behaviors. Then we end up paying for treatments for them.”

“That sounds pretty depressing. What are you doing about this?” I said.

“We reviewed all of our new hires for the past five years, looking for common denominators on what made some successful. Here’s what we discovered in our most successful new hires and what I tell the recruiting team to look for. When interviewing new candidates, look for students who are leaders in campus ministries.”

“Really? Why?” I said.

“We hire these people because they have character. We can train new hires to do any job that we want them to do in our company. But we can’t train them in character. They either have it or they don’t. Leaders in campus ministries have what we want, so we look to hire qualified people who were leaders in these campus ministries. They have character!”

This chief headhunter was not a follower of Jesus! But he and his team had figured out that character counts, especially when hiring leaders. And they had identified a pool of potential leadership hires who had the essential character qualities that they were looking for to make their company successful.

Yes, character counts when it comes to Kingdom leadership. Character and competency are two wings of the leadership airplane. You need both wings to do well. Often, we focus on competency and neglect character. It’s a both-and, not an either-or.

What are you looking for as you recruit? Are you intentionally pursuing your own Christlike character development in addition to growing your leadership skills?

## **Temptations for Leaders**

This is what the LORD says: “Maintain justice and do what is right.... But what is right? How do I know if it is right or wrong? Kingdom leaders we are frequently making judgment calls where decision is not black or white, rather it seems as if most of these decisions are “gray.” What standards or grids can we use to help us? Here’s one simple guideline – if the devil is involved, it’s wrong!

Let’s look at the temptations that Jesus faced and see what lessons and applications we can make.

### **3 Temptations of Jesus/Leader      Luke 4:1-13**

#### **Self-Gratification – vs. 3-4**

The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone.

This is the temptation to use resources for yourself, instead of the mission. Leaders often have special access to leadership accounts or resources that others don’t have. Many times there is also a lack of oversight or accountability for these accounts and it can be very easy to justify an expense that is personal and say it was for the work. The ability to say no to this type of temptation is key for further responsibility in the Kingdom. See Luke 16:9-11 and Nehemiah 5:14-19 on the importance of faithfulness, self-control and self-denial for leaders.

#### **Self-Promotion – vs. 5-8**

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.

The second temptation of Jesus is also a common one leaders face – that is, the temptation to use our position and influence to promote ourselves. This seeking of power, position or influence flows from a misguided sense of ambition. Many Kingdom leaders are self-flagellating out of the misconception that any kind of ambition is wrong or bad. But in the Scriptures, we find that there are two types of ambition. The bad type of ambition is self-seeking and wants to gather attention to ourselves. Our English bibles often translate it with the words “selfish ambition.” See Philippians 2:3-4. But there is a good ambition, one that seeks to promote Christ and the Kingdom, rather than self. Paul mentions this in Romans 15:20 when describing his own ambition to preach Christ where He has not been heard.

#### **Self-Glorification – vs. 9-12**

The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” .... Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.

This last temptation is seeking attention for ourselves, turning the spotlight on us, or taking credit for something that was the work of others. It flows from an enlarged ego that is an all-to-common trait among leaders. Want to know if you are in a danger zone for this enlarged ego? Here's a simple test – How much do you talk rather than listen and ask questions? See 1 Samuel 15:12.

Leadership is not about you, but others!

Beware of these common temptations and pitfalls!

Many before you have been removed from the race as they stumble and fall over these temptations!

## Lust, Immorality, and Leaders

Perhaps, like me, you have been amazed at the number of leaders who have fallen into moral collapse. I ask myself how could this happen? Could this happen to me? I'm sure that, like me, you desire to finish the race well. How can we avoid this trap that has captured and ruined so many?

Below are summaries on the process of lust and immorality as seen from a man's and woman's differing perspective. The man's perspective was outlined by Phil Parshall in an article, *The Tiger of Lust – The Downward Path of Moral Ruin*. The woman's perspective was contributed by Mrs. Fran Love.

### A Man's Path of Moral Ruin

1. Enjoyment of another woman's company
2. Appreciation of her body
3. Thoughts of physical lust
4. Emotional desire
5. Initiation of casual encounters
6. Mutual arrangement for frequent meetings
7. The first lustful touch
8. Total deceit with one's wife
9. Intimacy without full sex
10. The physical act of adultery

### A Woman's Path of Moral Ruin

1. Enjoyment of another man's personality
2. Attraction towards his status (he's a leader, popular, etc.) and his looks (manly, sexy, etc.)
3. Trying to attract his attention by whatever means is considered appropriate (nothing overt, all done very smoothly and imperceptibly)
4. Flattered by his reciprocating interest
5. Development and expansion of a fantasy thought life – emotional desire
6. Initiation of casual encounters with great pains taken to ensure that you are made-up and dressed up as attractively as possible
7. Romantic desire – no physical touch even necessary; the “romance” of it all is stimulating enough
8. Total deceit with one's husband
9. Intimacy without full sex
10. The physical act of adultery

'The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.

**Proverbs 27:12**

May we learn from the mistakes of others and avoid the pitfall of immorality that has ruined many!

## Leaders and Faithfulness

Dr. Francis Dixon, a well-known evangelist in Australia and NZ, who also led a church in England, told the following story:

One Sunday night Dixon asked a man, Peter, in his church to share his testimony. Peter said, “This is how I was saved... I was in the Royal Navy stationed in Sydney, Australia and one night I was walking down George St. and out of nowhere stepped this little grey-haired old man. He said, ‘Excuse me sir, but may I ask you a question? I hope you won’t be offended but if you were to die today, do you know where you would spend eternity? The Bible says it will either be in hell or it will be in heaven. Will you think about that? Thank you. God bless you.’ And he left. I had never been asked that question before and I could not get it out of my mind. When I got back to England, I sought out a pastor and was converted to Christ.”

Several weeks later a revival team came to Dr. Dixon’s church and on a Wednesday night he asked one of the team members (Noel) to share how he had been saved. The guy stood up and said, “I was stationed with the Royal Navy stationed in Sydney, Australia and one night I was walking down George Street and out of nowhere stepped this little grey-haired old man. He said, ‘Excuse me sir, but may I ask you a question? I hope you won’t be offended but if you were to die today, do you know where you would spend eternity? The Bible says it will either be in hell or it will be in heaven. Will you think about that. Thank you. God bless you.’ Noel said I couldn’t get that out of my mind. When I got back to England, I sought out a Christian businessman and I came to know Christ as my Savior and Lord.”

Several months after that Dr. Dixon was in Adelaide. He was doing an evangelistic crusade and said that he just had to share this so he shared about Peter and Noel. As he was sharing a man stood up in the congregation waving his hands. Dr. Dixon stopped and asked what the problem was – to which the man replied, “I’m another. I was in Sydney, Australia and one night I was walking down George Street and out of nowhere stepped this little grey-haired old man. He said, ‘Excuse me sir, but may I ask you a question? I hope you won’t be offended but if you were to die today, do you know where you would spend eternity? The Bible says it will either be in hell or it will be in heaven. Will you think about that. Thank you. God bless you.’ Later I was converted to Christ.

When he came back to his church, he shared about the crusade experience – specifically about Peter, Noel, and the man in Adelaide. Afterwards a woman came up to Dr. Dixon and said, “Well, I’m another. I was visiting Sydney Australia and walking down George Street.... Later I was converted to Christ.”

Shortly after that he was teaching at a convention in Northern England and he was asked to address a group of pastors. When he started talking, he said, “I’ve got to share this, This is exciting.” So he told them about Peter, Noel, the man in Adelaide and the woman in his church.

Afterwards a pastor came up to him and said, “I am another. I was in Sydney walking down George St and out of nowhere came this grey-haired old man... Later I was converted to Christ.”

A year later Dr. Dixon went on a world tour and he was in India and was asked to speak to a group of missionaries on evangelism. So he told them the story and afterwards a missionary came up to him and said, “Dr. Dixon, I am another. I was walking down George St.... Later I was converted to Christ.”

From there he went to Jamaica. He was in Kingston addressing a group of businessmen at a luncheon. He shared this story and afterwards a man came up to him and said, “I am another. I was on a business trip in Sydney, Australia and I was walking down George Street and out of nowhere stepped this little old man...Later I was converted to Christ.

Where do you think Dr. Dixon Went next?... Sydney, Australia

He went to a Christian businessman there and told him this story and asked, “Do you know who this man is?”

“Sure, that’s Mr. Jenner. He’s been doing that for 23 years. But he is very feeble now. He just got out of the hospital, is confined to his bed and is almost blind.”

Dr. Dixon said, “Would you take me to him?” The man said, “Of course.”

So they went to this little grey-haired old man’s house. As they walked into his bedroom, Dr. Dixon introduced himself and began to unravel one of the most incredible witnessing stories ever verified. As he started to share about how one after another had come to know Christ, the little old grey-haired man started to weep to the point that Dr. Dixon had to stop. “Excuse me sir, but what is wrong?”

Mr. Jenner said, “After 23 years, that is the first time I have ever heard of anyone coming to Christ through my testimony.”

23 years of faithfulness...23 years of sowing and never knowing that the seeds had sprouted and borne fruit... 23 years of serving out of obedience to Christ.

May we be found faithful!

## Living a Life of Love

God loves people. When deciding on an inheritance for Himself, He chose to give Himself people (Deuteronomy 32:8-9). God desires to be with people forever and plans to share all of His creation with them. People who live with the unseen world's values will invest in people because people are eternal and valuable to God.

God so loved people that He sent His Son to die for them! The people of this world who do not yet know Christ must be given the opportunity to believe. Believers will have to go and tell them of Christ's death and resurrection. For many this will mean leaving family, friends, and their home culture to take the gospel to those who have never heard. It will take the zeal of Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier, who served in India, Japan, and Southeast Asia. He said he longed to be back in Paris, "to go shouting up and down the streets to tell the students to give up their small ambitions and come eastward to preach the gospel of Christ."<sup>3</sup>

Not only do these people need to repent and believe the gospel, but afterwards they must be established in their new-found faith in Christ. The Apostle Paul was moved by love to impart the gospel and his life as he followed-up the converts of his ministry. He wrote, "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us" (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Colossians 2:6-7

These young believers will need someone who can come alongside and help them understand the Bible and apply it to real life situations. It will not take spiritual giants, but a person who is just a little farther along in their pilgrimage who is willing to share with others what they have learned. Someone put it this way, "It's like a new patient who has checked into a hospital getting help from some other patients. They can help because they know the hospital, having been there a little longer than the new patient."

Once believers have become disciples of Christ, we must help them begin to help others. They must be equipped to impart the life of Christ to the next generation. Disciples must be enabled to labor for Christ—to evangelize the lost and establish the new believers. They must realize that they have been given a commission by Christ to disciple the nations.

Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

Where do we get a heart for evangelizing the lost, establishing the saved, and equipping laborers for Christ? We only need to ask!

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<sup>3</sup> *Give Up Your Small Ambitions* by Michael C. Griffiths, Moody Press Chicago, Illinois 1978 p.6

Several years ago four men, all in graduate and professional studies, decided to pray for 30 days straight from 5:30 am to 7:00 am on a hill overlooking Purdue University. They prayed for one thing only during those mornings—that God would give them a heart for people. They asked God to give them a heart as in Ezekiel 36:26, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

Those days ended but a permanent transaction had taken place in their hearts. Within a few short years they had finished their studies, but all felt called of God to give themselves to ministering to people full-time. They all came on staff with The Navigators. One became a leader in the U.S., one went to Zimbabwe, one to Zambia, and I went to Indonesia. Was it by coincidence? No! God had answered our prayers and given us a heart for people!

Not every believer is called or gifted for full-time ministry. Seeking God’s best does not mean becoming a full-time Christian missionary. But those who choose to live for the world to come will give themselves to serving people in this world whatever their vocation. They will have a heart for people because people are valuable to God. They will grow in their love for people as God forms His heart within them.

## Leaders and Love

In March 2003 I had the opportunity to interview Lorne Sanny, former International President of The Navigators, regarding the topic of loving leadership – What are its characteristics and methodologies? How do Kingdom leaders lead with love? The following are my notes from that insightful conversation.

### **Love means we freely accept others just as they are, not how we hope they will become.**

- Acceptance is a matter of the heart, not your mind
- People know whether you love/accept them or not; we have an innate ability to discern this

### **Love means we always seek their highest good for the person over the mission**

- This does not mean we tolerate sin in another
- It does mean we speak the truth to them – John 8 (woman caught in adultery)
- It does mean that we forgive them

### **Love means we think of others before we think of ourselves (Philippians 2:3-4)**

- When returning from a trip, take a walk around the office and reconnect with your co-workers; not to tell them about your recent experiences, but to find out how they are doing

### **Love means we always seek to affirm and encourage others**

- Public affirmation from a leader goes a long, long way
- “Praise in public, correct in private”
- “God never gives a hard message to a hard heart to deliver.”
- Affirmation is like making deposits into a bank account, for we know that we will have to make withdrawals from that relational account (corrections or rebuke) in the future

### **Love means we give people feedback on how they are doing**

- Annual work reviews = ‘progress’ reviews, not ‘performance’ reviews
  - ‘Progress’ implies work is still in progress and we can affect the outcome
- With my own team sought to check on their progress every 3 months
- Reviews are based on agreed upon goals, outcomes, or “focus items”
  - Some personalities don’t like ‘goals’ – use the term “focus items” instead
- Have them evaluate their progress themselves by asking questions
  - Many are harder on themselves than we would be, so we can affirm them and bring a true perspective to them
- “Is there anything I can do or you need from me to help you accomplish your goals?”
- End the reviews by asking, “Is there anything else you want to say to me?”
- Don’t use progress reviews to correct problems! Do that as a regular supervisory function.
- Romans 14:17-18 is a good outline for progress reviews

## Be a Life-long Learner

Nothing so stifles a leader as an attitude of, “I already know that” or “Yes, I mastered that some time ago.” This attitude of “I’ve arrived” has its roots in pride and destroys one’s ability lead effectively.

God does not take the sin of arrogance lightly. Three times (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5) He says that He opposes (actively works against) the proud person. We will learn humility, either by humbling ourselves or having God humble us. The choice is ours as to the means.

The learning leader is humble enough to admit that one never arrives. Yes, we may gain altitude in some areas, but it’s all relative. Altitude compared to what or whom is what’s important. Comparing ourselves to others often leaves us feeling good about ourselves. But comparing ourselves to Christ should quickly remind us of how far we have to go. Look up, not around!

Good leaders are learners. They are not learned in the eyes of the world necessarily (Luke 10:21, 1 Corinthians 1:26), but they are ever striving to develop in areas of character, skills, and abilities; seeking to maximize their potential impact and for Christ. They set the pace for others in their personal pursuit of God and their service for Him, always sensing how far they need to go, not how far they’ve come.

From where do leaders learn? There are multiple sources, but let me suggest two. One primary source for learning is from those who are older. Job 8:8-9 says, “Ask the former generations and find out what their fathers learned, for we were born only yesterday and know nothing.” From what older person are you mining their years of experience and wisdom?

A second important source for a leader’s learning is from observing what goes on around us. In Proverbs 24:32 we read, “I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw.” Rushing from one thing to the next greatly hinders the learning one can do from observing. We must take the time to stop, think and reflect. When was the last time you just took some extended time to think about life, your family, your ministry or some other important issue?

