

LEADERSHIP LESSONS **FROM THE BIBLE**

1 Corinthians 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow
the example of Christ.

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PREFACE

Why did I write a book about leadership? Can one learn how to become a better leader by reading a book? What about all the other books already written about leadership? I wrote this book because being a godly leader is very important for pastors and church leaders. Yet often it is hard to find practical, Biblical information about how to be a better leader.

Leadership is necessary in order for a pastor or church leader to be able to use their other skills. An evangelist needs good leadership to get people to listen to him and then to follow up with them later. A pastor needs leadership so people will trust and follow what he says and does. Every time two or more persons do something, one of them needs to be a leader, and the better a leader they are the better the result of what is done.

Godly leadership skills reveal the character and the integrity of the person. It shows who the person is, the real person inside. This instills trust in the leader. Godly leadership is not just who we are, but it also includes what we do – our outer words and actions. Both are needed to be an effective leader in our home, business or church.

In this book we will cover both aspects by looking at the lives of Bible people who were leaders. We will look at the character of the person and also the actions of the person. These weave together to form the kind of quality leadership God wants us to have.

So why another book on leadership? This book is an easy-to-understand explanation of the lives of various Bible people and draws leadership lessons from them. It isn't a to-do list, but rather practical principles that can be applied by each one of us in many different ways. My prayer is that this book would help you be a better leader in whatever roles you have in life.

Jerry Schmoyer, 2017

1. WHAT IS A LEADER

In some ways, almost everyone is a leader. Leadership is not a special personality type or someone with a certain talent. Simply put, a leader is someone who influences someone else. It can be done by word or action. If someone chooses to allow another person to influence them by something they say or do, that person is a leader. Almost everyone is a leader because most people influence someone else in some way. So it's not a matter of if you are a leader, but what kind of a leader you are.

If you are a husband, you are a leader in your family. If you are a wife, you are a leader of your children and possibly other women as well. Older children influence younger children. Younger children influence their friends. Unmarried people impact friends and others. Leadership is something we all do. It isn't a title given to us, but a role we fill in life.

Often we think that to be a good leader we must be a friendly, outgoing person who is popular with everyone. That is not true. I am not that kind of a person. I am quiet, shy and more naturally a follower than a leader. I had to learn to be a godly leader in my family and church. God has been developing it in me over the years. I am still quiet and shy, but have learned how to lead while still being the person God made me to be. I have studied what it means to be a good leader, have read much and watched others, have taught leadership principles for many years, and have studied people in the Bible to learn good leadership qualities from their lives. There is no better book than the Bible and no better standard than men of God in the past in whom God has been working. By following their examples, we will be walking in the path God wants us to walk.

Every year in India I dramatize the life of a different Bible leader by dressing in a Bible costume and telling the story of the person as if I were him. I draw lessons in leadership from their lives and apply these to today's leaders. I have taken the sessions I have taught to pastors in India and compiled them into this book on godly leadership. These Bible people have a variety of personalities, skills, abilities and weaknesses. We can learn from what they did right as well as what they did wrong. Each person is different, and the way they lead is different as well. There is no one pattern for everyone. We are all different as well, and so our leadership will be different, too.

When we study Bible people, we all find someone we can identify with more than others. Moses has been of a particular help for me and is one of my favorites. I have learned a lot about what a leader is to do (and not do) from him. You will find some of these people you can closely identify with as well. Study them closely and learn from their lives.

As we look at these people, we will see that there are three elements that go into intentional, godly leadership.

First, a leader must know where he is going. If you don't know what target you are shooting at how can you possibly hit it? If I don't know God's goal for me in my life, how can I grow to meet it? If I don't know what God's plans for my church are, how can I lead the people in that direction? When starting in the ministry, I thought I needed to have my church grow to be a large church, but that never happened. It wasn't what God wanted to happen in my ministry. I had to learn to listen to God, to be sensitive to His Spirit showing me what God wanted to accomplish in my life and in my church.

Second, a godly leader must know how to get where God wants him to go. Knowing the goal is important, but then knowing how to get there is also important. God wanted my church to be a teaching hospital to help suffering Christians to grow. To accomplish that, He used my gifts of teaching, counseling and working with people to help them grow spiritually. Each leader needs to know what God wants him to achieve and how to go about doing it.

Third, when we know where we are going and how to get there, a good leader must know how to take others with him. Being able to work with people is very important. Some leaders know where they are going and how they want to get there but aren't able to have people follow them because they are prideful, controlling, and don't know how to show love and respect to others. Other leaders can naturally have people follow them because they are enjoyable to be with and make those around them feel good. They are friendly and want people to like them and they will do whatever it takes to be popular and well liked. But, they don't know how to lead people to the place God wants them to be. Their personality attracts others but they don't lead them to maturity in Christ.

A godly leader must be able to influence others by their words, by their example, and by their character as well. I know where God wants me to go and how to get there, but I must make sure I do it in a way others will follow. I must communicate to them that I care about them and what is best for them by showing love and compassion. People don't follow me because I have a fun loving personality, for I don't. People follow me because they respect me, trust me and know I have been faithful and dependable in the past. All leaders need that.

God has created you to be the leader He wants you to be – not like another leader, but using the gifts and skills He has given you. Each one of us is different, as are each of the people in this book. But we all are leaders wanting to help people come to know Jesus and grow spiritually. There is no one pattern for everyone, but the principles in this book from the lives of Bible leaders can be applied to each of us. As you read, listen to what God says that applies to you and put it into practice in your life. That will help you become a better leader. It's a lifelong process. My purpose in writing this book is that it will help you as you grow as a godly leader.

2. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM JOSEPH

READ Genesis 37 – 50

Often we think that leaders are people who don't have the same struggles others have. We think they have somehow risen above the trials and challenges of life. It seems they have arrived spiritually and matured so they can now lead others. But, that is not true. Everyone faces difficulties and challenges in life, leaders included. In fact, the best leaders often have had the hardest times in life. Daniel was taken from his family and put in captivity in Babylon. David was rejected by his brothers and forgotten by his father when Samuel came to anoint the next king. Joseph, too, had a very difficult start in life. Let's look at his life and some lessons in godly leadership we can learn from him.



1. A GODLY LEADER RISES ABOVE HIS CIRCUMSTANCES

Nothing in Joseph's family history could have predicted he'd be a good leader. His father had children by four women who didn't get along well. He had 10 older stepbrothers. Because his father loved his mother above the others, he was the favorite son and indulged in ways the others weren't. That made his brothers jealous and bitter toward him. Such a difficult upbringing could cause a person to have many problems adjusting to life, but Joseph chose to rise above this and grow stronger. The challenges matured him. He had a choice to make in how he responded to the circumstances in his life and he chose to rise above them to become the best person he could be.