Learning leaders are also passing on what they learn to others. Jesus and Paul modeled this well. Jesus learned and passed it on to his friends, “I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15). Paul says to Timothy, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2). Are you passing along what you are learning? Who looks to you for coaching, mentoring or discipling help?

Maintaining a learning mode throughout life continually increases our effectiveness for Christ as

leaders. But what we learn is not for us only. We can use it to help others. Let others benefit from the things God is teaching you. Perhaps we should begin by sharing more with our friends, spouses, and children.

## Learning from Our Mistakes

King David had a great idea... let's bring the ark of God back to Jerusalem to the place it rightfully belonged. So, he consulted with his leadership and they all agreed that this was a wonderful idea. Plans were formulated and put into action.

They obtained a new ox cart - certainly, this would be God-honoring. We can't have the ark of God riding in a previously used cart! A great procession was planned to bring the ark to its new home. People gathered along the procession route and the celebration began. What a wonderful day!

Things went well until the oxen stumbled and Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark and God struck him dead. As you can imagine, this threw a cloud of gloom over the entire event and David decided to end the procession, being frustrated with God for his failure to accomplish his wonderful plan (see 1 Chronicles 13).

Sometime later David is now well-established as king in Jerusalem and he once again remembers that the ark of God is residing in a tent outside of Jerusalem. With this idea in mind, he again confers with his leaders as before. But note the difference. He acknowledges that previously they had forgotten to 'inquire of the Lord' as to their plans.

This time they realized that the ark is to be carried only by the Levites and that it is to be carried with poles inserted along the sides of the ark. Note what he says, "Because you did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule." (1 Chronicles 15:13 ESV) On the second attempt the procession goes to completion with great rejoicing and the ark arrives at the city of David.

David had learned from his previous mistake. He acknowledges that they did not consult the Lord on their first attempt and they ended in failure. As leaders we all make mistakes, just like David. Key questions are, "Do we learn from our mistakes? Do we adjust and continue to move ahead? Do we own our previous mistakes?"

How about you? Made any mistakes recently? Welcome to humanity!  
Now, what are you learning from them?

## The Treasures of Darkness

The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. Exodus 20:21 ESV

What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. Matthew 10:27 ESV

I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. Isaiah 45:3 ESV

Note where Moses had to go to meet with God – into the ‘thick darkness.’ What a description! Try to imagine the difference between simply being in the dark and being in the ‘thick’ darkness. Sounds quite foreboding doesn’t it?

It would seem that the adjective ‘thick’ implies something that can be felt, not just seen. It is a darkness that is total, overwhelming and scary. Perhaps it’s similar to being in a large underground cave where all lights extinguished. It’s an eerie feeling for sure when you can’t see your hand in front of your face. But it is in this kind of absolute darkness of soul that God invites us to meet with Him and He speaks to our innermost character.

Our tendencies are to run away from and recoil from the darkness. We plead with God to remove it or shine some light within. But it is in this foreboding darkness of soul that the Lord speaks, for He has our undivided attention with no other sensory distractions other than our own thoughts. It is in the ‘thick darkness’ that we can hear the still, small voice of God piercing through into our hearts and bringing comfort, hope and assurance.

When we hear His voice, we begin to realize that He intends to use our darkness to bring new life within us. And He gives a new life message that will transform us forever when we exit the darkness. It is a platform of influence that we never would have had, had we not experienced Him in the darkness. We exit the darkness with a new-found strength and message that He intends for us to share. “What I tell you in the dark, say in the light...”

Therefore, do not shrink back from the darkness you may be facing. Embrace it. Plunge into it. For in this darkness you will find the treasures of God Himself and the life-changing messages that He will give you. He promises, “I will give you the treasures of darkness...”

He will see you through the darkness into the light. When you exit, you will be forever changed more into His image than when you entered. And He will use you as His instrument in ways you had not dreamed or imagined.

“When my schoolroom is darkened, I see most.” Charles Spurgeon

## **Beware of the Root of Bitterness**

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled... Hebrews 12:15 (ESV)

Life will bring wounds and hurts from others, even those we love and who love us. It's the nature of the fall and the curse that we now live under. Though Kingdom people have been saved by God's grace and mercy, we are still people in process, being conformed into the image of Christ daily. To expect to never hurt or be hurt-wounded by another, even those who are followers of Christ, is unrealistic and only setting ourselves up for great disappointment.

When wounded by another we have a choice to make. We can choose to forgive the offending party or we can harbor this wound, cultivate it, letting it take root in our souls. This wound now becomes a 'generalized infection' within us and poisons our life. Someone has said, "Harboring bitterness is like drinking poison thinking it will hurt the other person." How foolish of us, yet many still hang onto past memories and hurts, dwelling on them and letting these control our emotional well-being.

God's solution for relational hurts and wounds is forgiveness. It frees the offended person from the bitterness and the pain of the offense. While we may not be able to forget the offense, the pain of it is removed. Much like a physical scar can bring to mind past injuries, when the scar it touched there is no associated pain.

The only way possible to be free from past wounds is to forgive others. And the only possible way to forgive others is to first, fully understand how much we have been forgiven. Jesus reminds us that those who have been forgiven much love much (see Luke 7:47).

Is there some offense that you have been clinging to that has taken root and bears toxic fruit in your heart? Release that offense to God and forgive the offender, knowing that you have been forgiven a much, much larger debt for your sin against God Himself.

... and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 8:32 ESV

## How a Leader Acts - DO

Using the simple outline of Know – Be – Do – Reproduce we can categorize the important functions of this vast subject called leadership. We now turn our attention to the “how” of Kingdom leading – What a Leader Does. Here are some introductory principles and practices for how to lead well.

### Leading and your family

Love your kids and help them love God and God’s work

- Involve your children in prayer for people in the ministry
- When you have people in your home, ask your guests to tell stories to your kids about their walk and experiences with God
- Give your kids responsibilities at ministry activities, when appropriate – it can be as simple as greeting people at the door or serving refreshments
- Seek to build a positive identity and a sense of ‘being special’ because they are children of parents who serve the King and advance His Kingdom
- Avoid building a child-centered home – see Mark 10:29-30; Luke 18:29-30

Offices in the home can create unusual stresses

- Set ‘office hours’ when working at home and work during these times as planned
- Don’t let work invade your personal and family time; leave work and ‘go home’
- Set boundaries with your spouse regarding expectations and respect each other’s ‘turf’
- Put in a good day’s work each day; discipline yourself to focus and stay on task

### Leading meetings

Learn to lead a better meeting!

- Meetings are a part of organizational leadership, so learn to lead good ones!
- An outline for meeting agendas is that good meetings have 3 parts – ‘business,’ development, relationships
- Remember that ‘business’ will expand to crowd out all other agenda items
- Leading your team in development does not mean you have to be the development expert – bring intentionality to this function and lead your team in being developed as leaders

Have fun together with your team!

- Leadership should be fun! Don’t be so serious all the time!
- If you are not creative at having fun, ask a team member to help you

Set realistic agendas and schedule with a margin when you plan your meeting

- Margin in meeting agendas allows for relationship building and fun
- For multi-day meetings - be sensitive to time zone changes for those who traveled, schedule regular breaks and free time for recreation and connection with family, recognize individual

sleep patterns (individual rooms for those who snore), and personal dietary needs (healthy snacks and meals)

### **Increase your leadership capacity with an administrative assistant**

- A good assistant can greatly increase your capacity to lead; indirect leadership roles with added responsibilities often require added administrative support
- Know what you need and want in an assistant before selecting an assistant
  - Do you want someone to keep you organized or are you well-organized and you want someone to help implement your ideas and plans?
- Be sure your assistant knows your appointment calendar and schedule so that they can assist others who may need to contact you
- Keep an on-going Action List with both short-term and long-term items to be focused on and scheduled when appropriate
  - Review your upcoming calendar and Action List regularly with your assistant and update or adjust it as needed

### **Additional ‘How To’ Leadership Ideas**

- Seek to “ruthlessly eliminate hurry” from your daily life and schedule
- Prepare to transition your leadership well – be intentional in the transition and have a succession plan; don’t wait to be forced to transition your leadership in a crisis
- Operate with “Planned Neglect” – you can’t do it all now, some things will have to wait; give your attention and effort the most important things now and intentionally wait to focus on other important items in the future

## Strategic Leadership and Priorities

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 10:5-6  
ESV

Does not God love the whole world? Of course He does! Did not the mission of the Messiah, Jesus, include taking the Good News to both Jew and Gentile (non-Jew)? Of course it did! (see Isaiah 49:6) Then, why did Jesus restrict His apostles from going to the Gentiles and Samaritans (half-Jewish and half-Gentile)? It was a matter of priorities and strategy.

At this time, Jesus' priority was training the Twelve and preparing them for the ultimate mission to reach the world. But that would be over two years later. For now, the priority was to send the Twelve in pairs for a ministry training exercise to develop their confidence and trust in Him. Later He would send them and all of His disciples on a mission to make disciples of all the peoples of the world (see Matthew 28:18-20).

They needed an audience that would be somewhat familiar, so He sent them to the villages of Galilee. And yet, it would still be by faith, as He restricted their provisions on what they were to take. It would be by faith in that not every village they entered would welcome them. It would be by faith because He was not with them.

The priority for the moment was a faith training, practical ministry exercise. His current need was preparing the Twelve, knowing that within a relatively short time He would expand their mission to include all the peoples of the world.

Short-term goals can seem contradictory to long-term mission objectives if we don't understand strategy. Jesus' strategy included training these future leaders of a world-wide mission and thus He focused their ministry efforts within Galilee for the short term.

Accomplishing our God-given mission requires Kingdom leaders to develop and execute a strategy to accomplish their overall task. This strategy will need to be sequenced and prioritized within a timeline. Jesus demonstrated this and in His prayer before the crucifixion when He said, "I have completed the work you gave me to do." (see John 17:1ff).

Kingdom leaders who have a clear mission and vision, will also need a strategy to accomplish both. Remember that your strategy must be sequenced and prioritized - you can't do everything all at once.

"Mile by mile, it's a trial. Inch by inch, it's a cinch!"

## **Lead from Your Strengths!**

Every job description will be shaped by the leader around their individual strengths. No JD is so tight that one can't bring their best into how it will be executed. Thus, the same role will be done differently by two different individual leaders.

A key mantra for success is, "Operate in your strengths and staff to your weaknesses." Now this implies: 1) you are self-aware of your own strengths and weaknesses, and 2) you are able to recruit others with complimentary gifting and strengths. If, for example, you are in a start-up or pioneering situation, then one may not have the luxury of delegating to others for there may not be anyone to delegate to.

In 1 Timothy 4:14 (NIV 1984), Paul exhorts his son in the faith, Timothy: "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you." Paul encourages Timothy to use his gift (a potential strength) in the exercise of his leadership. And later in 2 Timothy 1:6 (NIV 1984) he says, "... I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands." That is, Timothy was to continually develop the gift (turn it into a strength) that was given him. Our gifting and abilities need to be maximized and grown to strengths for the exercise of our leadership.

It has been said, "You are to concentrate on the depth of your message and God will take care of the breadth of your influence." Seek to grow in your gifting and turn potential into realized strength. Deepen the messages that God has given you. Put a sharp point on them and then wait on the Lord to give you the platform for their delivery. His ways and timing for platforming leaders are often different from ours and thus, it will be a walk of faith as you trust him for that influence with others.

Do you know your spiritual gifts? What are your natural abilities? Are you developing or neglecting these? Are you shaping your current job description around those abilities and gifts that the Lord has given you to steward?

## Teams and Teamwork

It is evident that no one individual has all that is necessary to bring the best leadership to any Kingdom enterprise. Because no one leader can do everything well, we must lead with a team. Good teams are hard to come by, but when you experience one you will never forget it. Remember, when talking about leadership and teams, we mean a leader and his/her team, *not* team leadership.

By 'team' we mean: a group of people who are committed to accomplishing a mission and need each other in order to accomplish the task. Following are some introductory thoughts related to teams and teamwork. Team synergy comes from both *group think* concerning individual team member's portfolio items and *group work* on specific tasks for a limited time. Good team leaders must: 1) Listen, 2) Learn, 3) Love and 4) Lead.

### New Testament Leadership Team Models

1. Elder model - a local team for oversight and direction of assemblies of believers
2. Apostolic model – Jesus and His team of 12 — a mobile training, development team
3. Apostolic model – Paul and his missionary team — a mobile task, mission-oriented team

### Leadership Team Models in the Great Commission

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV

#### Apostle / Evangelist

Go to the nations....

Paul

mobile

sodality

para-local church

#### Shepherd-Teacher / Elder

...teach them everything

Philemon / Archippus

local

modality

local church

May God give you the special privilege of leading a team of other leaders to accomplish His mission for His glory!

## Leadership Team Member Responsibilities

Leadership team members have a unique relationship one to another. They are often thrown together and told to function as a team because the leader chose them. But they were chosen individually, most often without much say as to who else joined the team. We may or may not be “naturally” drawn to our teammates. Though we are united in our mission and vision, our personalities, backgrounds, or interests may present challenging obstacles to our effectiveness as a leadership team.

How do we relate to one another on a leadership team? What are our responsibilities to each other? No doubt you could list several, but let me suggest two.

In John 13:1-17 Jesus models the attitude of a servant before his leadership team. After finishing washing their feet, in vv. 13-14 he says, “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.” Jesus’ instructions to “wash one another’s feet” were given to explain how the members of His leadership team were to relate to each other. They were to serve each other, choosing to meet the needs of fellow team members rather than promote or serve one’s own self interests. As members of a leadership team we have a responsibility to serve one another, helping each other become a success in our individual responsibilities.

In Acts 20:28 we see another team member responsibility. Paul had gathered the Ephesian elders for some final words and he reminds them, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.” We often neglect the first part of this passage. The members of the Ephesian leadership team were to “keep watch over [them]selves.”

Yes, I am my brother’s keeper! We have a responsibility to one another on our leadership team to ensure we continue to walk with God, fulfill our family responsibilities and fulfill our leadership calling. Spiritual leadership requires the utmost in Christlike character and we are to “keep watch” on each other to ensure that we do not allow any moral compromise as we fulfill our duties.

‘Serving each other’ and ‘keeping watch over each other’ are two of our responsibilities as leadership team members. Let’s not be so focused on the outward mission responsibilities that we neglect the responsibilities to each other on our team.

## Your First Leadership Team Meeting

There is only one “first meeting” when forming your leadership team—you won’t be able to have a “do-over.” Therefore, you will want to ensure that it is a success. It will set the tone and pattern for future team meetings and if done well, will create an environment for great teamwork. Here are some practical ideas for launching your team at that first meeting. Some ideas may fit your team and some not. So, take these ideas like you would eat fish - enjoy the meat and discard the bones!