We today have choices to make as well. We have to choose if we are going to live for God or ourselves, give in to difficulties and quit or move ahead no matter what. We may have had a difficult family life in childhood like Joseph. We can find excuses to feel sorry for ourselves, decide life isn't fair, and envy those who seem to have lives much easier than ours. Or, we can do our best to grow and be the person God created us to be. Joseph made that choice and so must we.

Being a pastor or church leader is a choice we make. God doesn't force us to serve, He gives us a choice to decide if we want to rise above life's troubles and trials or fall under them. He puts the desire in us to serve and gifts us through His Holy Spirit, but it is up to us to decide to follow Him when He calls. It is not easy being a leader. If we serve out of pride or wanting attention, we will fail. If we allow the attacks of Satan, the flesh, and other people to defeat us, we won't move ahead. But, if we choose to do the very best we can with the one life God has given us then we, like Joseph, will be making godly choices and commitments. This is the first lesson in this book, and the first for us as well. If we don't dedicate ourselves to serving God in whatever capacity He wants, then none of the rest of the advice for leadership in the rest of the book will mean anything to us.

Are you willing to follow and serve God with all your heart and life no matter the obstacles and difficulties you have had in the past and will have in the future? Will you choose to stay faithful whatever happens? Are you just serving because you like the attention you get by being a pastor or leader? Being a godly leader is not easy, and without total commitment no one will faithfully serve to the end.

2. A GODLY LEADER HAS A GOD-GIVEN PURPOSE IN LIFE

One of the reasons Joseph chose to rise above all that was wrong in his life was because God gave him a dream which he remembered and believed (Genesis 37:5-9). He knew this was God speaking to him and calling him to lead his family. He kept his eyes on that goal, knowing it was what God wanted for him. He didn't do it out of pride or wanting to be first, but because He knew God wanted him to do this with his life. Whatever ups and downs life brought him, he always remembered that one day God would use him to rescue his family. So no matter what happened, he kept hope in God's plan for his life. When he went into captivity as a slave and then when he was put in prison, he never forgot God had a plan and purpose for his life.

God has a plan and purpose for each one of us today as well. He puts a desire in our hearts to accomplish something for Him, and it becomes the guiding light in our heart. This isn't something self-centered like fame, popularity, or a large ministry. These things may or may not come to us. What matters is carrying out the plan and purpose God has put inside you. When I was young, He gave me a vision to pastor and help people grow closer to Him. Later, He put a desire in my heart to help the pastors in India. There have been many obstacles and problems along the way, but I know that is what God wants me to do, so I continue doing my best to obey.

What is God's plan and purpose for your life? What desire has He put in your heart to do to serve Him? What goal does He want you to accomplish? In other words, for what reason are you alive and on earth?

3. A GODLY LEADER PERSEVERES DESPITE OBSTACLES

We've seen a leader must make godly choices and follow God's plan and purpose for his life. But, there is another ingredient we must add to these two: perseverance. God showed Joseph that he was going to lead his family through difficult times, but for the next 15 or 20 years it seemed that would never happen. He was thrown into a pit by his brothers, and then sold as a slave to Egypt. He stayed faithful despite all that, but his faithfulness resulted in his being thrown into prison. It seemed like he was forgotten by God and others. Still, he stayed faithful in his heart. He had patience. He persevered. What God had said did come true, and later in his life he enjoyed the fruit of his patient endurance.

Leadership takes patience and perseverance. Paul told Timothy to persevere and endure (1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:3). That's important advice for everyone who wants to be a godly leader. God used trials and difficulties in my life to teach me patience and perseverance. One of my favorite childhood stories is about a turtle and a rabbit that had a race. The rabbit thought he would easily win since he was very fast and the turtle moved slowly. So, the rabbit ran awhile, then ate and rested. He ran some more, then took a nap. The turtle kept slowly moving forward without stopping, and actually won the race while the rabbit slept. The lesson from this is that we don't have to move fast, but we must persevere and keep going no matter what.

All godly leaders must learn to persevere when things aren't going as they'd like. Don't think something is wrong with you as a leader, or that God isn't with you. God uses things like this to mature us, to stretch our faith, and to make us more like Jesus. Satan wants us to get discouraged and quit. He failed with Joseph, but succeeds with many others. God allows these challenges because He is more concerned with making us more like Jesus than He is with giving us an easy life.

Are you facing something in life now that isn't going as you'd like? Are you patiently trusting Jesus and faithfully serving no matter what happens? Do you keep moving ahead, however slowly? Or do you have times of great faith and closeness to God followed by times when you drift and aren't close to God?

4. A GODLY LEADER HAS INNER CHARACTER

The Bible tells us that Joseph was “well-built and handsome” (Genesis 39:6). He also had wisdom and God prospered what he did in Potiphar’s house (Genesis 39:2). Yet he didn’t use these things for his own glory, but for God’s service. When Potiphar’s wife tempted him, Joseph could have sinned without anyone knowing. He could have said that God deserted him so why should he remain faithful to God? He could have found excuses to sin, but he didn’t because he had inner character (Genesis 39:9).

This applies to the use of our gifts and talents as well. God gives all of us spiritual gifts to use to minister. They differ from person to person, but whatever they are, He expects us to use them to serve Him and not for our own pride. It can be a real temptation for some pastors to become self-centered and take credit for what God has done through them. Others can become lazy or indulge in sin when it seems no one is watching. A godly leader does what is right, even if no one is watching! Joseph learned that as a boy when he was making godly choices to follow God no matter what was happening in his life. He also did it when on his own as a slave to Potiphar.

If people could see you when you are alone, would they see you are different than the person you are when others are watching? If people could read your thoughts, would they find ungodly, sinful things in your mind? Would God say you have inner character, or that you are a hypocrite? Confess any sin you find and ask God to help you live a godly life and have inner character.

5. A GODLY LEADER SERVES WHEREVER HE CAN

Joseph certainly didn’t have an easy time of life. He could have felt sorry for himself and quit when he was made a slave, but he didn’t. He was loyal to Potiphar and served him well. Then despite faithfully following God and not sinning with Potiphar’s wife, he found himself in prison and seemingly deserted by God. He could have turned from God and gotten bitter. Instead, he helped out in any way he could, even in prison. He didn’t sit around waiting for God to get him out before serving; he ministered to others wherever he was. He maximized every opportunity. God had prospered Potiphar’s house while Joseph was there, then blessed the work he did in prison.