- 1) First meetings are important as they set tone, expectations, patterns, and first impressions that are lasting. Giving good thought to ensure that it is done very well is essential. Come prepared and plan the time well.
- 2) As a general outline for all leadership team meetings (especially your first one) think of 3 parts: business, development, and relationships! Equal time need not be spent on all three, but try to ensure that every time together you address these three areas. The business will always get the most attention as teams form to accomplish a task. The business items often come with deadlines that demand our attention. Development and relationship components (building community and esprit de corps) are easy to shortcut or minimize their importance. But to ignore these will be detrimental to long-term effectiveness and impact as a team.
- 3) The development part of team meetings should be related to some aspect of leadership and can be varied – from interacting over a bible passage, article, book or movie you watch together and then talk about lessons demonstrated, etc. When leading a team of busy leaders, be wise in how much prep beforehand you can expect of the members as all are very busy. For example, instead of reading and discussing an entire book together, choose one chapter to read and discuss together.
- 4) Relationships - For those team members who are more task oriented, this aspect of our meetings can seem like a waste of valuable time. Remember, just because you meet together does not mean that you are building trust relationships on the team! Use variety and know your team as you seek to build deeper relationships together. It is only by building deep friendships that go beyond just being on a task-oriented team. By building trust through shared experience we will be able to create a safe place where we can be real with one another. The transparency and vulnerability that you model as a team leader will help create this for others on the team.
- 5) When you think about these three aspects of every meeting, you realize that you will need to plan enough time to have a relaxed pace. Our tendency is to schedule the business agenda and neglect time for development and relationships. With multi-day meetings begin each day by sharing the Word and praying together. This will help set a spiritual tone to your work. You can lead this time or ask other team members, always trying to make this time in the Word interactive. To deepen relationships, begin with each person giving a personal update on life and family – seeking to model the idea that we are important as people, not just the task that we do. Pray for each other during these times of sharing.
- 6) You are wise to define the purpose of the team as well as member expectations. What will this team seek to accomplish if all members contribute well? Don’t have a “hidden agenda” with the answers you have already decided upon. No doubt you’ll have some ideas in these areas, but if the team as a whole helps shape the outcomes, then all will own it together and be highly motivated to serve together.

7) It is very important to discuss how you will make decisions on the team. There are several standard decision-making models and you'll want to clarify how the team will operate as you go forward. I believe the biblical model is "a leader and their team," not "team leadership." Thus, with an experienced team of leaders, you will utilize a participative decision-making style for most daily leadership decisions. Remember that all decision-making models are appropriate at different times and situations. Discussing different decision-making models can be developmental for your team members and help them lead their own teams.

8) If you are setting future goals and plans in your first meeting, you want to ensure that the goals are balanced between being realistic, given where you are now, and faith influenced, having enough growth that they will require the hand of God and His blessing to see them accomplished. Having both aspects and holding them in a dynamic tension will enable you to recruit others to 'lay down their nets and come with you.'

You only have one 'first team meeting' – make it a good one!

And remember, don't eat the bones!

## How Many Apples in the Seed?

The question is not how many seeds are in the apple, but rather how many apples are in the seed? It's a matter of perspective and vision. Vision sees the potential of the many apples that can come from one seed that is planted and nurtured to the point of a mature tree. And not only one apple tree from that one seed, but true vision sees orchards of apple trees that can come from a single seed, given enough care and time.

Leaders with vision see the current reality and the future reality that they are seeking to create. They see what is and what is not yet. The future they see is seen by faith, knowing that unless God intervenes then it will not be realized.

Vision differs from dreams or fantasies. Vision can see how, by the grace and empowering of God, our current reality becomes the future. Dreams or fantasies hope for that future, but have no connection or pathway from the current present to the hoped-for future state.

Vision needs to be big enough to attract and recruit resources (people and money), but not so big that it is immediately dismissed by others because it seems impossible, outlandish or unattainable.

Vision casting is both art and science. What details to share when talking of our vision is the science of vision casting. We must include enough information to answer anticipated questions before they are asked. But we must not include so much detail that it bores those who might be interested. How leaders share their vision for the future is also an art. Sharing too much too soon can overwhelm some, while understating can lack sufficient motivation or inspiration to attract necessary resources.

Jesus cast vision when recruiting His initial four disciples – Andrew, Peter, James, and John. He had already spent a year with them (see John 1-4) getting to know them and they getting to know Him. They had visited His home, seen him change water into wine, observed Him interact with Samaritans and engage a Jewish leader, Nicodemus, in conversation about eternal life. Now He asks them to leave their vocation (fishing) and join Him as leaders in training. He lays out for them a vision of a future state when He says, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (Mark 1:14ff).

Did these men fully understand this vision? Probably not. But they did have enough context and understanding to make a very important decision. They left their home and current vocation to pursue Jesus and this vision together.

How's the clarity of your vision?

Can you share it in such a way that it is clear, concise and compelling?

## The Quality of a Leader's Vision

A leader needs to lead towards a vision of the future. A good leader does not need to be the one who creates the vision. In fact, creating a future vision may be best done with a leadership team. But once the vision is clear, team leaders are the primary communicators of the vision. These leaders must see more, see farther, and see more clearly than those they lead. Without clear vision a leader becomes one of the “blind leading the blind” and we settle for activity rather than accomplishment of God’s purposes.

When we say a leader needs to “see more,” what we intend is that a leader needs to be able to see the whole, not just the individual parts. They must be able to think and lead systemically, noting how one decision can impact the whole, not just the immediate parts. Much like a fine watch that has multiple interconnected gears, so too is leadership at an organizational level. One change can have ramifications at multiple levels. A leader with vision sees the immediate impact, but can also anticipate consequences on multiple levels.

The second quality of vision needed by a leader is the ability to “see farther” into the future. It is that gaze towards the horizon that sees what is coming before others and that prepares to take advantage of or protect others from this change. This vision truly needs to be bifocal – seeing what is up close and immediate as well as seeing what is coming towards us in the future. Many get so consumed by the immediate that they are taken by surprise by what arrives on their doorstep. Much like the approaching tsunami, when the water recedes away from the beach, we know that there is an impending wave coming. Rather than rushing towards the receding water to collect the newly exposed seashells, we move rapidly away from the beach to higher ground because we know what will soon follow.

A third quality of vision that good leaders need is to “see more clearly” the issues surrounding their leadership. This quality involves focus as well as depth perception. A focused vision is one that does not get distracted by the clamor around them. It is laser-like in intensity, knowing that this is a God-given mission done for His glory, knowing that we will be accountable to Him for our stewardship of it.

This clarity has depth perception in that it takes into consideration the various dimensions of any issue. A good leader is able to see multiple sides of an issue, weighing the pros and cons, embracing different points of view. They are willing to change their thoughts when confronted with weightier arguments or better thought-through positions. They desire to see the vision become a reality more than who is credited with accomplishing it.

Vision – don’t try to lead without it!  
Have you had your vision checked recently?

## **Vision Statements and Vision Casting**

Effectively casting vision never comes to an end. It is a discipline. Derwin Gray

Casting vision is one of the primary responsibilities of a leader and Kingdom leaders especially must align this vision with God's eternal purposes. In the quote above we are reminded that vision casting is an on-going process, not an event.

Vision is a statement about an unknown future that we see by faith. Vision statements usually have a time horizon of 5-10 years out in front of our current reality. Beyond 10 years it's difficult to have a clear vision due to the rapidity of change and the multitude of unexpected influences that can impact our vision outcomes.

Good vision statements have three common characteristics: they are clear, concise and compelling.

First, they must clear. That is, the vision must be clear enough to see the destination or outcome. An unclear vision makes it difficult for others to decide if they want to join with us or support it financially.

Secondly, vision statements must be concise. Vision statements that are too long or too complicated are not memorable or easily repeated. Conciseness takes effort to choose exactly the right words that convey enough to help others visualize where we are going, but not so wordy that it seems complicated or confusing.

Lastly, good vision statements are compelling. They demand a response from us. They capture our hearts and our heads. They raise our sights to the future and inspire us to act. They draw us to join in and help make that future vision a reality. They are easy to recruit to because they are big enough to allow room for many to join us.

Casting vision is a primary responsibility of the team leader. They are the primary mouthpiece for the vision. If they share an unclear vision, then those who hear will be even more unclear as they are forced to 'translate' what was said into their context.

Vision casting means repeating our vision again and again, for it goes in and out of focus for those we lead. Changing realities and 'glorious opportunities' can divert attention from what was once very clear, but now seems less important or even boring. Keeping the vision before those we lead is a discipline that we develop as we lead, always reminding them of 'why' and 'what' we are about.

Share your vision frequently! Invite others to join with you in making the faith statement a reality.

Vision – don't leave home without it!

## Go for the Blue on the Map!

Once our desired future state is clear, it is the leader's job to communicate this vision so that others can 'see' it along with them. Tom Clancy's book, *Into the Storm: A Study in Command* (page 504) provides a great illustration of vision casting by a leader. Gen. Freddie Franks was leading the VII Corps in Desert Storm and in the midst of the fog of war it became apparent that the final outcome was not clear. Gen. Franks provided needed clarity as described below.

"But I've been around tired troops, and these troops were tired... though clearly not down. They were running on fumes now, but they wanted to finish it. I could imagine what the troops who had fought all night felt like.

"As I looked at the map, a piece of blue representing the Persian Gulf was just visible at the far eastern map sheet. It caught my attention.

"Attack east," I told them. "*Go for the blue on the map.* That is what is bringing the ships to take us home when this is over. Go for that. Here!" I said, banging on the map. Not too military, but I wanted them—as clearly tired as they were—to have something to seize on to propel them forward another twenty-four hours. As Greg Fontenot was to tell me later, my remark 'Go for the blue on the map' got all the way to the battalion commanders, and maybe further."

Good vision is clear, concise and compelling. This incident of vision casting checks all the boxes. It galvanized people into action.

How's your vision? Can you communicate it clearly and concisely to others?

Where is the 'blue on your map?'  
Go for the blue on the map!

## Recruiting and Retaining the Best

General Colin Powell [Chairman (Ret.), Joint Chiefs of Staff] in his work, “A Leadership Primer” describes the following principle: “Organization doesn’t accomplish anything. Plans don’t accomplish anything either. Theories of management don’t much matter. Endeavors succeed or fail because of the people involved. Only by attracting the best people will you accomplish great deeds.”

How does a leader attract and recruit the best people to accomplish great things? Here are several thoughts:

1. Ask God to give you people to help you accomplish what He has asked you to do. People are a gift from Him. John 17:6
2. Have a clear and compelling vision that is big enough to grab someone’s attention, challenge their status quo and attract them to join you in making the vision a reality.
3. Recruit to vision, not activity!
4. Don’t be afraid to ask busy, competent people to join with you in making your vision come true. Be bold! James 4:2
5. Promise to lead and care for them well. And deliver on your promise.
6. Promise to develop them for contribution, not for role or title. Deliver on your promise.
7. Trust that God will sovereignly bring people across your path to help you. It is His enterprise and He is vested in its success. 1 Chronicles 12:22
8. Ask people to decide – does God want you with us or not? What does God want you to do with this decision?
9. Don’t let their decision linger with no deadline. Don’t rush it, but don’t let it drag on forever either. If they say no, then God has someone else better suited for your needs.
10. Celebrate the person’s response. If with you – great! If God has told them no to this offer – great! We only want what God wants for you, not what we want!

Are you asking God for the best possible people or are you simple looking for anyone with a pulse? Ask Him to give you His best!

## Don't Chase Leadership Fads

General Colin Powell [Chairman (Ret.), Joint Chiefs of Staff] in his work, “A Leadership Primer” describes the following principle: “Fit no stereotypes. Don’t chase the latest management fads. The situation dictates which approach best accomplishes the team’s mission.”

When one begins to focus on the subject of leadership you will notice that many are talking about the latest leadership book that they have read. Through these conversations certain phrases become part of our everyday leadership vocabulary – “get the right people on the bus,” “you have to think systems,” “change management,” “EQ,” “be proactive, instead of reactive” – the list is endless.

Now books and their contents are not necessarily bad (I write them myself), but it’s what we do with them that can make them helpful or harmful. We leaders can get very excited about a new idea or concept from a recent book. That quote or concept now becomes part of our everyday conversations and we spread that influence among those we lead or interact with indiscriminately. We do so without any sense of context or without thinking carefully about our audience. It has been said, “When all you have is a hammer, the whole world looks like a nail.”

A good leader stewards their influence wisely. While we may be helped by some thought from a recent read, we should ask ourselves, “Will this truly help this person? Is it appropriate for them or their leadership context?” If not, then keep quiet! Put yourself in their situation and ask yourself what they need to hear from you that fits them where they are in their context and stage of development.

Books come and go in their popularity. Few stand the test of time. Be careful not to be always chasing the latest leadership fads or what’s trendy. You will miss the timeless truths and wisdom that comes from the Lord. Yes, read leadership books and think about what you read. Don’t just accept it because it’s in print. Yes, read critically and compare what you read with the Bible.

The Bible is a Kingdom leader’s primary textbook on leadership. It contains ageless leadership principles and God’s wisdom. The Bible is cross-cultural and cross-generational. Always share thoughts and insights from God’s Word as the Holy Spirit helps you discern the need of those you are influencing. Listen carefully to Him and He will guide you and give you exactly the right words.

What have you been talking about recently. Is it a recent fad or what’s popular?  
Or have you been sharing with others God’s truths and His wisdom for leaders?  
Don’t just go along with the crowd. Lead from the Scriptures and into the Scriptures.

## Leaders and Assessment

Is assessment a Kingdom principle? Does God want His leaders to assess others? What's the difference between assessment and judgment? How can we give assessment to those we lead in a positive, developmental way?

Jesus sent out the Twelve and then upon their return they reported what they had done (Mark 6:30-31). The parables of the Talents (Matthew 25) and the 10 Minas (Luke 19) teach that we will give an account to God for our stewardship. Hebrews 13:17 reminds us that Kingdom leaders will give an account for their leadership. Paul gave feedback to the churches through his letters. Assessment is a Kingdom principle.

But we must not cross over from assessment to judgment. Jesus commands us not to judge others (Matthew 7:1-5) and Paul reminds us of the same (1 Corinthians 4:5). Judgment is passing a final, negative evaluation of another. It focuses on results observed and pre-supposes motives or matters of the heart that we cannot know. It implies making our personal standards normative for others (Romans 14:1-13). Only God can judge!

But as leaders who will give an account to God for our leadership, we are told to know well the condition of our flock (Proverbs 27:23). We must evaluate our flock to know if they are doing well. Assessment of those we lead focuses on their faithfulness to labor, not the only on results which are determined by God. Assessment is given to encourage growth and help measure progress and development. It has a desired positive impact on another with a willingness to be involved in helping to correct any shortcomings.

Assessment is more formal than feedback. It relates to mutually agreed upon standards or desired outcomes, deals with a work process, involves a commitment to help and provides accountability. Feedback is informal, does not need mutual goals, usually deals with an event, does not necessarily involve a commitment to help and provides perspective. Leaders assess; facilitators give feedback.

For assessment to be positive, we must begin with agreed upon outcomes. The one being assessed must know from the outset what will be evaluated at the end of the process. When the process is concluded, the leader bringing the assessment should seek to point out any positive outcomes initially. Negative assessment should be limited to one or two items at the most, focusing on those areas that are most important. As their leader, you should offer to help them correct these shortcomings in the future. Ask how you can help them succeed in their efforts or what they might need from you to help them achieve the agreed upon outcomes. Get involved! Bring resources to help them become a success.

Remember to assess, not judge. Seek to apply the Golden Rule of Leadership in your assessment of others, “Lead others the way you want to be led” (Luke 6:31).

## Your Leadership Wake

Henry Cloud has described what he calls the ‘leadership wake’ that all leaders leave behind them as they exercise their leadership. Just as a boat moving through the water leaves a wake (trace) behind it of two waves, so too leaders leave behind them the impact of their influence.

On one side of the leadership wake we have the ‘wave’ of mission or task. It is the reason we have a need for leaders – a mission or a task needs to be done. A leader is identified to help set a direction forward, align resources, cast vision and manage the work of people in order to accomplish the mission.

A Kingdom leader when looking behind them at one side of their personal leadership wake would hope to see mission after mission, task after task, accomplished, completed and finished for the glory of God. It is often the reputation of being a leader who gets things done that draws the attention of other leaders and encourages them to give you more responsibilities. The reward for good leadership is more responsibility!

But there is a second wave on the other side of the ‘leadership boat’ that is equally important for Kingdom leaders. That side of the wake is people. We want to see people thriving under our leadership influence, not just surviving their time with us. Too often we observe mission accomplished on one side and forget to look at the other side of the wake. Do we see people thriving or struggling? Are we creating a healthy and attractive environment where co-workers are operating in their strengths and growing in their contributions?

The good Kingdom leader is looking at both sides of their leadership wake. They take note of whether the job is accomplished and completed well. They are note whether people are thriving under their leadership. 360 reviews can be very revealing when direct reports and peers are given opportunity to evaluate leaders.

Much of Kingdom leadership is leading volunteers. And because this is a volunteer workforce, they have a vote on whether or not to serve under our leadership. Good leaders have volunteers who continue to ‘re-up’ to serve with them again and again. Volunteers can ‘vote with their feet’ and leave if we are not leaving a leadership wake that is healthy and attractive.

Have you looked behind you recently to check your leadership wake?

Are you looking at both sides of the boat?

## Watch Out for Glorious Opportunities!

One of leadership's greatest challenges is staying focused on the set direction you've intended. As a young staff member of The Navigators I can remember the exhortation from veteran leader, Leroy Eims, "There are two ways to miss the will of God: 1) sin and 2) glorious opportunities."

Hippolomy was a mythical, Greek young man who was in love with the beautiful Atlanta. Atlanta, in addition to her striking beauty, was also a gifted runner, but she had a cruel, sadistic character. Many young men became infatuated with her beauty and desired to marry her. Atlanta challenged these men to a foot race with two conditions. If the man won the race, she would marry him. But if he lost the race, he would pay with his life. Many a man tried and paid the ultimate price for his second place finish.

Hippolomy also became mesmerized by Atlanta's beauty and challenged her to a race. Shortly after the race began, he was lagging behind. Reaching into his tunic, he withdrew a golden apple and threw it in front of the streaking Atlanta. The flash of gold caught her eye and she stopped to pick up the golden fruit as Hippolomy raced by. She soon recovered and again moved ahead of him. Hippolomy pulled a second golden apple from his tunic and threw it in front of Atlanta who once again stopped to pick it up. As Hippolomy passed the crouching Atlanta, she realized that the race was nearing the finish and she recovered soon enough to regain a comfortable lead with a short distance to go.

Hippolomy retrieved the last of his golden apples from his tunic and rolled it ahead of Atlanta as she approached the finish. Atlanta was in a quandary; should she stop and pick up the apple or press for the finish line? She reasoned that she certainly could do both. So she stopped to place the golden fruit in her robe just as Hippolomy passed her and raced towards the finish. She recovered, but now with such a short distance left, she was not able to beat him. Hippolomy had won!

This is not an illustration on how to find a life partner! Rather, as you race through life, you will find the enemy of your soul rolling "golden apples" of opportunity, compromise and temptation in your path as you run your life's race.

Watch out!  
Stay on target!

## Leaders and Hard Work

God is a God who works. In the very first verse of the Bible, we find God at work—creating the universe. Jesus also modeled an industrious life and had a lot to say about work. He said, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and *to finish his work*” (John 4:34). He added, “*My Father is always at his work* to this very day, and *I, too, am working*” (John 5:17) and “As long as it is day, *we must do the work* of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work” (John 9:4).

Work is part of our God-given purpose and design. Because we are created in the image of God and because God is a God of work, we too were made to work. Adam was given work to do while in the Garden even before the Fall (Genesis 2:15). Only after the Fall did work become difficult because of the curse (Genesis 3:17-19).

Kingdom leaders work very hard and put in long hours. A leader’s work is never done. Expect it. Count on the fact that the easy work is done by others; it’s only the hard work that ends up on your desk or in your inbox. And because leaders work hard, a sense of God’s calling to our leadership role is so important. We must know that God has asked us to assume this leadership in order to embrace the increased demands.

The example of John Wesley, the great English pastor and theologian, is very challenging:

John Wesley averaged three sermons a day for fifty-four years preaching all told more than 44,000 times. In doing this he traveled by horseback and carriage more than 200,000 miles or about 5,000 miles a year.

His published works include a four-volume commentary on the whole Bible, a dictionary of the English language, a five-volume work on natural philosophy, a four-volume work on church history; histories of England and Rome; grammars on the Hebrew, Latin, Greek, French and English languages; three works on medicine, six volumes of church music; and seven volumes of sermons and controversial papers. He also edited a library of fifty volumes known as “The Christian Library.”

His daily schedule was as follows. He arose at 4:00 am and worked solidly through to 10:00 pm, allowing brief periods for meals. In the midst of all this work he declared, “I have more hours of private retirement than any man in England.”

At age 83, he was piqued to discover that he could not write more than 15 hours a day without hurting his eyes; and at the age of 86 he was ashamed to admit that he could not preach more than twice a day. In his 86th year, he preached to almost every shire in England and Wales and often rode thirty to fifty miles a day. (from *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations* by Paul Lee Tan).

Let’s work hard so that at the end of our lives we can say, along with Jesus, “*I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do*” (John 17:4).

## How's Your Leadership Posture?

**Posture** – a particular way of dealing with or considering something; an approach or attitude

As we lead into a particular context, we need to be self-aware of our leadership posture in the immediate context, that is, how we will act in this situation.

There are two general types of leadership postures that we can adopt – directive or supportive. Both approaches are appropriate with neither being better or more valuable. The context we are leading in will determine which of the two general postures is most appropriate for the situation.

The directive posture is often the one seen as the 'typical' leadership style. Here the leader is giving direction, making decisions and assigning responsibilities. They are out in front, setting the pace and visibly rallying the people towards the goal.

The directive posture is needed when one is leading an inexperienced team who are unclear on what to do or how to do it. This leadership posture is also necessary in a crisis environment. We don't want the ER doctor leading a brainstorm session with his staff when the patient is bleeding out from gunshot wounds!

The supportive posture is fitting when leading in a context where the team is more experienced. The team members know what to do and how to do it. They now need to know specifically from leadership what their contribution will be to the whole team effort. After delegating responsibilities, we then come alongside and help them solve problems, motivating and encouraging them, while continuing to let them bear the weight of their responsibility.

If a leader assumes a directive posture with a highly experienced team, he or she will stifle initiative, for team members soon realize that there is little room for independent action. Instead of feeling empowered, they feel controlled and micro-managed. If leading a team of volunteers, they will choose to 'vote with their feet' and leave. People want to be empowered, not controlled.

The key is knowing which posture to adopt when. We all have a natural, default posture given our design and gifting. But, if we only do what comes naturally or easy for us, we will miss bringing our best to those we lead.

Pray for discernment and self-awareness on which posture is needed and how to deliver it well.

How's your posture?

## Leading with Love

Jesus said in John 13:34-35, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” The one outstanding character quality for Kingdom leaders is that we are known as men and women who love Jesus and one another.

We are to know Him intimately, trust Him explicitly and grow more deeply in love for Him with each passing day. This knowledge of God and His love is not just cerebral, but a real-life experience. As we experience His love more and more, it is expressed in our lives and in how we relate to others.

Kingdom leaders who lead with love are helping others to experience the love of God and become followers of Him. These leaders have a commitment to multiplying their lives in the lives of others. They want to reproduce Jesus in the lives of as many as possible and thus help make disciples of all the nations. They are not satisfied with spiritually adding, they want to see generations spiritual workers for the harvest fields of the world.

If we are to see this become a reality, it must begin with us today. We reproduce after our own kind and will only reproduce who we are. An Indonesian proverb states, “The coconut doesn’t fall far from the tree.”

Here are some questions to consider:

1. Are you truly experiencing the love of Jesus in your own life? Is this love growing?
2. Are you manifesting God’s love in your relationships with your family and friends?
3. Are those you lead falling in love with Jesus and seeking to live lives that are pleasing to Him?
4. Are those you lead understanding the vision of spiritual generations?

This will take a commitment, a decision to love, even when others do things that are not lovable. This kind of love is more than a feeling; it is an act of the will.

May we love God with all we have and may we model the great and wonderful love of God to one another first and then to the world.

## The Power of Affirmation

A friend once reminded me that as a leader I may speak at a volume of 2, but I'm heard at a volume of 9! This can be very damaging to others if my criticism is too harsh. But it can be life-giving if I use my influence for affirmation.

In the book, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* by Hans Finzel, we find a section on affirmation. It is a good reminder on this important function in my leadership. Here are his summary points on affirmation for leaders:

### **Everyone thrives on affirmation and praise**

Affirmation encourages and motivates people much more than financial incentives. It does more to keep people fulfilled than fortune or fame could do. He comments that Christian organizations are sometimes the worst, because there is the attitude that: "They are working for the Lord," or "They should not look to the organization for affirmation, but to the Lord."

### **Leadership has as much to do with "caring" as with getting things done**

In the gospels, Jesus spent more time touching people and talking to them than in any other action. Jesus was not primarily task-oriented, even though He knew He had only three years to train twelve men to carry on the movement that would change the world. Touching wounds amid the unbearable pressure to perform tasks – that was the model of our Lord Jesus.

### **We wildly underestimate the power of the tiniest personal touch of kindness**

It doesn't always have to be a "big" event to affirm people. He gives an example from Tom Peters who shares about a former boss who took 15 minutes (max) at the end of each day to jot a half-dozen paragraph-long notes to people who'd given him time during the day or who'd made an insightful comment during a meeting, etc. He was dumbfounded by the number of recipients who subsequently thanked him for thanking them.

### **Learn to read the varying levels of affirmation your people need**

Obviously, different people require different doses and different kinds of affirmation. The key seems to be that it needs to be genuine not "setting me up to get something from me later," and not canned. (i.e. everyone gets the same affirmation letter without any personal touch).

When was the last time you intentionally affirmed someone?

Is affirmation a regular part of your leadership communication?

Have you created a 'culture of critique' or a 'culture of affirmation' around your leadership?

## Pay Attention to Morale!

Morale is the greatest single factor in successful warfare.

Dwight Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*

Leaders who neglect the morale of those they lead will pay a big price and lose much momentum in the mission by just assuming that all is well. Here's several thoughts on how to maintain good morale.

Never underestimate the importance of your leadership presence. Just showing up with those we are leading does a great deal for their morale. Being with them, paying individual attention to them, goes a long way to keeping morale high. And when we visit, ask them questions about what they are learning, what the Lord has been teaching them or what things we can be praying for them. And when we do ask them, note their answers and be sure to pray over their requests. If possible, follow up with them in the future. Our personal attention will mean a lot.

“Loose lips sink ships” – this phrase originated during WW2 to remind all to beware of unguarded talk. So too for leaders who carelessly talk about things that breed distrust or fear in the minds of those they lead. Think about what you are saying and guard your lips on topics that can distract or create undue fear of the future. Rather, use your words to point people to Christ, our hope in Him and His promise to see us through and never leave us.

Rumors spread like wildfires and when any unfounded rumor comes to your attention address it fully and quickly. Don't assume that it will just die on its own. Rumors have ways of growing into wildfires of fear and can create full-blown panic if not addressed.

When there is a lack of communication from leadership, people tend to think the worst. This can be true of an individual or a group. Make it a habit to regularly keep those you lead informed.

Affirm, affirm, affirm!! Your words carry weight – for better or worse. You will be quoted and remembered for what and how you speak. Use this reality to benefit others! Don't flatter, but affirm! Find someone doing something right and tell them about it!

Do you know the morale of those you lead?

Are you out among them?

Are they hearing from you regularly?

## **It's Courage that Counts!**

Success is not final; failure is not fatal;  
it is the courage to continue that counts.

Winston Churchill

Kingdom leaders are called to be courageous in their decisions as the times in which we lead are filled with danger. Threats abound and it is tempting to shrink back, not wanting to be thought of as 'extreme,' try to fit in and just keep hoping that things will improve over time.

Today requires leaders of courage who will stand in the gap and face down a cultural tide that is increasingly hostile to the Kingdom of God. Below are several key principles for growing in courage.

1. Let your faith in God give you courage to do His will  
(Isaiah 12:2, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Ephesians 3:12, Philippians 1:20, Hebrews 3:6)

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold... 2 Corinthians 3:12 (ESV)

2. There can be blessings for those of us that act with courage in God's will  
(Hebrews 10:34-35)

But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded.  
2 Chronicles 15:7 (ESV)

3. Have courage when facing idols, false prophets and enemies, because they are nothing compared to God  
(Deuteronomy 18:22, Psalm 56:3-4, Isaiah 41:22-24, Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:4-5)

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31 (ESV)

Be courageous because God is in control of all things. Matthew 10:29-31

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:6-7 (ESV)

Are you boldly trusting Him who holds the world in His hands?  
Or are you shrinking back because the threats seem large and the potential consequences unthinkable?

Be bold! Be courageous!

## Leaders and Crisis

Life and leadership bring crisis moments whether we are expecting them or not. They just happen! This reality should prepare us to address them when they show up. But we are often taken by surprise when a crisis interrupts our plans. Crises are not something to be dreaded, but rather embraced.

The following are several thoughts on how to face up to your next leadership crisis.

1. Adjust your attitude! This current crisis is an opportunity for personal growth as a leader as you address this latest ‘disaster.’ Rather than fearing this crisis, embrace it and look for the Lord to help you, not only conquer the problem, but also turn this into a hidden blessing.
2. Move towards it now! It will not solve itself! If ignored, it will probably grow worse, bigger, more ominous, or ripple out to influence more people. Just as David ran towards Goliath (see 1 Samuel 17:48), move towards this threat and engage!
3. Do not delegate your problems to someone else on the team. Others can ‘smell’ cowardice or unwillingness to deal with something that is messy.
4. While not delegating the crisis to another, loop in others for help. Continue to run point on the crisis, but by bringing in others for help, they too will grow from the experience and their contributions will often help bring about a better solution than if you handled it all yourself.
5. Look for the best solution to the problem, not just the quickest or easiest. One practical discipline that I have tried to develop in this area of problem solving is to force myself to come up with several possible solutions, not just one. But doing this I am often pushing myself to think more deeply or broadly to different, more creative ways to solve the issue. The final action is often some combination of several possible solution scenarios.
6. Expect God to help you. He has promised to never leave you or forsake you (Matthew 28:20). Look to Him in the midst of seeking a way forward. The prayer of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:12 is instructive, “Lord... we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”
7. When the crisis abates, and it will, be sure to give thanks for deliverance from the current mess. An ungrateful spirit is discouraging to others serving with you and revealing about our hubris, communicating we were the ones who really solved the issue.

Crises come and crises go.

You either in the midst of one right now or one is coming soon. Get ready!  
One person’s crisis is another person’s ‘opportunity.’

## Crisis and Opportunity

“For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Esther 4:14 ESV

Times of crisis do not make leaders, but they do reveal them. If there ever was a time for courageous, wise leadership, now is the time!