God will bless and prosper our work as well when we faithfully serve Him. We may not see much fruit, but God will use what we do. “It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2-3). God rewards us for faithfully serving wherever we are. He doesn’t look at the amount of people or money we have, he wants us to faithfully persevere and do what we can wherever He puts us.

Are you content serving God where He has you, or do you long for something more important or easier? Do you, like Joseph, look for those you can help even if they can never help you back?

6. A GODLY LEADER HAS DISCERNMENT AND WISDOM

Joseph could see God’s hand in and behind the events in his life even if it wasn’t evident to others. He realized God had allowed him to go through all that happened so he would be in a position to save his family from the famine (Genesis 45:5-8). He realized that, although they intended to harm him, God intended to use it for their benefit. “You meant it for evil but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). Joseph was able to look at the events around him and see God’s plan behind it all. He remembered God’s plan and purpose for him and believed in it. He tried to see things from God’s perspective. That gave him wisdom. We as leaders must be able to discern and trace the hand of God in His workings in life. We must be able to see God’s big plan and, based on that, use wisdom and discernment to make proper choices and decisions.

How is God using you and your ministry to serve Him? Can you look back and see how God has used you and your ministry? Do you keep His purpose for you in mind, or do you focus on the difficulties and challenges you face? Do you believe He will keep on using you in the future?

7. A GODLY LEADER LOVES AND FORGIVES OTHERS

Joseph freely forgave his brothers for all they had done to him. He did that many years before they were reunited. They didn't deserve forgiveness, they didn't ask for it, and he didn't have to give it. In fact, he found himself in the perfect place to get justice and revenge when they came to him begging for food. But he cared about his family and their future. He wasn't hard and bitter, but sensitive and compassionate. He never would have been the godly man he was if he had kept unforgiveness in his heart all those years. The bitterness would have poisoned all he did.

The same is true of us as leaders today. We can have all the marks of leadership mentioned above, but if we don't have compassion and forgiveness, the rest doesn't matter. 1 Corinthians 13 tells us that if we don't have love we don't have anything, no matter what we produce as a leader. We must have compassion for others. We must forgive any hurts they cause us as soon as they happen, no matter if they apologize or not. Jesus forgave us long before we could thank Him, or even recognize our need of being forgiven. In order for us to be like him we, too, must be people who forgive. God commands it (Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-13; Matthew 18:21-35; 6:14-15).

Is there anyone you haven't forgiven, anyone whose name comes to mind when the topic of forgiveness comes up? Are you as quick and thorough to forgive others as you want God to be when He forgives you? Do you have love and compassion for others? If not, ask God to put the love He has for them in your heart so you see them as He sees them.

8. A GODLY LEADER IS BLESSED AND USED BY GOD

Despite all Joseph went through, he recognized God's blessing in his life. He named his first son Manasseh because it meant that God had made him forget all his troubles (Genesis 41:51) and his second son Ephraim because God had made him fruitful (Genesis 41:52). He sought to follow and serve God despite it often seeming like God had deserted him. As a result, God used Him for His glory. He will use us, also. We don't have to be perfect, educated, or popular. We have to be faithful.

List some of the ways God has used you and blessed you. Do you let others know all He has done for you? Spend time thanking Him for these, and for the ones He will do in the future as well.

We have seen from the life of Joseph that to be a godly leader we must:

1. Rise above circumstances
2. Have a God-given purpose in life
3. Persevere despite obstacles
4. Have inner character
5. Serve wherever he can
6. Have discernment and wisdom
7. Love and forgive others
8. Be blessed and used by God

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God to help you have each of them in your life.

3. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM MOSES

READ Exodus 1 - 19; Numbers 12 - 14; Acts 7:20-43; Hebrews 11:23-29

Moses is one of the most important men in the Bible and in Jewish history. He is my favorite person in the Bible. I identify with him in his struggles and weaknesses, and learn from him as he overcomes them. Several books in the Bible tell about his long and fruitful life. He lived 120 years. The first 40 he was a somebody, then for the next 40 he was a nobody. During the last 40 he learned what God could do with a nobody who lets God use him for His glory. Moses was a man of faith, obedience and trust. He was a man of the Word and a man of prayer. He had great failures in his life, but he kept moving ahead by God's grace. Moses didn't want to be a leader, but was willing when he knew that was what God wanted from him. He certainly wasn't perfect, but he did try to be the man God made him to be. We can learn some important lessons from his life.



1. A GODLY LEADER FOLLOWS GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY

God always has a plan. His plan for the Jews was for them to come out of Egypt and into the Promised Land (Exodus 3:7-8; 23:31). God had a plan for Moses as well - to lead them from Egypt to the Promised Land (Acts 7:35-35). Moses passed God's plan on to the people, who wanted it to happen as well (Exodus 6:6-8). Moses didn't come up with his own plan for the people, nor did he try to make them like other nations. His goal was to follow God's plan for them.

God has a plan for each one of us as well. It's of primary importance that we know it and follow it. Some leaders come up with their own plan and ask God to bless it and make it work. That seldom works. Instead, we must listen to His voice speaking inside us, revealing to us His plan for us and our life and ministry. Sometimes God puts a desire or burden in our hearts as a way of showing us what He wants us to do. It could be something major that will require our whole focus, or something smaller and simpler that doesn't take much time to accomplish. Other times He sends us opportunities like open doors to step through.

In chapter 1 we talked about a leader knowing where he is going, how to get there and how to take others with him. Moses knew where he was going – God told him to take the people to the Promised Land. God would show them the way to get there. Moses spent the last 40 years of his life trying to take the people there.

Do you know where God is leading you in your life and ministry? What goals has He set for you in your personal growth and maturity? Where does He want you to take your ministry? What does he want you to accomplish through your family? If you don't know then pray, listen to God, meditate on His Word, and follow what He says. Don't make your own plans and ask God to bless them, discover what God's plans are for you and follow them.

2. A GODLY LEADER IS HUMBLE

Some men want to be leaders so others will like them and be impressed with them. Often this is because they are afraid of rejection or failure. They think being a leader will make others think they

are important. There are men who don't want to lead because they are afraid of the struggles and difficulties that come with leadership. They also are afraid of failure and rejection. In both these cases it is pride that is behind these feelings. Pride doesn't just mean we think we are better than others, pride also can be thinking we aren't as good as others. In both cases the person is self-centered, thinking about themselves before anything else. That is what makes this pride.

I have struggled with fear of failure and rejection, and at times that kept me from being a good leader because I was more concerned about what others thought than with doing what was right. Moses had this same struggle. He didn't want to be a leader. He made five excuses to God about why he couldn't be a leader (Exodus 4). He was afraid he would fail, or the people wouldn't follow him, or something would go wrong. That is pride because that is thinking about yourself instead of God. Yet God patiently worked with Moses showing him that God would be with him, helping him, and that he could be a good leader if he depended on God for wisdom and strength. Moses learned to be humble, and the Bible tells us he was very humble, more than anyone else (Numbers 12:3).

How did Moses learn to be humble? God used the painful struggles in his life to teach him to depend on God and not himself. He learned to overcome his fear by focusing on God instead of himself. We cannot have faith in God and fear of others at the same time; one will push the other out. Moses learned to grow his faith in God so it was greater than his fear of others.

Ask God to show you if there is any self-centeredness in you that keeps you from trusting and following Him. Are you afraid of what others will think or say, of failure or rejection? Does it make you use your role as leader as a way of getting approval or affirmation from others? How can you become more humble like Moses?

3. A GODLY LEADER SERVES OTHERS, ESPECIALLY HIS FAMILY

Jesus came to serve, not be served (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45). He washed the disciples feet (John 13). A godly leader serves others instead of expecting others to serve him. Moses chose to serve God and his people instead of becoming Pharaoh and being served (Hebrews 11:24-26). As pastors we are shepherds and servants (1 Peter 5:4-5). Shepherds are to sacrifice for the sheep like Jesus did for us (John 10:11). Moses made that choice when he committed to serve the Jews.

However, he didn't always make that choice when it came to serving his own family. Leaders must put their families before their ministries (1 Timothy 3:5). Unfortunately the story of Moses family life is not good. Perhaps he was gone from home a lot as a shepherd. Pastors can be gone from their families as they shepherd God's people. Because he didn't circumcise his second son when he should have, God threatened to take Moses' life. His wife was forced to perform the circumcision to save his life but then took his sons and left him. They were never reunited again (Exodus 4:24-26). As leaders we must serve the people, but that means serving our wives and families first of all.

Being a godly leader also means serving the people who follow us. But that doesn't mean we do everything they want. We serve them by doing what is best for them. A parent serves their children by doing what is best for them, not doing everything the child wants them to do. A parent teaches their children to do things for themselves. So does a godly leader.

Moses became so busy trying to do everything the people needed he wasn't able to do the really important things, so he had to learn to train others to help with the work (Exodus 18:14-17). God provided others to help Moses with the leadership of the nation (Numbers 11:16-17). He trained Joshua to take over for him when he died. Jesus trained His disciples in the same way. Paul served Timothy, Titus and Silas by training them to serve. We are to do the same thing.

Would people say you are a leader who serves the people, or who expects others to serve them? Does your family see you as someone who puts them before the needs of others outside the family? Do you serve the people in your ministry by doing what is best for them, or do you do what pleases them to keep them happy? Are you training others to carry on the ministry you have?

4. A GODLY LEADER MUST HANDLE CRITICISMS

Moses was a good, faithful leader who was used by God, but that doesn't mean leadership was easy or smooth. Leading the Jews was full of ups and downs. Sometimes the people loved and followed him, other times they blamed all their problems on him and wanted to kill him and go back to Egypt (Exodus 14:11-12; 32:1; 7:9; Numbers 12:1,8; 16:1,3). The same was true of Jesus. He wasn't liked by everyone either, and He said that the same would happen to us (Luke 6:26).

The Bible says that when we are criticized, and we will be criticized, we should keep silent and listen (John 19:9; Proverbs 17:27-28). Think about what is said before reacting in self defense (Proverbs 15:28; James 1:19-20). Learn what good you can from the words spoken and think carefully before responding (Proverbs 15:1; 16:21; 25:15). When you do respond, do so in love and humility. If others don't accept what you say, don't argue. Let God change their hearts in His time. Humble yourself and be quick to apologize if you should (1 Samuel 15:24, 30; 25:28). Don't give in just to keep the peace, but don't get into a fight either (Ephesians 4:31; Proverbs 17:14). Don't defend yourself. Just listen, learn what is helpful, apologize for what you could have done better, forgive them for hurt caused against you and leave in peace. The best place to learn and practice those skills is at home with your mate and family.

How do you respond when you are criticized? Does your mate feel free to make suggestions to you? What can you do to better learn from criticism? Do you apologize for your part in things or find reasons to blame the other person? Are you quick to forgive those who hurt you by what they say?

5. A GODLY LEADER ACTS WITH INTEGRITY

It's important for a righteous leader to have a good reputation and be above reproach in how he treats others (1 Timothy 3:1-7). He must be a person of integrity, honesty and fairness. Good character is more important than training or skills. Moses was a man of godliness and integrity, but he wasn't perfect. His anger problem kept him from entering the Promised Land (Numbers 20:12). Previously he had killed an Egyptian in anger, broke the stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments when he saw the Jews sinning, and struck the rock twice instead of speaking to it when angry with the people.

Lack of self-control can be a big problem for all Christians, but it is especially important for those in leadership positions. We must always act with honor and integrity. No one respects an angry person. They may cooperate out of fear, but there is no respect. I hear of too many pastors and other leaders who use anger to make others do what they want. That is not what Jesus would do, and He is the one we are to be like.

What kind of reputation do you have among those who know you? What do people say when they talk about you? Do people know they can count on you to do what you say? Do they trust you? Who has seen you expressing unrighteous anger? When do you have the hardest time controlling your anger? What should you do to have self-control?

6. A GODLY LEADER SPENDS TIME ALONE WITH GOD

One of the traits I most admire in Moses is his commitment to spend time alone with God. He would speak with God face to face (Exodus 33:7-11; 34:29-35; Numbers 12:5-8; 3:12-17). He didn't spend the time telling God what he needed God to do, nor did he tell God what he wanted to do and ask God to help him do it. God already knew everything Moses could have said to him. Instead, he listened to what God wanted to say to him. What God has to say to us is much more important than what we have to say to God, so it's important to make sure we spend more time listening than we do talking. That is true of any personal relationship.

It takes time alone with God to learn to listen to His Spirit putting thoughts in our minds or burdens in our hearts. Make sure you spend time listening to God each day. Some have found it helps to have a special time and place where they meet with God in privacy. Turn off your cell phone and let people know you aren't to be interrupted. Then spend time listening and talking to God. God speaks to us through His Word as well. Spend time slowly reading the Bible and meditating on what you read. God will speak to you through His Word. Listening to God is a top priority for all Christians, no matter how busy their days are. Jesus would get up early and go off by Himself to spend time alone with God. Sometimes He would even stay up all night praying. If Jesus needed to do this, how much more do we need to do it?