With the viral pandemic gripping people’s attention, many are being reminded of their mortality and vulnerability. School schedules have drastically changed and major sporting events or seasons are cancelled or postponed indefinitely. Large public gatherings including worship services have been removed from our calendars, at least for a while. With the turmoil in the financial markets and threat to personal health, things that once were sources of personal security are stripped away. During previous financial downturns some would say, “Well, at least I have my health.” Now even that is under siege. People are feeling very, very vulnerable and insecure.

Into this breach step Kingdom leaders with the answer everyone so desperately needs. It is for such a time as this that we have faith in the One who knows the end from the beginning. It is in times as this that we need to be reminded of the hope that lies beyond this life. This is not to say that we adopt a fatalistic attitude – what will be will be. No, we must be wise as we go about our daily routines. But our confidence is not in our hand washings or social distancing, rather it is in the Lord Jesus! Kingdom leaders point their friends to the One who holds the future in His hands.

This crisis atmosphere is also an opportunity to advance the gospel. Those who do not know the Lord have little resource to fall back on for hope and comfort. We have the answer! Anticipate the Lord creating daily opportunities for you to point others to the One who can give them the security they long for and desperately need. Be bold and be sensitive to the leading of His Spirit.

“Be strong and courageous...” the Lord told Joshua. (Joshua 1:6 ESV)  
Like him, you came to the Kingdom for such a time as this!

## Facing the Black Death!

In 1527, the Black Death with a mortality rate over 50% arrived in Wittenberg, Germany. Many fled the city, but Martin Luther and his pregnant wife stayed to minister to the sick and frightened people. Other friends in the city who lost family members moved into Luther's house for mutual support and encouragement.

There was a difference of opinion among church leaders on whether to stay or flee the plague. All looked to Luther for advice. The following is an edited version of his guidance titled, *Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague*. Many of his thoughts ring true for Kingdom leaders today in the midst of our own viral pandemic.

“To begin with, some people are of the firm opinion that one need not and should not run away from a deadly plague. Rather, since death is God’s punishment, which he sends upon us for our sins, we must submit to God and with a true and firm faith patiently await our punishment. They look upon running away as an outright wrong and as lack of belief in God. Others take the position that one may properly flee, particularly if one holds no public office...

“From what has been said we derive this guidance: We must pray against every form of evil and guard against it to the best of our ability in order not to act contrary to God, as was previously explained. If it be God’s will that evil come upon us and destroy us, none of our precautions will help us. Everybody must take this to heart: first of all, if he feels bound to remain where death rages in order to serve his neighbor, let him commend himself to God and say, “Lord, I am in thy hands; thou hast kept me here; thy will be done. I am thy lowly creature. Thou canst kill me or preserve me in this pestilence in the same way as if I were in fire, water, drought or any other danger.

“If a man is free, however, and can escape, let him commend himself and say, “Lord God, I am weak and fearful. Therefore I am running away from evil and am doing what I can to protect myself against it. I am nevertheless in thy hands in this danger as in any other which might overtake me. Thy will be done. My flight alone will not succeed of itself because calamity and harm are everywhere. Moreover, the devil never sleeps. He is a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44) and tries everywhere to instigate murder and misfortune...

“In the same way we must and we owe it to our neighbor to accord him the same treatment in other troubles and perils, also. If his house is on fire, love compels me to run to help him extinguish the flames. If there are enough other people around to put the fire out, I may either go home or remain to help. If he falls into the water or into a pit, I dare not turn away but must hurry to help him as best I can. If there are others to do it, I am released. If I see that he is hungry or thirsty, I cannot ignore him but must offer food and drink, not considering whether I would risk impoverishing myself by doing so. A man who will not help or support others unless he can do so without affecting his safety or his property will never help his neighbor. He will always reckon with the possibility that doing so will bring some disadvantage and damage, danger and loss. No neighbor can live alongside another without risk to his safety, property, wife or child. He must run the risk that fire or some other accident will start in the neighbor’s house and destroy him bodily or deprive him of his goods, wife, children and all he has.

“... You ought to think this way: “Very well, by God’s decree the enemy has sent us poison and deadly offal. Therefore I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air,

administer medicine, and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance infect and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, He will surely find me and I have done what He has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely, as stated above. See, this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.”

The Lord promises to guide and direct us along paths we have not walked (Isaiah 42:16). We can count on Him when all else fails.

May the Lord give each of us wisdom from above as we navigate the storm.

## A Black Swan Event

**Black Swan Event** = an unpredictable or unforeseen event; typically one with extreme consequences

Up until the late 1600's naturalists assumed that all swans were white. However, in 1697 the Dutch explorer Willem de Vlaminck discovered black swans in Australia. This unexpected event upended assumed paradigms and profoundly changed zoology in the modern world.

Today, our English vocabulary has co-opted this experience to coin the phrase, 'black swan event' where something very unexpected happens that has huge ramifications. One can imagine how the terrorist's attacks of 9/11/01 were a 'black swan event.' It would also seem that the Covid-19 pandemic is another one.

These events are unprecedented and human wisdom fails to adequately address them because worldly wisdom is founded upon previous experience. When there is no prior experience to fall back upon (think - unprecedented), at best we draw from parallel experiences or insights to deal with a completely new situation.

But Kingdom leaders have a second and more reliable source of wisdom for leading in turbulent times – wisdom that comes from above - godly wisdom. Young and old alike may possess God's wisdom, for it is a gift. James 1:5 promises that those who ask for it will receive it. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." (ESV) We desperately need this kind of wisdom during this viral pandemic!

With many traditional forms of ministry being taken away (i.e. group gatherings large and small), new virtual gatherings (online video conferences) are rapidly becoming the norm. Life-to- life discipling still continues, but we now connect via computer or smartphone instead of in person. The old mantra of 'form follows function' is proving true as new ministry forms emerge to meet our functional needs. It is a very new day!

As old ways are swept away by the raging torrent of rapidly changing events, we must look to Him for help and the ability to meet the demands of our new situation. These events have not taken Him by surprise. In fact, He is orchestrating all for His good purposes and for the advancement of the Kingdom among the peoples of the world.

The headlines and news leads shout woe and sadness. But God's work is often unseen and quiet in the midst of the storm. We keep our eyes steadfastly on Him as we navigate the storm.

... And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith... Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

## A Time for Reflection

Selah = a pause or intermission; an encouragement to reflect upon what has just been said; used 71 times in the Psalms and three times in Habakkuk

Kingdom leaders step off of the rapidly moving conveyor of their life in order to gain insight into their own situation. It is good to pause and reflect upon what was and what will be. Just as the Psalmist encourage a pause in singing with the word, 'selah,' we too need times of pause and reflection to gain God's perspective on our life and leadership. It is through reflection that we can find objectivity and clarity for the overarching, macro-movements of our lives.

Kingdom leaders are often too busy to stop and reflect upon their lives and leadership. We always have more things to do and people to see. We take one item off of our do-list and add three more! Who has time to stop and think?

*Today... now* is the time to stop and reflect upon who you are becoming and what you are doing! Your personal diary, journal or devotional notebook can be of great help to look back through and observe themes or topics that Lord has been addressing in you. Here are some questions to get you started in this reflection time.

Are you pleased with your own personal spiritual walk? More importantly, is Jesus pleased? How's that margin in your life? Are you living and leading from an overflow? How's your family doing? Are you paying the price to have the marriage you committed to on your wedding day? Are you investing deeply in your children and grandchildren, knowing that the years for significant influence are rapidly passing you by?

What fears are you trying to ignore related to your leadership? Are you leading with faith and courage? Is your mission and vision focused or foggy? Do you have a team that is unified and empowered? Are you accomplishing the mission that you intended or has it become diverted?

These and many more questions are helpful for taking stock of where you are today and where you need to be/go tomorrow. Use this time for reflection and refocus as you start a new year full of new hope and new beginnings.

Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah  
Psalm 32:6-7 ESV

## Wise Travel and the Kingdom Leader

For many leaders, one of the consequences of increased leadership responsibilities is more travel away from home. This increased ‘away time’ puts added stress on family responsibilities, as well as local and routine commitments. How to wisely handle this travel and optimize it for all involved is key to becoming an effective leader. Here are some practical suggestions to consider as you enter a new season of increased leadership travel.

1. The first question to ask is, “Why am I making this trip? Is it truly essential that I go or could someone else represent me? Could what I hope to accomplish be handled via phone or video conference call?” Maybe you don’t have to make this trip!
2. When booking air travel, have you allowed enough time for the seemingly inevitable delays in arrivals, departures or connections? Booking too tightly increases stress load and decreases enjoyment if you are stressed due to long security lines or running from gate-to-gate to make a connecting flight. When you are on-time and have some margin, use it wisely to increase your leadership capacity.
3. When planning your schedule at the destination, think of dividing the workday into three parts – morning, afternoon and evening. Those planning your arrival schedule should be informed to only fill two of these three parts each day. Thus, you will have a portion of each day for rest, reflection, catch up and dealing with any unexpected crisis.
4. Be wise on what you eat and when you get sleep on trips, especially if you have time zone changes such as on international trips. If hosted, you will often be treated with great generosity of sight-seeing events, shopping for family gifts, wonderful meals, etc. Being out of your normal routines can make self-control and self-discipline difficult. Pace yourself!
5. For truly extended trips of several weeks, consider a one or two-day break in the middle of the trip for relaxation, reflection and restoration.
6. Ensure your spouse knows how to contact you if needed, especially for emergencies. Even today, not every place has easy internet or mobile phone connections. Have other contacts for them to pursue should you be out of reach.
7. When returning home, it’s easy to think that the trip is over when you ‘hit the front door’ upon your return. You’ve been serving others intensely and now you just want to crash and relax. On the other hand, your spouse has been at home while you’ve been away and you have a lot to catch up on. If there are children still at home, your spouse probably needs a break from the daily responsibilities of parenting and the household. Plan accordingly.
8. A wise mindset is this -- when returning from a trip, remind yourself that the trip ends the day after you return home. That is, you are still in the ‘giving out’ mindset when you hit the home front – especially the first 24 hours after your return. Focus on your kids and your spouse’s needs, not your own. Seek to serve others, not be served by them.

When's your next trip?  
Are you planning ahead for more than just how you will spend the days away?  
Are you planning wisely not only for the trip, but for your return?

## Leading from Trust Relationships

And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. Luke 5:4-11 ESV

Early in His relationship with these two pairs of brothers, Jesus needed to establish a trust relationship for He would ask them to follow Him into an unknown future. Their sacrifice and personal cost would be great and He, knowing this, had to establish a platform of trust from which they would be willing to follow Him.

Note Peter's response when instructed to put out into deeper water and let down their nets. He knew that daytime was not the time to net fish. He knew that they had already tried all night long and failed to net anything. Based on previous experience-fishing was their expertise- why do this futile exercise?

Peter replies to Jesus, "But at your word I will let down the nets." This was foundational in Peter's relationship with Jesus - obedience to Jesus and not logic, experience or worldly wisdom was key. He trusted the words of Jesus, no doubt with some hesitancy, and was rewarded with an amazing haul of fish. Peter's response was trusting submission and a willingness to follow Christ and His leadership, even to the point of leaving his vocation.

Kingdom leaders lead from a platform of trust that we build between ourselves and those we lead. This trust is built over time as we ask others to trust our judgment and follow our lead. Positional authority comes with a job title, but personal authority and trust is earned over time.

Trust is earned, not given. It is built over time as we make deposits into our 'trust bank account' in our leadership relationships. But trust can quickly be lost and the bank account emptied through untrustworthy behavior.

Don't assume that you have the trust of others.  
Major on building trust and they will follow your lead!

## Communicating with Word Pictures

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."

Matthew 7:24-25 ESV

"What we have here is a failure to communicate" is heard all too frequently. Communicating well can be difficult for Kingdom leaders. As a team leader you are often casting vision and futuristic concepts that for you may seem crystal clear, but for your hearers they are a thick fog. How can you cut through the fog and help those around you see it as clearly as you do?

One key to good communication, especially when dealing with abstract or complex topics is to learn to speak in word pictures. Taking the complex and 'putting a handle on it' so that it is easily grasped is a learned skill. Like all skills, you can become good at it and when you do, you will find yourself being quoted because your communication is memorable.

Note how Jesus ended His most famous Sermon on the Mount. In the reference above, He closed with a word picture of a person building a house on two different types of foundations. The key word is "like" which introduces the simile that follows. Those who hear His words and obey them are 'like' a wise man who builds on a rock. 'Like' transitions from concept to word picture that helps make the abstract more concrete in the minds of His audience.

As you talk about your mission and vision, learn to use word pictures, similes that will help your audience better understand and remember key points and concepts. Here's an example that I use to explain the difference between mission and vision for Kingdom leaders.

What is a Mission Statement – This statement answers the question, "Why do we exist?" It is first and foremost in strategic leading. It's like a picture frame on the wall of the Kingdom of God that separates and defines who we are from what others are in God's work. It is our God-given task and our purpose.

What is a Vision Statement - This statement defines where we intend to go in the future – our destination. It is a picture of our desired future state that we see by faith. It's like a picture that is placed into the picture frame of our mission on the wall of God's Kingdom. We are working towards bringing this future vision into reality by His grace and power.

Train yourself to communicate in simple, easy to understand word pictures. Your influence will grow and your communications will 'stick.'

## Over-communicate!!!

The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. Exodus 24:12-13 ESV

The Lord had something extremely important to communicate to His people. So, He called Moses and his aide, Joshua, up on a mountain top for 40 days of extended time together. What was communicated from God to Moses during those days was recorded by him in chapters 25-31 of Exodus. Let's examine how God communicated to and through leadership.

There were three general means of communication that the Lord used to get the message of the Law, the Tabernacle, and Levitical leadership to Moses (and Joshua), seeking to ensure clarity of His message.

The first means of communication was verbal. "The LORD said to Moses..." (Exodus 25:1). To deliver a message, speaking the message to another (sometimes repeatedly sharing the message) is an initial step. The fact that Moses records the many details spoken to him by God implies that he (or perhaps his aide, Joshua) was taking notes of what was being spoken.

Secondly, we note that God used visual reinforcement of what He communicated verbally. "Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it." (Exodus 25:9) Again the Lord says, "And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain." (Exodus 25:40 ESV)

The third means the Lord used to deepen the impact of His message was written words. Note what Moses took down the mountain with him when he left after 40 days. "And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God." (Exodus 31:18 ESV) Here was the 'executive summary' of the Law - the 10 Commandments, written on two stone tablets by God Himself.

Verbal, visual, and written means of communication were all used by God to 'over-communicate' this very important message. As Kingdom leaders, don't assume that telling is communicating. Don't assume that just because you put it in writing those you lead are reading and understanding it. And yes, sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words!

*Don't let this be your leadership legacy, "What we have here is a failure to communicate!"*

## Planning into a Turbulent Future

And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.  
Matthew 10:11-14 ESV

Jesus was preparing His disciples for a short-term mission assignment. He gave them very specific instructions on what to take or not take, the audience of their mission and how they were to interact with those they met. But note that He also helps them anticipate various responses when they enter a village - both when received positively and also when rejected. Jesus is doing some scenario planning.

When Jesus sends the two disciples to get a colt for Him to ride into Jerusalem, he again helps them anticipate a possible response to those who think they are stealing it (see Mark 11:1-7). The scenario Jesus help them anticipate came to pass exactly as discussed.