Not only should you have some time each day when you do this, but take special days off throughout the year to just get alone and read the Word while you pray and meditate. I would spend Wednesday mornings alone in my church praying and worshipping. It was often hard to make sure I did this, but when I did it was the best time of my week. I also like to pray when I go for long walks by myself. Being in God's nature helps me to better connect with Him. You should find what works for you and do it.

Taking one day a week off from your normal work duties to relax and spend time with family and loved ones is also important. They need uninterrupted time with us as well. God commands us to take off one day in seven. Unfortunately, it is a command most church leaders break. But God commands it for a good reason and we must obey Him. For me, it is often during these times away from work, when I am more relaxed and distracted, that God speaks comfort, encouragement or wisdom to me. In addition, it gives me more time with my family and that is also very important.

How much time do you spend alone with God each day? Do you spend most of your time talking to God or listening to God? Do you know how to listen to God? Are you able to hear Him when He puts thoughts in your mind or burdens in your heart? Do you hear Him speak to you when you study and meditate on the Bible? Do you take time away from your ministry and other work to relax and enjoy time with family and friends?

7. A GODLY LEADER PERSEVERES

There will be times when every leader wants to quit. Moses wanted to quit several times (Numbers 11:14-15). The burdens of ministry get heavy, opposition makes progress difficult and our energy gets low. I've had time when I wanted to quit and wished God would let me quit, but I always knew inside that isn't what He wanted and I didn't want to disobey Him, so I kept on. Each leader needs to learn that for himself or herself. Discouragement is a strong tool of Satan and we need to recognize it and not give in to it.

Moses lost his family when his wife and children left him and went back home (Exodus 4:24-26). The Jews were constantly complaining and criticizing what he was doing, even though he was obeying God's directions. Moses struggled with sin as we all do, and often was defeated by lack of control over his anger. He never did accomplish what God wanted – leading the Jews into the

Promised Land. They just wandered for 40 years without growing or maturing. Those are the kinds of difficulties we face as church leaders today as well.

A lesson I learned from Moses was the importance of keeping my eyes on Jesus, not on circumstances around me or on the results of what I was trying to accomplish. God expects us to be faithful to Him (1 Corinthians 4:2). He doesn't look for great results from us, just faithfulness to what He assigns us. Jeremiah ministered for 50 years without one convert. Isaiah's ministry was much the same. So faithfully persevere.

When God looks at you, does he see someone who faithfully perseveres no matter what is happening? Are you quick to quit? Maybe you don't quit completely, but do you slow down and not serve as faithfully as you should? What things make it hardest for you to persevere? What can you do to keep faithfully serving despite these things?

8. A GODLY LEADER HAS CLOSE FRIENDS

Another thing that can help us persevere is to have friends who support and encourage us. This can help in every area of leadership. Your mate should be the one you share with the most. Other friends are important as well, especially those who are also leaders. Moses had an older man to mentor and give advice when needed, his father-in-law Jethro. He had a friend his own age to share the load with and talk to, his brother Aaron. And he had a younger man to help him and learn from him, Joshua. You, too, need someone older to give encouragement and advice and hold you accountable for your faithfulness. You need a friend about your own age that is facing similar things in life so you can face them together and help each other. And you need someone younger than you to assist you and to learn from you so they can eventually minister on their own. Paul had an older mentor (Luke), a friend his own age going through the same things (Barnabas) and a younger man to train (Timothy). Each leader needs someone in these three roles as well.

Who are your closest friends? Do you share with them how you are feeling about your ministry? Is your mate someone whom you talk to about things that discourage you? Who do you have that is older and more experienced that you regularly talk to about your life and work? Is there another pastor or ministry friend who knows all you go through? Who are you training for the ministry while they help you with yours?

These are some lessons we can learn from Moses about godly leadership. As we see from Moses' life, it's not easy being a faithful leader who is used by God. Moses had some great times of success, but some big failures as well. Still, God faithfully worked with him, helping him to become the man of God which God created him to be. He will do the same with each of us if we commit to serve Him no matter what and are willing to humble ourselves and be changed by His Spirit.

We have seen from the life of Moses that to be a godly leader we must:

1. Follow God's plan for his life and ministry
2. Be humble
3. Serve others, especially his family
4. Must handle criticism
5. Act with integrity
6. Spend time alone with God
7. Persevere
8. Have close friends

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God help you have each of them in your life.

4. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM JOSHUA

READ Joshua 5:13 – 6:2

There are many lessons in godly leadership from the whole life of Joshua, but we will focus on that time when he first took over leadership from Moses. Moses was very gifted, well trained and had a lot of experience. When he died it was up to Joshua to take over, which was hard for him. He was a typical, average person: not someone as special as Moses. He was called to do something he couldn't do – and he knew it. Still, he was God's choice to lead the Jews into the Promised Land. Often God chooses those who realize they are unable to do what God asks so that they will rely and depend on Him to get it done. That's why God chose Joshua. If being a leader is more than you feel able to do but it seems God wants you in that position, you will benefit from these lessons we can learn from Joshua.

1. A GODLY LEADER KNOWS HE IS NEVER ALONE

Joshua 5:13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

God revealed Himself to Joshua to assure him that he was not alone in leading the Jews. Being a leader can be a very lonely position. The leader has the responsibility for important decisions and life-changing events. No one else can experience just what he feels. There also is the pressure of others around him who try to oppose or influence how he leads. The leader can't expect anyone else to do that which is his responsibility alone. Yes, being a leader can be a very lonely job.



That's why it's so important to know we are never alone. We may feel alone, like Joshua did, but God's presence is always with us as He was with Joshua. We may not be able to see Him, but we know He is with us (Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5) and dwells within us (1 Corinthians 3:16). When Joshua first took over for Moses, God had promised to be with him: "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5). God is repeating it again to make sure Joshua remembers it.

We must always remember that God is with us, even if it doesn't seem so at the time. He promises that His presence is always with us and He dwells within us. We are never alone. Satan tries to have us believe that God has forsaken us, no one cares, and we are all alone. Those are lies, for they contradict what God says in His Word (Philippians 1:6).

When do you get most discouraged in leadership? When do you feel most alone? Think of all the times God has provided for you. Have there been any times He has failed you? There may be events you don't understand, but somehow God is still with you after them. What are some lies Satan puts in your heart to discourage you? What should you do when you start hearing Satan's lies that you are alone and God doesn't care?

2. A GODLY LEADER REALIZES HE IS ISN'T IN CHARGE

Joshua 5:14 "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"

Jesus was reminding Joshua that He was "Commander of the army of the Lord," not Joshua. Joshua is outranked by this Person, Jesus Himself. The highest ranking officer is always in charge, and Jesus outranks Joshua. Jesus outranks you and me as well! We are not in charge either!

Pastors are shepherds – that's what the word 'pastor' means. Yet we are shepherds under the Chief Shepherd, for the people we lead are His sheep, not ours (1 Peter 5:4). They belong to Him and are on loan to us. This applies to our children as well as the people to whom we minister. Since they are His sheep, then He is in charge. We must carry out His plans and orders, but they are HIS plans and orders, not ours! God has a plan for each of us, and it is different than His plan for others around us. We can lead with courage and confidence, but our confidence must be in God and not in ourselves.

Do you sometimes think that those in your family, church or ministry belong to you? Do you ever forget they are really God's and not yours? Do you ever feel like your battles are yours alone to fight? Why is it so important to always remember Jesus is in control and not us? Do you always strive to lead His sheep the way He wants them to go instead of going by your own plans and ideas?

3. A GODLY LEADER REMEMBERS GOD AND HIS WORK IS HOLY

Joshua 5:15 The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

It might seem strange that the conversation is interrupted by Jesus ordering Joshua to take off his sandals because he was on holy ground. What made it holy? It wasn't holy a few minutes before, why so now? It is holy because God is holy, and God was present there with Joshua. God is holy; we must always remember that and treat Him as He deserves. We show Him honor and respect when we live holy lives before Him.

We must remember that wherever God leads us or whatever He has us do, no matter how unimportant it may seem to us, is very important because God has made it holy by His very presence in it. There are no small ministries in God's sight: a mother with her children, a father with his family, a Sunday School or Bible class, a church with only a few people – nothing is small and unimportant in God's sight.

I pastored a small church in a small town for 35 years. People came and went, and we ministered to many who weren't part of our church, but it never grew in size. Sunday morning attendance was always 30 to 35, although many others came to us for training and guidance. God taught me that success in His sight is being faithful to Him, no matter the size of the ministry. Every ministry is holy and set apart to Him. Wherever He puts you is His ministry and He is present in it, that makes it holy ground. Every assignment is a sacred assignment. A mother is just as special as an evangelist. A pastor of a small church is just as important to God as a pastor of a large church. A pastor's wife is just as important as a pastor. God looks at our faithfulness, not the size of our ministries, because every place we serve is holy to Him.

Do you think more of yourself because you may have a larger ministry than others, or less of yourself because you have a smaller ministry? Do you see those with large ministries as more important and those with smaller places of service as less important? Do you recognize your place of

service is holy because God is with it, and you should treat it as holy ground before God? Do you strive to be holy in all you think and do?

4. A GODLY LEADER KEEPS IN MIND THAT VICTORY COMES FROM GOD

Joshua 6:1-2 Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men."

When Joshua met the Lord, he discovered that the battle was not his, but the Lord's. God had already overcome the enemy. All Joshua had to do was listen to God's Word and obey His orders. God did the rest. Before the Jews attacked Jericho the city already was theirs. They needed to step out by faith and obey God in attacking and fighting. God had everything under control and He was the one giving them the victory.

Our battles, too, are in God's hands. We don't have to fight and hope for His help, we follow His directions in His Word and obey what He says. We step out in faith and let Him do the fighting and win the battle. All our battles will be won that way. Some may not be won until we die, others during this lifetime. But we must realize that victory comes from Him, not our plans or strength.

Sometimes his orders don't seem to make sense or to be the best thing to do. Joshua was told to have the people walk around the city one time each day for six days, then on the seventh day walk around seven times, make a lot of noise, and watch the walls fall down! It didn't seem to make sense to them, but they followed and victory came. God never told them to do this again. The orders were different for each battle. One time God sent hail, another time the sun stood still so the enemy couldn't hide in the night. There is no one way to fight battles, God leads differently at various times. But we must always remember that victory only comes from Him.

This is just one small part of Joshua's life, but it is important because God is teaching him basic leadership lessons at the very start. These are important lessons for all of us to learn as well.

Are you aware that your battle belongs to God? Do you obey His Word and trust in Him? Or do you panic and fight to win the battle by your own strength? If you trust Him, you will have peace while fighting the way His Word tells you to fight.

We have seen from this incident in Joshua's life that to be a godly leader we must:

1. Know we are never alone
2. Realize we aren't in charge
3. Remember that God and His work is holy
4. Keep in mind that victory comes from God

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start improving? Pray about these things and ask God to help you have each of them in your life.

5. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM DAVID

READ 1 Samuel 4-21; 2 Samuel (all), 1 Kings 1-2

The story of David really starts with his great-grandmother Ruth. She married a man named Boaz and they lived in Bethlehem, the family hometown. That's why Mary and Joseph, also descendants of Ruth and Boaz, had to go there to register for the census (Luke 2:1-7). Bethlehem was a small village of farmers and shepherds 5 miles from Jerusalem. Ruth had a son named Obed, and he had a son named Jesse, who was David's father. David was the youngest of 8 sons.



Judges such as Gideon and Deborah ruled the nation following the death of Joshua. However, the people wanted to be like the other nations; they wanted a man to be king. In demanding this, they were rejecting God as their king. About 8 years before David was born, God allowed the people's choice of Saul to be their king, whom people liked because he was big and powerful. But, he didn't follow God, and he led the nation astray.

David was born about 1035 BC. Since he was the youngest son, he got the worst job on the farm, watching the sheep. But, God used those years to train David to be a man who would trust, love and serve God. There are several lessons about godly leadership we can learn from David.

1. A GODLY LEADER HAS COURAGE TO FACE CHALLENGES

By the time he was 10 years old, David had fought a bear and a lion to protect his sheep. It took a lot of courage for a young boy to do that. A godly leader's first lesson is that he needs courage to faithfully serve God and lead others. God will continually put us in positions where we must trust Him and Him alone for protection and deliverance. David learned he could always count on God. That's what courage is – trusting that God is in control no matter what happens. If we follow God, there is nothing to fear. That doesn't mean everything will be easy or perfect, but it means that God is always with us and whatever happens, no matter what, it is by His will and for His glory.

David wrote in Psalm 27:1 "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" God teaches us to have courage in small ways, then as the challenges grow so does our faith in Him. Before David could face Goliath, he had to be victorious facing the bear and the lion.

Today, too, leaders need courage to stand against mockery, criticism and persecution. Sometimes the worst opposition we face comes from other believers. It takes courage to take a stand for Jesus and lead others to follow Him as well. That starts in our families and with our friends.