Now this is fascinating because Jesus knows the responses they will receive, but they don't. Thus, He gives them some preparation so that they are not taken by surprise and have some forethought on how to deal with differing scenarios they will encounter. Scenario planning that anticipates several possible future situations is not a lack of faith, but rather it is wisdom.

The enemy will always try to take your focus off the Lord and place it on our threatening circumstances. While planning for current and possible realities, always, always keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. Keep your head up and your eyes fixed on Him.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Hebrews 12:1-2 ESV

## Scenario Planning for Kingdom Leaders

Storm clouds precede a coming change, but what exactly that storm will be when it arrives is unknown. Scenario planning anticipates several possible future situations and helps us prepare for the coming changes. It is not a lack of faith, but it is wisdom to anticipate the coming storms.

Scenario planning requires that leaders think ahead in order to stay proactive and not reactive in their leadership. While one can't be too detailed in future scenario plans, one can anticipate possibilities and likely responses. Then, as the future becomes clearer, we add more details and follow one of our likely scenario plans of action.

Here's some practical ideas on how to lead your team in scenario planning:

1. A key word in scenario planning is "if" - that is, if this happens, then this should be your response. If....then... thinking and planning is scenario planning.
2. When thinking about a future scenario, first determine the time horizon for your planning. To use a weather metaphor – are you thinking about the immediate storm, the coming season or the beginning of a new climate change?
3. Start future scenario thinking by taking stock of your current reality. Use a tool like a SWOT analysis (current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to think on a macro scale for the whole. Once you have a good grasp of current reality, then begin to think and plan for possible future scenarios within your time horizon.
4. It seems wise and prudent to plan scenarios dealing with three possible futures: 1) minor changes in the future (we continue our previous normal, with a few minor adjustments, 2) a few significant changes occur that impact our ability to carry out our mission or 3) major changes or made that force major shifts in ministry philosophy and methodology.
5. Do scenario planning with your leadership team because there will be differing perspectives from various people, especially if geographically dispersed. Being more inclusive in this process will help with ownership and build a 'guiding coalition' for leading change (see John Kotter's book - *Leading Change*).
6. The enemy will try to take your focus off of the Lord and place it on your threatening circumstances. While paying attention to and planning according to our current and possible realities, always, always keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. Key your head up and your eyes fixed on Him.
7. Always remember that the future is known by the Lord and His Spirit will help us anticipate and prepare wisely for it. Listen to Him for guidance. He's vested in your 'success' because His name, glory and purposes are at stake. Trust Him to lead you and anticipate it.

Be wise.

Be safe.

Be bold.

Trust Him who knows the future!

## Making Decisions According to God's Will

Kingdom leaders want to further God's purposes and therefore seek to align their decisions in accordance with God's will. But given the many choices, how do we discern the Lord's will in specific decisions? Here are some foundational thoughts regarding this important topic.

If a Kingdom leader is to know the will of God, they must first commit themselves to doing it. Often, we desire to know God's plans for us and then we decide if we want to obey them. But God's ways are not our ways. Jesus says in John 7:17 (ESV): If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

And in Romans 12:1-2 (ESV) we read: I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 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.

Note that the precursor for testing the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is to first present yourself as a living sacrifice to the Lord and become transformed in the renewal of your mind.

In Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV) we see: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. The Lord is working on/in/through us to do His good works which He planned long ago. It's our responsibility to align ourselves with Him and then we will experience His perfectly designed plan for which we were created.

Because God is God, He will have no trouble communicating what He wants us to do. Our problem is doing God's will, not knowing God's will! We must be willing to do whatever He desires for us, before He will begin to unfold His plan for us. This can be frightening, but if we really know God and His love, we will also trust Him and follow His guidance by faith.

May our attitude be that of Mary who, after learning about God's plan for her to be the mother of Jesus says, ..."Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." Luke 1:38 (ESV)

## Making Decisions - God's Word and Personal Peace

When discussing decision-making and God's will, we are talking about major decisions in our lives, not things like, "What will I have for lunch today?" The Lord gives great freedom to choose in such decisions. But in others that have greater impact for us He will direct us. When making such decisions as, "Is God calling me into vocational ministry?" or "Should I marry this person?" we can expect God to guide us.

The Lord often uses five means to direct us into His will. The first is the Word of God - the Bible. We can expect to have specific biblical passages or Scriptural promises that speak to the decision we are working through.

Obviously, if something is contrary to a direct teaching or command in Scripture, or contrary to God's character, it is not the will of God (i.e. marrying a non- Christian - see 2 Corinthians 6:14). But God can also speak to us concerning our specific situations through personal promises from the Bible. The Holy Spirit will confirm in our heart that this is God's promise to us.

In Psalm 119:105 (ESV) we read, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." The Word of God is like a small, hand-held, oil lamp that sheds enough light for us to take a few steps, illuminating the path as we move ahead. It's only enough light for the next few steps, but as we go, we have light for the next few steps. See also Proverbs 6:22-23.

When wrestling with decisions, we can have an expectant attitude as we interact with God's Word. We may hear Him speaking while in our morning devotions, when listening to a Sunday sermon, or He may bring to mind a passage we have previously memorized. His direction from the Word will often be multiple passages, not just a singular one. He does not want us confused or mistaking His voice for another's.

The second means that the Lord uses to guide us is personal peace when we pray and reflect upon the decision.

In Isaiah 30:21 (NIV) we read, "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" The Spirit will confirm with our spirit that we are on the right path, keep going, don't give up or doubt. There will be an inner settledness and confirmation from the Lord that this is the way.

Though we may not have all the answers, we will have a deep peace, a rest in our heart, knowing that this is from God. Doubts only need more facts. Anxiety only needs more reassurance. It's is unbelief and disobedience that we must avoid.

We may have unanswered questions and the Lord may simply say we are to trust Him. But other times our doubts will be removed as we get more clarity on the situation. The Lord will give us all we need at the right time to make the right decision.

Psalm 143:8,10 says, "Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life. ... Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. The Lord will guide and

direct us by His Spirit within us. Listen carefully and you will hear His voice. Jesus says, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27 (ESV)

## **Making Decisions - Wise Counsel, Critical Thinking and Circumstances**

As we wrestle with major decisions in our lives, Kingdom leaders want what God wants. Such decisions as, "Is God asking me to assume this ministry leadership role?" or "Should we move our family to a different city?" are ones where we can expect God to help us.

The Lord often uses five means to direct us into His will. The first is the Word of God - the Bible. The second is personal peace about the decision when you pray and reflect upon it. The third means is wise counsel.

Proverbs 15:22 (ESV) says, "Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed." Note that it says, 'many advisers.' The Lord will give us a consensus of opinion from many advisors. Not all will say exactly the same thing, but there will be a general consensus of what we should do in a particular decision.

Proverbs 13:20 (ESV) reminds us, "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm." Who we select for counsel determines the quality of advice we receive. Finding the right counselors who know us, want our best and God's best for us can be a challenge.

We don't want biased counsel from those who try to direct us to a particular outcome. It is hard to get counsel from someone who does not have hidden motives - someone who is neutral in whatever decision we may choose. Objective, unbiased counsel from mature believers will be used to give perspective and direction.

Look for counsel from those who are more spiritually mature and experienced. If we ask our friends, they may only give us the answer they think we want to hear, not wanting to risk the friendship by telling us the truth.

Proverbs 19:20 (ESV) says, "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future." The Lord will see that we get good counsel if we seek it.

The fourth way the Lord guides us in important decisions is critical thinking. It was Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, who said, "God gave you a lot of leading when He gave you a brain. So use it!"

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV) says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Note that it does not say to forget your own understanding. Rather, it says 'do not lean on your own understanding.' That is, we are not put our full weight upon our ability to understand. We often can't think your way into the will of God for many times God's will is counter-intuitive and 'illogical' from the world's perspective and logic.

But neither should we throw away our brain when working through an important decision. It can help to make a 'pro-con' list. In one column list all the things that seem positive about this decision. The other column are those items that seem negative or we have major concerns about. Then, reflect and pray for discernment over both columns.

Think it through. Reflect on it and ask the Lord for objectivity. Ask for Him to give His perspective on this decision and insight into the consequences in the future - both good and bad consequences of this decision.

The fifth means of God's guidance in our decision-making is circumstances. God will open doors to guide us and He will also close doors to lead us to other open doors. Our enemy can also create opportune circumstances or seek to confuse us with multiple seemingly good choices. How do we know if a closed door is permanently shut or is simply a matter of continuing to knock by faith and wait until for it to open?

In Acts 16:6-10 (ESV) we read, "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."

It seems that Paul's strategy was to plant the gospel in major cities that were transportation and communication hubs. On this, his second ministry tour, he completed visiting the cities from the first tour and now was going to go to Ephesus - the major city in the province of Asia. Logic and strategy dictated this as the next destination. But God, through the Holy Spirit (a prophet, vision, dream?) prevented this from happening. The door closed to the province of Asia.

The team redirected north to Bithynia and then to Mysia. Both were again blocked from entering by the Spirit, finally arriving at the port city of Troas. It was here that Paul had a vision (note the extraordinary means of direction) to come over to Macedonia (northern Greece). Europe was next in God's plan for Paul and his missionary team, but it was not originally part of Paul's. Ephesus was reached eventually, but it would be several years later on Paul's third tour.

The Spirit will let us know if the door is closed and if we should redirect or patiently trust Him to open it in His time. Tune your heart to His voice and you will hear it.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:11-13 ESV

## Transitioning our Leadership

All leaders will transition their leadership. It is not a question of if, but when we will hand it to someone else. Having this reality in perspective from the beginning of a leadership role can be very helpful when we come to the end. As Stephen Covey reminds us, “Begin with the end in mind.”

Here are some practical reminders that will help ensure that we transition our leadership well to those who come after us.

**1. Be intentional about the transition – plan for it.**

- a. Develop a bench of potential candidates to take your role
- b. Expose them to tasks and people that will prepare them to lead in your place.
- c. Include them in problem solving and strategic discussions that will stretch them and get them out of their comfort zones.

**2. Make the selection of your replacement far enough in advance so you can coach the new leader for a period of time.**

- a. Don’t make this overlap too long and be sure to give the new leader lots of ‘room’ to lead and make changes.
- b. Make the transition timeline clear from the beginning and then exit the stage.
- c. Give the new leader freedom to make whatever personnel or system changes they see are needed. And don’t get upset when they do bring change to things that you held near and dear. You are no longer the leader!

**3. Position your replacement for success by not only giving them the title or role, but also give them the authority to lead.**

- a. A visible ceremony where the authority is passed from the old leader to the new is a very helpful reminder to all that “the old has gone and the new has come.”
- b. Note that when God transitioned the leadership of Israel from Moses to Joshua, there was a commissioning ceremony in front of the leadership community led by Eleazar the priest. Note too that this commissioning ceremony was God’s idea and that it was done before Moses’ death. See Numbers 27:22-23.
- c. Position yourself to be a counselor and coach for a period of time. You can act as one who provides context and background, even advice if asked.

**4. Move on! Don’t linger! Trust God for what’s next!**

- a. We talk about the importance of finding our identity in being a servant of God and not in our leadership role or title. The test will come when we transition our role to another.
- b. Do we cling to our leadership role or freely give it away to another? Do we demand a lateral or upward organizational move? Can we submit to another’s leadership and follow them even if they

were previously our direct report?

Who are those potential candidates being intentionally groomed to take your spot?

Does that transition excite you or threaten/unsettle you?

Don't wait for a crisis to have to transition your role. Go from strength to strength!

Kingdom leaders are givers, not takers!

## Developing More Leaders – REPRODUCE

We continue to reflect upon how to organize our understanding of the complex subject of leadership. Using the simple outline of Know – Be – Do – Reproduce we can categorize the important functions of this vast subject called leadership. We will now address the category of “Reproduce – Developing More Leaders.”

An essential part of your leadership is to multiply more leaders. Yes, we must accomplish mission and task. Yes, we must care well for those we lead. But Kingdom leaders must not overlook the very important responsibility of leaving behind more leaders. Be intentional about developing the leaders on your team to ensure they are reaching their potential for greatest contribution.

Some leaders are so personally insecure that they avoid developing those on their team. They see their team member’s development as a threat to their leadership, thinking, “If they reach their potential, they could take my role and then what would I do?” Leaders who find their identity and security in their leadership title or role will be very reluctant to develop the leaders around them.

The reality is that all leadership roles are temporary. We lead for a while and then transition our leadership to another. We can make this transition healthy and positive by intentionally planning and celebrating it. Or we can ignore it until a crisis occurs and then leave our work ill-prepared for the transition to the next leader.

Here’s some practical reminders for intentionally developing the Kingdom leaders on your team.

1. We don’t personally have to do the development of our team members, just lead our team in their development.
2. Be intentional about your team’s development as a whole and as individual members.
3. Model intentional, individual leader development for your team; set the pace for the rest by our own personal pursuit of developing yourself.
4. Make leader development fun and interesting, not a duty!
5. Be sure that the Scriptures are central in your team’s leader development.
6. Reading a book or an article together as a team and then discussing how it might be applied in your context is an easy way to lead your team in development.
7. Bring in outside resources (people and tools) to help your team grow and develop.
8. Make leader development a part of your regular team meetings and consider an extended team retreat focused entirely on relationship building and leader development.
9. Have team members set 6-month personal development goals related to their development as a leader and hold them accountable for attaining them.
10. Remember to keep this question before your team – “Development for what?” Their personal leader development and the development of the team is to help all accomplish your God-given mission or task.

Are you being intentional about your personal leader development? Are you helping your team members maximize their potential as Kingdom leaders? Are you leading your team in development?

## Developing Kingdom Leaders for What?

In Genesis 12:1-3 we read of God's promise to Abram that His blessing upon Abram and his descendants would be a blessing to all the world. 1,500 years later Isaiah wrote a prophecy about the coming Messiah and states that the mission of the Messiah would be to take the message of salvation not just to the tribes of Jacob, but to all the nations (peoples) of the world.

500 years after Isaiah, Jesus summarizes His entire ministry with a commission to make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:18-20). And at His final public appearance, the Ascension from the Mount of Olives, the Lord instructs them to begin at Jerusalem and reach to ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

This mission of discipling the nations is why we need Kingdom leaders. These missional leaders will seek to advance the rule and reign of Jesus Christ into the various peoples of the world. They will advance the gospel to the unreached, establish believers in their faith to become disciples of Christ and then equip them to reproduce more spiritual generations of disciples. These leaders will be called of God to engage in this great cosmic task of discipling all the peoples of the world. They will hear His voice and raise their hand to volunteer their services.

The grand vision of making disciples of all the peoples of the world will need leaders of disciplemaking ministries and disciplemaking movements; leaders whose vision is global and action is local. They will not be discouraged or shrink back from the immensity of the task. Rather, they will rise to the challenge, trusting God by faith to use them in some way to further His Kingdom purposes.

What better way to invest your life? Some will be called to engage in this Great Commission vocationally as full-time workers. Others will have differing vocations, but their missional commitment will not waver as they engage in the grand enterprise of seeing the nations come to know Him.

These Kingdom leaders must be prayed for, worked for, recruited, trained, developed and deployed strategically into the peoples of the world. There will never be a great number, given that the 'laborers are few' (Matthew 9:35-38). But God will accomplish this mission with just a few (see Revelation 9:7).

We are not disheartened by the few who raise their hand and volunteer for this daunting challenge. With God, one is a majority! And in Him we have all the resources needed to accomplish everything He desires of us.

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?  
Romans 8:31 (NIV 1984)

## **Begin with the End in Mind!**

Someone has said, “If you don’t know where you are going, then any road will get you there.” Have you thought about the final season of your life when you will have developed your strengths to the point of serving and blessing others in and through them? If that is the ‘end’ of our race, then what road should we be on now that will lead to that destination?

At this season of my life I’m focused on equipping other Kingdom leaders for our work and the Kingdom. I’m sharing life messages developed within me over years as I coach these emerging leaders, teaching them to live and lead like Jesus. But all of this current investment flows from a decision to focus on my life passion of leadership and developing Kingdom leaders some 20 years ago.

In 1991 when home for six months from our international assignment, I took some extended time to reflect upon my own growth and development at the age of 40. I reviewed where I sensed the blessing of God on my life and ministry and where I was truly motivated. This reflection time led to a focus on the areas of Kingdom leadership and developing emerging leaders. 15 years later, now at the age of 55, I again took some extended time to reflect upon my passions and life messages with a deepening sense of stewardship of these for before the Lord. This led to a laser focus on three areas: leader development, emerging leaders and the nations (missions).

In thinking about this path of personal development over two decades, it is clear that the “end” has become more and more focused as I progressed in my journey. The initial direction for multiplying my life through spiritual generations of laborers now has resulted in a personal mission statement as follows: I am out to change the world one leader at a time by helping them live and lead like Jesus.

In sharing this I am not suggesting that you imitate my personal journey. I only point this out as an illustration to consider for your own development. Operating and leading from strengths will not just happen with the passing of time. You will have to choose to focus -- to say ‘yes’ to some things and ‘no’ to others in order to maximize your strengths. It will be a process, a longer process that you think, to get to a destination of serving others from your passions and strengths.

Here are some general thoughts regarding contributing in our strengths:

1. *Develop yourself for contribution, not a role or title or spot on an organizational chart.* This thinking is too small and limiting what God could desire to do with and through you. Develop your life messages and giftedness and then let God surprise you with how He will let you make that contribution.
2. *Continually reflect on your personal mission statement to help clarify your contribution.* Take some time to stop and think about the end of your journey now, not later. What would you desire the final season of your life to be? What would ‘turn your crank?’ Ask God to give you His perspective on your life and the contribution He desires. Why has God designed and gifted you the way He has? For what purpose? What are the life messages He has given you to steward for which you will be held

accountable?

3. *Determine the primary audience for your contribution.* Who is the audience that the Lord seems to connect you with? What age group? Do you have cross-cultural ability or experience? I determined that my primary focus was on emerging leaders under the age of 40. I wanted to help shape them before they made too many choices that led to bad consequences. This aligned with my life experience as well as my strategic desire to help others before they made major mistakes, rather than afterwards.

4. *Determine your primary delivery platform.* What format do you just love to engage others in? Is it one-on-one with individuals, small groups or large group? Do you like informal, semi-formal or more formal environments for influencing others? Written or verbal communication? Is your style more “come along and watch” or “let’s discuss this?” Regardless of the delivery preferences, there needs to be intentionality for the greatest impact in the lives of others.

Now, it’s time to get out your ‘life map’ and rethink your destination. Remember, if you don’t know what you’re aiming for, you’ll hit it every time!

## Leading Like Jesus

It's hard to critique a leader about whom others said, "he does all things well." How do you select out what made Jesus great? He was perfect! Everything about Him is great!

Yet, when I think of Jesus' leadership, what impresses me most are two things. He was a leader who brought value to those who interacted with Him. And He was a leader who developed other leaders to the point where they were able to lead in His place.

Jesus did many things in His ministry: redemption, the founding of a new movement, selection and development of leaders for this movement, a compassion ministry to address felt needs, etc. But one thing seems to be consistent in all; Jesus brought added value to the lives of those He touched. He left people feeling grateful for His presence or interaction with them, whether a brief encounter or a ministry to them of several years.

I want my leadership to be one where those impacted feel that there is added value because of my intervention in their lives. As a leader, I am called to add value (i.e. vision, motivation, encouragement, assessment, counsel, resources, development, etc.) to the lives of those I lead. I want to leave those with whom I interact desirous of more time together, rather than feeling grateful that I'm finally gone. They will want more if there is a sense that I add value to their lives.

Secondly, Jesus selected and developed other leaders to continue on past His life on earth. All leaders have a 'life span' of power and influence. This will quickly pass. What is it that will last when our leadership is finished? We want to leave behind a new generation of leaders who will carry on long after we have left the scene.

Some call this type of leadership "leading with a developmental bias." We always lead with an eye on the next generation, seeking to identify those whom God has gifted and called to lead the work for their generation. We then begin to intentionally build into their lives, helping develop them to their potential in Christ, so that they are well prepared to lead when we are gone.

Bringing value to the lives of those He led and developing the next generation of leaders is what made Jesus a great leader.

Are you aspiring to be a great Kingdom leader too?

Follow the example of Jesus!

## **Jesus' Way of Developing Leaders**

I've always loved the Gospel of Mark because of the action-oriented narrative. You'll remember that Mark's gospel begins with a one-year gap (Mark 1:13-14) between His baptism and the 18-month ministry in Galilee. This first year of Jesus' public ministry is only recorded in John 1-4.

The following is a short list of key leader development passages found in Mark. While this is not an exhaustive list, it does serve as a reminder of how we can be more intentional about developing those leaders we influence.

Mark 1:14-18 – Jesus was on the move and He recruited others to join Him in the movement; note that He recruited busy, industrious people

Mark 1:35 – Jesus was a pacesetter and model, especially concerning spending time with His Father

Mark 1:36-39 – Jesus had a plan for His ministry; He took the risk of disappointing those He was leading by saying 'no' to their desires for Him that He might carry out His mission

Mark 3:14 – the emerging leaders were "with Him" first and then sent out; He prepared them to carry on His mission after He was gone

Mark 3:16-17 – having nicknames indicates He knew His disciples well; there was a deep, personal relationship between Him and those on His team

Mark 4:10,34 – He gave special training and development to a few while maintaining a broad teaching and healing ministry; He told the Twelve the "why and what" about Himself and the Kingdom of God

Mark 4:35 – Jesus took the initiative and led by example

Mark 6:6-9 – Jesus modeled faith lifestyle and expected it of His disciples; while this was a short-term training exercise, living by faith was to be a lifestyle for them when He was gone (Luke 22:35-36)

Mark 6:30-31 – He modeled for them the importance of taking time for reflective evaluation and relaxation; after an intensive time of ministry, He encouraged them to take a break for refreshment

Mark 8:31 – He sought to keep His disciples informed about upcoming events; He sought to prepare them for future circumstances they would encounter

Mark 9:14-16 – Jesus protected His disciples; note how He takes the argument with the teachers of the law onto Himself and away from His disciples

Mark 10:28-31 – Jesus was an encourager and He affirmed good behavior; He promised reward for their sacrifices on His behalf

Mark 11:1-3 – Jesus emphasized forethought, scenario planning and preparation before sending them out on assignments

Mark 14:10 – Jesus had one of His leaders in training who did not finish well; not all failures are reflections on the leader and their ability to train others

Reflect on these passages and ask the Lord for insight and application for your own leadership. Open the Bible with those you are developing. Look carefully at the model of Jesus and how He developed other Kingdom leaders.

Remember, “Lead from the Scriptures and into the Scriptures!”

## **A Mature Disciplemaking Ministry – Luke 6:13-19**

Jesus is approximately one year into His 3+ years of public ministry when in Luke 6 we read that He spent a night in prayer. While it is not unusual for Jesus to spend time alone in prayer with His Father, this prayer time preceded a significant shift in His ministry. From here He would have a leadership team that would consist of future leaders for the movement He would leave behind. These 12 would now become His top priority in ministry. We see that He completes this training of the 12 leaders in John 17:1-6. It is these leaders that ensure spiritual generations of future leaders will emerge after He departs.

Jesus' ministry as described in this one paragraph illustrates the three major audiences found in a mature disciplemaking ministry and the three different functions that are addressed in these audiences. His ministry example serves to guide us as we lead our own work.

The first group in His audience is the **Core leaders** – Luke 6:13-16. These are the emerging leaders who will be the 'golden thread' for spiritual generations to come. Like Jesus, we **Train** these leaders in vision and skill for spiritual reproduction – helping them move to maturity and ability to reproduce their lives in others.

The second group is the **Large Crowd of Disciples** – Luke 6:17. These are those put their faith in Christ and those believers who want to pursue spiritual growth. Like Jesus, we **Teach** these disciples principles about being a Kingdom citizen – helping them know and apply what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

The third group with Jesus' audience was the **Great Number of People** attracted to the movement, but lacking any commitment to it – Luke 6:17-19. Like Jesus, we seek to **Touch** them in His name for He has the power to change them forever. Some we simply contact – maybe a spiritual interest survey or simply testifying before them that we are follower of Jesus; while others we will deeply impact, even winning them to faith in Christ and eventually discipling them to spiritual maturity

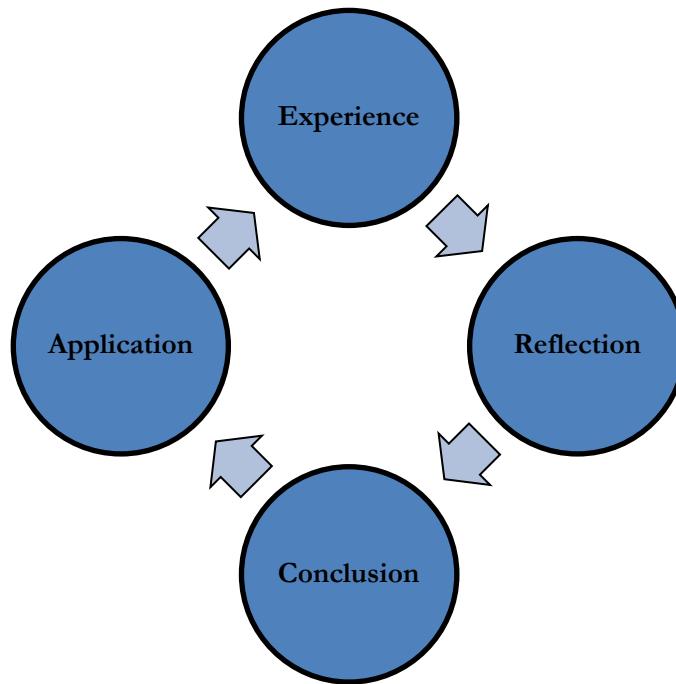
These are the three audiences in a mature disciplemaking ministry – Emerging Leaders, Disciples, and Great numbers of people on the journey to Christ. We seek to Train, Teach, and Touch them for Jesus' sake and for His glory, that the world may come to know Him.

## The Adult Learning Cycle

Experience is not the best teacher. It is evaluated experience that makes for truly developmental learning. For those of us who seek to intentionally develop others, especially Kingdom leaders, helping them evaluate their experiences will maximize every developmental opportunity.

David A. Kolb (born 1939) is an American educational theorist whose interests and publications focus on experiential learning, the individual and social change, and career development. He was first to identify this model of how adults learn. In the mid 1970's Peter Honey and Alan Mumford adapted David Kolb's model for use with a population of middle/senior managers in business. They published their version of the model in *The Manual of Learning Styles* (1982) and *Using Your Learning Styles* (1983). Here is their Learning Cycle with minor adaptations.

## The Adult Learning Cycle



From the above diagram we see the following:

### 4 Phases of the Adult Learning Cycle

- **Experience** – The circumstances, people, responsibilities and opportunities that make up the reality of life. All experiences provide opportunity to learn, grow, develop and change if processed well.

- **Reflection** – People need to reflect on their experiences well to truly benefit from them. Questions need to be asked about what happened and why it happened.
- **Conclusion** – Having reflected on our experience, the learner draws conclusions, lessons learned, that them in future experiences.
- **Application** – Applications are adjustments in behavior or an affirmation of previous behavior that form the basis for ongoing activities and experience.

Too often busy leaders fail to stop and reflect adequately upon their leadership experiences. They complete one responsibility and ten more await their immediate attention. They move forward with impressions from past experiences, but not having taken the time to reflect well, these impressions are half-formed thoughts or wrong conclusions that then lead to even poorer personal applications.

One of a leader developer's tools for helping others is the ability to cause busy leaders to stop long enough to adequately reflect upon their experiences. We do this by asking them questions about their leadership experiences. Becoming a good questioner is key to helping other adults learn from their experiences.

So, are you a 'teller' or an 'asker'?

How you answer can determine how well you develop other adults.

## Five Questions for Reflection to Help Leaders Develop

Experience is not the best teacher, rather it is evaluated experience that makes for truly developmental learning. Too often busy leaders fail to stop and reflect adequately upon their leadership experiences. We rush from activity to activity focusing on productivity without thinking clearly about what is being accomplished. We draw satisfaction in our busyness without evaluating the impact on our mission because we assume that activity leads to productivity without thinking about it in light of our mission and vision.

A leader development tool for busy leaders is helping them stop long enough to adequately reflect upon their experiences. We do this by asking them questions about their leadership experiences, forcing them to reflect on what they are learning. Becoming a good questioner is key to helping other adults learn from their experiences.

Here are five of my favorite questions to ask leaders about a recent leadership experience.

1. What did you learn about yourself from this experience?
2. What did about your God from this experience?
3. What did you learn about leadership from this experience?
4. If you were to repeat this experience, what would you do again and why?
5. If you were to repeat this experience, what would you not do again and why?

These five simple questions will cause a person to stop and think carefully about their life and leadership and help them arrive at good conclusions. When asking these questions we can then follow up with more questions based upon their responses.

The first three questions relate more to macro-lessons in life and leadership. The ‘why’ part of the final two questions is most insightful as it helps them identify and understand their reasoning and values.

We don’t need to ask all five questions about every leadership experience. But having these questions available will truly help guide a discussion with others listen to their recent happenings. Being intentional about your listening posture, filling your conversation with these types of developmental questions, will ensure good development of those you influence.

Seek to be an ‘asker’ not a ‘teller’ in your conversations with other leaders and they will be forever grateful for your input.

## Jesus' Leader Development Example

And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ... And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." Mark 8:27,29 ESV

If there ever was a busy leader it was Jesus! His days were so full that He and His disciples did not even have time to eat, nor could they enter openly into the villages for fear of the crowds that would press in on Him. Yet in the midst of this intense daily activity, Jesus frequently asked His emerging leaders questions that forced them to reflect on what was happening around them.

In the passage above He forced them to reflect upon His identity by first asking in general about what was being said concerning Him but the general public. He then puts a sharper focus on the subject by asking a follow up question, asking for their personal response. Jesus did not ask these questions because He was concerned about His reputation or was in some kind of an identity crisis. Rather, it was for the benefit of the Twelve, forcing them to think about their experience with Him.

In Matthew 16:6, 8-12 (ESV) we read, "Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ... But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Note again that through a series of questions to His disciples, Jesus forced them to reflect upon their recent experiences of the miraculous feeding of thousands to help them arrive at a good conclusion about the false teaching of the Jewish religious leaders. Rather than explaining what He meant by 'leaven,' He asked them questions to help them discover the meaning for themselves.