Do you do what God commands in His Word and through the leading of His Spirit, no matter what others may think? Are you often influenced by the opinion of others? Is your confidence based in God alone and not your own ability?

2. A GODLY LEADER HAS PATIENCE, PERSEVERANCE

When he was 12 years old, Samuel came to Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint the next king, the one to replace Saul. David's father never even considered David, as he was so young. But God showed them he was to be the next king (1 Samuel 16:3). David was chosen and anointed at 12, but didn't become king until he was 42, and even then it was only over 2 of the 12 tribes. Finally, when he was 49, he became king over the whole nation. David had to wait 37 years to become king! God was teaching him patience and trust. David wrote "wait for the Lord" in Psalm 27:14, and that is an important lesson for all leaders. It takes time to become a godly leader, to learn to patiently trust and follow God, to persevere no matter what happens. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and we only have it as we rely on His Presence in all things.

Are you faithful now in the little things God has entrusted you? Are you content to wait for God to work, or are you always trying to make things happen as soon as you want? Do you make plans and then ask God to make them work, or do you wait for His leading and direction first? Would those who know you best say you are a patient person? Would God say you persevere and keep faithfully serving no matter what?

3. A GODLY LEADER IS HUMBLE

The next year, when David was 13, he was chosen to play music for King Saul (1 Samuel 16:21-22). It was quite a privilege for a shepherd boy whose father had forgotten about him! It could have caused great pride in him, but it didn't. He was always amazed that God would choose and use him. "Who am I and who is my family, that you have brought me this far?" (2 Samuel 7:18). David always remembered that all he had and all he was came from God. He wrote about this often in his Psalms.

A leader today must be confident, but still humble. His confidence must be in God, not in his own ability. It's a great privilege to be in the position of a leader, but never think it is because you deserve it. None of us deserve anything from God! If it weren't for Him making us leaders, and helping us to carry out our responsibilities, we would be failures. Pride is the sin that turned Satan from God, and it is something he tries to instill in all who would serve God. He is very subtle. He puts thoughts of our own importance into our minds, and unless we are alert we will start listening to and believing them. As Proverbs says, pride always leads to a downfall (Proverbs 16:18-28).

Would those around you say you are humble or proud? When do you have the greatest struggle with pride? What can you do to have victory over it? If God took His presence and blessing from you right now, how would you do as a leader?

4. A GODLY LEADER HAS DEEP FAITH IN GOD

David was a musician for Saul for two years when the war with the Philistines started. They sent their champion, Goliath, to mock God and the Jews. Everyone was afraid of him because of his size and reputation. Saul, the King and the largest of the men, should have fought him, but he was afraid as well. David was bothered by the shame Goliath was causing God and His people, so he volunteered to fight Goliath. There was no way he would be able to win, for he was not even a soldier and couldn't use the weapons of war, but his faith in God gave him courage to fight. With God's help he won, and the armies of Israel had a great victory (1 Samuel 17:40-54). David's faith in God, which had been growing through the years, enabled him to trust God even in impossible situations.

We all face 'giants' in life. We face impossible situations and circumstances we cannot control. It may be health problems or financial difficulties. It could be problems with others or in our ministries,

temptations we struggle with or issues in our families. These are too big for us to handle, so we need to trust God. God allows these things to teach us to trust and to see His provision and deliverance.

What giants are you facing in your life right now? Do you trust God no matter what happens? It may be hard to keep your eyes on Him through it all, but do you do your best to keep your faith in Him and not look to what is happening around you? What is it that usually causes you to be afraid? What can you do to remember to trust God at those times?

5. A GODLY LEADER IS OBEDIENT TO GOD

Because of David's success against Goliath, he was made an officer in the army. He received Saul's daughter in marriage (2 Samuel 18:21) and became part of Saul's family. He was extremely popular with everyone, but that made Saul very, very jealous. The more God blessed David, the angrier Saul became at him. He even tried killing David, so David ran away and hid. For almost 20 years, until he was about 35 years old, David was hiding from Saul who tried to capture and kill him. Many others who were enemies of Saul joined David in hiding, and he became responsible for the protection and provision of hundreds of people. David had 6 wives of his own and many children to care for as well.

Sometimes he didn't trust and obey God, but took matters into his own hands. He would lie or deceive others (1 Samuel 27:10-12). One time this caused innocent priests who helped him to be killed by Saul (1 Samuel 22:17-21). Another time David and his men killed innocent Amalekites to take their food (1 Samuel 27:8-9). He pretended to be crazy to escape arrest when with the Philistines. He was not perfect at all in his obedience to God (1 Samuel 21:13).

However, most of the time he did depend on God for protection and direction. Twice he could have killed Saul, but didn't because he knew God would take care of Saul in His way and time (1 Samuel 24; 26). He often poured out his heart to God in prayer and praise (Psalm 142). Many of these are recorded as Psalms in our Bible, for many of the Psalms were written while David was hiding from Saul. Many times he asked God for directions and guidance, and then obeyed what God said (1 Samuel 23:1-4).

Leaders today must obey God's Word and directions in all they do. Sometimes we break a Bible principle if we think it is for a good reason, but there is no reason to ever disobey. Other times we act on our own and do or say things we have never prayed about and brought before God. We will do what those who aren't Christians do to advance our cause or solve our problems. We are more concerned with what others will think instead of what God thinks. Like David, we do things that are wrong to protect ourselves or to advance our own desires.

Can you think of times when you acted or spoke without first going to God and you regretted it? Think of times you disobeyed Him and His Word – how did those turn out? When are you most tempted to act on your own instead of doing things God's way? What can you do to prevent those times?

6. A GODLY LEADER REPENTS WHEN HE SINS

While David obeyed God, Saul did not. Eventually Saul was killed in battle and David became king. He was 49 years old when he was made king over all 12 tribes. God blessed and prospered all he did. The nation became wealthier and larger than it ever had been, or ever would be again. The Philistines, Moabites and Syrians were defeated. Israel's armies were victorious in all their battles.

When everything was going well David, at age 53, decided to not go to war, as he should have, but to stay home. When a leader neglects his God-given responsibility trouble comes, and it did for David. David sinned with Bathsheba and sinned again trying to cover up his sin. There are lessons for us as leaders in this also.

For one thing, leaders should never neglect their responsibility, even when things seem to be going very well. Another lesson is that leaders are not exempt from temptation, in fact the more we try to follow Jesus the more our sin nature and Satan and his demons oppose us. So, instead of being exempt from temptation, we are hit all the more.