Some has counted that Jesus asked over 200 questions recorded in the Gospels. Not one questions was because He needed more information! Rather, it was always for the benefit of the hearer. Becoming a good questioner is key to helping other adults learn from their experiences. But many fail to probe another's experience by failing to ask. Why?

One of the greatest obstacles to overcome is the desire to talk about yourself and your own experiences. This self-centeredness can flow from an inflated ego and an assumption that my experiences are more important than others. We can ramble on and on about ourselves without seeming to take a breath and the listener, though hopefully polite, has really not benefitted. We may feel good about the time, but it is a wasted opportunity for them to reflect upon their own experience because we lacked the self-control to shut up about ourselves and listen to them.

One word from those we develop is worth one-hundred words from us!

## Becoming a Multiplying Leader

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 NIV

"Spiritual Generations." We've heard it many times. We've even had conferences with that title. It's our heartbeat as Kingdom leaders. We act locally and see globally with a long-term view of discipling the peoples of the world. We know it will take a while – we've been at this task for two millennia and have yet to accomplish it.

In a recent conversation with a younger staff, he asked me what I thought was the essence of The Navigators' ministry. He was trying to sort out in his mind our contribution as compared to other Kingdom ministries. I answered that all ministries are about trying to help fulfill the Great Commission and expand God's Kingdom. But one of our special contributions is the multiplication of spiritual disciplemakers for the Kingdom harvest resulting in many spiritual generations of disciples.

The objective of the Great Commission is making disciples of all the nations. But our (The Navigators) strategy to help fulfill this commission is the multiplication of spiritual laborers. A spiritual laborer is a disciplemaker - one who can do evangelism and follow up (establishing) of new believers. This is someone who can make disciples of all the nations. By focusing on the need for more laborers (Matthew 9:35-38) we will make disciples and help fulfill the Great Commission, for laborers (disciplemakers) make disciples.

But even this explanation is incomplete. We are about the multiplication of spiritual laborers, not just increasing their numbers. Spiritual multiplication implies raising up laborers who will then in turn raise up other laborers, who will in turn do that to still more. We are disciples first and then disciplemakers, who make more disciples and disciplemakers. The result is spiritual generations of disciples who live and disciple others.

It is a multiplying effect, not just addition. It is one becoming two, becoming four, who become eight, and so on. It is exponential growth through spiritual generations that we pray and work for by faith. That is what we are about—spiritual multiplication through successive generations!

May we be the good soil that multiplies! And, may God continue to lead us to many men and women who will be good soil that will multiply 30, 60, and 100-fold!

But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. Mark 4:20 ESV

## Helping Others Create Goals and Development Plans

When helping others create their personal goals and development plans, one of the first thoughts that should enter our minds is: What's the purpose of this exercise? Remembering the adage – always begin with the end in mind – we ask ourselves, “What's the desired outcome of these plans?” Once the outcome is clearly defined, then the actual plans are more easily identified.

The more specific the outcomes are articulated, the more specific the plans can be to accomplish them. For example, a poor goal would be: “to grow in Christlike character.” Not that this is a bad overall objective, but a better outcome is: “to grow in Christlike humility.” Note the sharper focus by narrowing in on one aspect of Christlike character. Now the plans of how to work intentionally on growing in humility will naturally flow from this outcome.

A second reminder for setting personal goals and plans is that they need a specified time period (time horizon) for their accomplishment. In the collegiate ministry context, we normally think in terms of semesters or summer breaks. In the marketplace we think more of fiscal years or calendar years or seasons. Knowing the time frame for accomplishing the goals makes it easier to determine what realistically can be accomplished during the time allotted.

A third reminder is that as we supervise others in setting goals is that outcomes must be agreed upon from the beginning. If we do not have agreement on the outcomes, then, when it comes time for evaluation or feedback related to accomplishment, we will have major problems. There should be no surprises on what was expected because from the beginning both parties agreed on the desired outcomes. Now we can objectively look at what really got accomplished during the time determined. Did we hit the mark, overshoot or undershoot?

A fourth reminder is help others set realistic goals. Many of us have over-zealous ambitions (ideas) on what we imagine can be done in a given period. We too often shoot for the moon and barely hit the ceiling! Helping others create goals and objectives that are realistic, allowing some margin for obstacles and unexpected challenges along the way, is part of the art of leadership. Some may have to be challenged to stretch a little more than they are comfortable with, perhaps fearing failure more than stepping out in faith. Helping others put more stretch, growth, faith, etc. in their personal goals is an art, not a science.

Whatever goals or plans we settle on, remember that, “Man plans his ways, but God directs his steps.” (Proverbs 16:9 NIV) Plans and goals are simply tools to help us live more fruitful and obedient lives as we follow Christ. They are not to master us, but rather serve to guide us as we live day-to-day. We must be careful that we don't become slaves to our plans. Plans are great servants, but poor masters!

Finally, remember to follow through on a period of feedback when the time period is finished. As a mentor, it does not help the development of others if we don't review with others their accomplishments. This review should be one of overall affirmation, with few surprises. Any shortfalls should have been highlighted along the way, not waiting until the end of the time to communicate dissatisfaction or failure. If the goals were specific to begin with, then the outcomes should be self-

evident. In case of shortfalls, we'll need to discuss the "whys" and how to avoid them in the future, as well as lessons learned through the experience.

Creating personal goals and development plans are helpful for living focused and fruitful lives for the King. Develop the habit and seek to help others do the same. You'll be amazed at how much more you can accomplish for His glory!

## Intentionality – A Little Goes a Long Way

One of the primary responsibilities for Kingdom leader is to leave behind more leaders. We are tasked with developing those leaders around us, helping them grow in their capacity to contribute to the great mission of discipling the nations.

But what should we do if we don't have the 'gift mix' for developing others? Often this development gets ignored or we silently hope that with more experience those leaders around us are being developed. While experience does help, it may or may not be good depending on how the experienced is processed and certainly does not maximize one's development opportunities.

When it comes to developing other leaders, a little bit of intentionality goes a long way. A small amount of forethought or planning for the development of those we are leading can bring great gains. And here's the secret – we don't have to be the 'developer.' All we have to do is lead them in their development.

Many leaders accept the responsibility for developing the leaders around them, but are paralyzed into inaction because they assume, they must be the ones to do the development. The answer is not in delegating the development to another. Rather, we simply lead them in development as we do mission together. It does not take much effort on our part and those we lead will love us for it.

As we put together our team meeting agendas, set apart some time for team and leader development. Depending upon the meeting, the length of time will vary. By setting time for this development in the agenda, we will focus our team on the importance of their own development as leaders. If not, then 'business items' will take all available meeting time and still not be completed.

Here's some simple ideas on how to lead your team in development:

1. Select a passage from the Gospels about Jesus developing the 12 Apostles. Read it together and discuss leadership principles you observe and how they might apply to your context.
2. Select a short article on leadership or a topic of current leadership interest to discuss together and then relate it to your mission.
3. Read a book together or select a chapter from a book and discuss it in your team meetings.
4. Visit another organization or church ministry as a team. Meet their leaders, seek lessons learned from them and discuss afterwards what may be applicable.
5. Watch a film together that has leadership related themes applicable for your context and discuss any lessons observed and how to apply them.

In all of these situations we do not have to be the 'answer person' for our team's development. We just have to take the time to plan ahead and lead them in a developmental experience. We can learn and develop right along with them through these shared experiences.

Do you have leader development as a part of your next team meeting agenda?

## Creating a Platform of Influence

One of our primary functions as a leader is to develop those leaders around us, helping them grow in their capacity to contribute to the mission. The ability to influence and help them grow is built upon the foundation of trust relationships that we have with them. But, what to do when we do not have that kind of history with them—when there is no real relationship yet established?

In a recent conversation with Paul Stanley, former International VP of The Navigators, we discussed how to address this challenge. Below are some of our practical ideas on how to build a relationship with team members, especially when the team is geographically distant, so we can begin to help them grow and develop.

1. Our first step is to begin to create trust in our relationships.
  - o Remember, the depth of our relationship will determine the impact of our influence.
  - o As their leader and mentor, we want to be viewed as a ‘value-added’ asset to their life and leadership, not a burden.
  - o Mutual vulnerability will create a growing bond of trust, as we, their supervisor, initiate appropriate self-disclosure and transparency.
  - o Mutual confidentiality must be assured, for any ‘leakage’ will quickly destroy trust.
2. Create a sense where others know that we are in it with them – we are in it together to help them succeed.
  - o Support them in spirit, becoming their fan and champion to others.
3. Help them see a bigger vision for life and contribution beyond their current role.
  - o Help them believe that their future destiny is more than what they can currently ‘see.’
4. Early in the relationship, they must feel practically helped in their current responsibility.
  - o Identify two or three leverage points for them to focus on in the next 1-2 years that will truly help them make progress and bring successful change to their mission responsibility.
5. Help them clarify their responsibilities that they are to steward before God and others.
  - o Help them shape the stewardship of these responsibilities, seeking to prioritize these responsibilities for what is most strategic at this time.
  - o Help them identify 3-4 key action steps to focus on within these leverage points.
  - o Pray for them and with them over these action steps.
  - o Talk with them regularly about progress or difficulties they are facing.
6. Help them grow in confidence as a leader.
  - o Affirm, encourage, advocate for and champion them.
  - o Help them identify leadership principles that they are doing that models good leadership.
    - Ken Blanchard reminds us to, “Find somebody doing something right and tell them about it.”

7. Help them grow in self-awareness.
  - o What are their personal strengths and weaknesses as a leader.
  - o Help them learn to lead from their strengths and staff to their weaknesses.
8. As we supervise and mentor them, adopt an attitude of asking, not telling!
  - o Lead them with questions, not answers!
  - o Help them reflect well on their leadership experiences and arrive at good conclusions.
9. Open the bible together and pray together on a regular basis.

Walking with those who we lead is a privilege. Don't be so focused on accomplishing the mission that you miss the relationships that God has given. Missions will come and go, but relationships well established will last for a lifetime.

## Faithfulness Through the Generations

The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel... After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what He had done for Israel.      Judges 2:7,10 (NIV 1984)

Israel walked in obedience to God and His law throughout the lifetime of Moses, Joshua, and the elders who led after Joshua died. For three generations they remembered the great deeds that the Lord had done, how He had delivered them from bondage in Egypt and preserved them for forty years in the desert. They remembered how He helped them cross the Jordan River and conquer the land promised to them when Moses sent Joshua, Caleb and the other spies into the 'land flowing with milk and honey.'

But now a new generation came who did not know the Lord or His deeds. Something had been lost in transmission through the generations. The author of Judges reminds us that this fourth generation did not know the Lord or His deeds done for Israel. Something happened after the generation of elders – they failed to raise their children in the ways of the Lord and failed to connect them to their spiritual heritage.

To see spiritual generations continue for the fourth, fifth, and more generations, we will need both a personal dynamic walk with God and some intentionality. Our 'children' – those we lead and influence (whether spiritual or biological) will need to see our own pursuit of Christ and embrace it as their own faith when mature. While we cannot force others to grow, our example can be so compelling that they will desire it for themselves. It has been said, "Set yourself on fire and others will come and watch you burn!"

Secondly, generations who do not experience our great God doing great things will drift into spiritual doldrums and their faith can be more intellectual rather than personal. They will have many opinions, but few convictions. The previous generations will have to be intentionally helping the new ones know their spiritual heritage and live a life that takes new steps of faith based on God's promises.

Isaiah 50:1-2 (NIV) says, "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many."

Are you planning and leading for a legacy of many spiritual generations? Are you seeking to connect the current spiritual generation with those who have gone before them?

## Who is Responsible for My Development?

The heights of great men reached and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight,  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upwards in the night.

*The Ladder of St. Augustine*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

My conversation with this 30-year-old leader had come to a point of discussing his ongoing development as a leader. “But my organization is not even thinking about my development,” he explained in exasperation. “When will I be developed as a leader so that I can truly make my contribution?”

I’ve reflected on that conversation many times. Who is responsible for our development as leaders? I’d suggest three sources who are very interested in us reaching our potential for influence in the Kingdom.

First of all God Himself is very interested in our leader development. While both competency and character are needed to lead well, God chooses to focus our development on the character side. The obvious reason is that He will certainly take care of any competency issues through as we depend upon Him. This does not mean that leadership competency is unimportant for Kingdom leaders, but God places a priority on Christlike character for His leaders.

He is committed to seeing Christlike character shaped within us all, especially His leaders. He is constantly arranging the circumstances of life and leadership to help us grow into the person He desires. We can embrace these opportunities for character growth or seek to run from them. But should we choose to run away, He will again raise up new circumstances to once more move us towards Christlikeness.

Our second source of development should be our ministry organization, corporation, business or workplace. Businesses and organization that purposefully invest in developing leadership communities tend to do well over time. These organizational opportunities can be formal (academic credentialing through study - secondary degrees in organizational leadership) or semi-formal (certification, continuing education days or seminars in leadership competency). Some workplaces are better than others at providing this type of intentional development. But even those who are committed to intentional development of leaders will often greatly cut the budget or staffing for it when there is an overall budget tightening.

A third source of personal development comes from within. We must own our personal development as leaders. Rather than waiting or complaining about not being developed, take the responsibility to be the best leader you can be for Jesus! Pray for and seek opportunities for growth in leadership competency and character.

One of the most helpful development opportunities is having a mentor for your leadership. Many emerging leaders tell me that they can't find a mentor willing to meet with them. Consider making yourself available to help a next generation emerging leader begin their leadership career with the benefit of your experience.

Be the best leader you can be for Jesus sake and embrace your own development!

Pursue it wholeheartedly!

Start today!

## Help – I Need a Mentor!

Many a conversation with next generation emerging leaders sooner or later comes to their felt need to be mentored. This is frequently followed by a complaint that there is no one to help them. “I’ve looked and asked, and no one is willing to help me,” they say. What to do?

First, the absence of a mentor is no excuse for not pursuing development. We can do personal bible studies of leaders, both good and bad, and seek to learn from their examples. There are multiple resources available to us online for growth. We can read biographies of leaders and glean valuable leadership lessons from their experiences. But it is nice to have someone to interact with – a mentor who can bring perspective and personal help.

Yes, most leaders are busy people with very full schedules. Their job descriptions do not contain responsibilities for developing others and few are looking for mentoring opportunities. What to do?

Identify someone who you think can be of some help. Approach them with this question, “Could we meet for me to ask some questions about how I can be a better leader?” Note that you’re not asking them to mentor you. Many busy leaders will immediately decline a mentoring offer... they have too many things to do! But they all have to eat sometime, so invite them to a meal (you offer to pay!) and come with specific questions. Take good notes and reflect on their answers for your growth and development.

I’ve done this over the years, targeting specific leaders for specific topics of my development. I’ve benefited from comments on: how to work with an executive assistant, how to select a leadership team, how to lead a meeting, how to manage your schedule, how to lead a geographically dispersed team, lessons learned about travel, how to handle communication demands, how to arrange an office, and many, many more. Note that most were ‘how to’ topics that can be answered from someone’s experience. All were practical and immediately applicable.

Another frequent objection mentoring another is that they have never done this before. To address this I’ve said, “I realize that this may be new for you. But you have been preparing for this all your life. It’s my job to get from you what you have learned by asking questions. All you have to do is answer my questions.” This makes it doable as they realize that they are not expected to prepare anything – they’ve already done the preparation.

Don’t let the absence of a mentor stop you from your growth and development!

Get after it! And if you do have someone, pursue them – now!