The sin with Bathsheba was a trap Satan has been setting up in David's life for years. He had several wives. When he saw a woman he wanted, he would marry her and take her as another wife. Because he was the king, it was very easy for him to do. The problem was that Bathsheba was already married, but David took her for himself anyway. Satan sets traps for all of us. It may start as a small sin but gradually it grows. It could be lust, or greed, or pride. It may be jealousy, deception, anger or fear. Whatever it is, if we don't have victory when it is small, the sin will grow until it destroys us!

Church leaders are especially open to some of these sins. Others admire and honor us. Women may treat pastors with more respect than their own wives do. We can like the attention and want more of it. Soon we may start neglecting our duties at home and in ministry, and give in to temptation, like David did. Even if we never act on the temptation, if we allow pride in our hearts, we are full of sin.

Never think that because God is using you as a leader and blessing your ministry that you can't or won't sin. We are human and will sin. That is not an excuse to allow sin. Rather it is to warn us and keep us alert. When we sin we must admit it and confess it (1 John 1:9). David didn't do that. He had a pattern of hiding and covering up sins in the past, as we saw earlier. That made it tempting to try to cover up his sin with Bathsheba. All that did was add more sin, including murder. He was far from God. The whole nation as well as his family suffered. Finally he repented and was forgiven, but the nation never attained the heights it had before his sin.

What are the sins you aren't having victory over in your life right now? Can you see them taking root and growing stronger? What are they? If you don't know where you are weak, you are even more open to being defeated by these things. What must you do to have victory over them? Who can you go to for prayer, counsel, accountability and help to have victory? What can you learn from David's sin?

7. A GODLY LEADER IS A SACRIFICIAL HUSBAND AND FATHER

Not only did David fail in temptation to lust, but also he had another area where he failed. That was as a husband and father. He could not be a good husband because he had more than one wife, and he was so busy as king that he neglected his children. When he was 57 his son Amnon abused his half-sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-20). David was angry, but didn't offer comfort to Tamar or correction to Amnon (2 Samuel 13:21). Finally, Tamar's brother, Absalom, took matters into his own hands and killed Amnon (2 Samuel 13:23-35). Again David did nothing (2 Samuel 13:36-39). Later Absalom tried reconciliation with his father, but David never reached out to his son (2 Samuel 14:25-33). He then rebelled against David and led the country in civil war. He, along with many others, was killed (2 Samuel 15-18). It was a very sad time for David's family and nation.

It's easy for leaders to be so busy doing God's business elsewhere that they forget their first responsibility is to their families. The Bible says that if a man can't be a good husband and father he shouldn't be a pastor (1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12). He needs to minister to his family before his church and

help each of them grow spiritually by praying and teaching the Bible at home. He needs to show unconditional love to his wife and children. He must discipline his children in love and consistency. He must treat his daughters the same as he does his sons. Men must make sure their children are respectful to their mothers. God values being a good father or mother as more important than having a great ministry! (For more about this see "Marriage and Ministry" by Jerry Schroyer)

Would your mate say you put them before your ministry? Are you doing more to help your own family grow than others, or is most of your time spent away from the home? Do your children know they are more important to you than the people in your church? If your children grow up to be just like you, would you be proud of them? What can you do to be a better husband or wife, mother or father?

8. A GODLY LEADER HAS FORESIGHT TO TRAIN OTHERS

David continued to learn and grow as a man and as a leader. He kept on leading his army. When he was 63, he was almost killed by another Philistine giant, but God delivered him (2 Samuel 21:15-17). God blessed David and Bathsheba with a son, Solomon, who would be the next king. David became a much better father, spending time training Solomon to be a godly man and leader (1 Kings 1; 1 Chronicles 22). When he was 72, David gave Solomon responsibility for rebuilding the temple (1 Chronicles 28:1-21). Two years later he died, and Solomon took over the kingdom (1 Kings 2:10-12).

Leaders should always be training others to do the work of ministry. Training others to minister is a major, God-given responsibility from God (Ephesians 4:12). A good leader is always active in training others to use their spiritual gifts to serve (2 Timothy 2:2). That includes training our own children, as David did.

Who are you training to do the work you are doing? Don't wait until the end of your life, follow Jesus' example and train each one who is willing to learn and serve.

David is one of the best-loved men in the Bible. Read about him and you will learn many more lessons for life and leadership.

We have seen from the life of David that to be a godly leader we must:

1. Have courage to face challenges
2. Have patience and perseverance
3. Be humble
4. Have deep faith in God
5. Be obedient to God
6. Repent of sin immediately
7. Be a sacrificial husband and father
8. Train others

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God help you have each of them in your life.

6. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM NEHEMIAH

READ the Book of Nehemiah

Because of their continual disobedience, the Jews were taken captive by Babylon. True to His promise, God allowed some of the Jews to return under Zerubbabel about 50 years later. They rebuilt the destroyed temple, although it was far less grand than the original one. Haggai and Zechariah preached to them. Esther lived during this time and preserved the Jews. The great majority of the Jews preferred staying in Babylon where life was easier than it would have been returning and rebuilding the destroyed city.

About eighty-five years after that, Ezra led a smaller group from Persia to Jerusalem. Then, fifteen years later, God chose Nehemiah to lead the third and final group to return. His grandparents had been taken into captivity when Jerusalem fell. It seems they continued to put their faith in God, though, for the name they gave Nehemiah means “The Lord Comforts.”



Nehemiah had a very important place in the government of King Artaxerxes. He is called the “cupbearer” of the king (Nehemiah 1:11). In earlier times the cupbearer was the one who drank first from everything given to the king to make sure no one was trying to poison the king. By Nehemiah’s time it had become a position of one who was a top assistant and advisor to the king.

1. A GODLY LEADER PRAYS

In the fall of 446 BC, in the capital city of Susa, word came to Nehemiah about the awful condition of Jerusalem and the Jews living there. The walls of the city were never rebuilt, and that brought great disgrace to the people and their God because all the nations around them saw it as proof that the God of Israel could not take care of His people. The people had been back for 150 years, but hadn’t taken any steps to restore the city. This really bothered Nehemiah, and he prayed and fasted for many days when he heard the news (Nehemiah 1:1-5).

Although he lived hundreds of miles away, Nehemiah was personally concerned with the needs he heard about. Neither he nor his parents had ever been back to Jerusalem, so they had not caused the problems; the people in the land caused them by not rebuilding the walls and the city. Still he cried over their failure. He had compassion for them even though they were suffering the consequences of their sin. He identified with their needs and didn’t criticize or blame. Also, he was hurt because God’s reputation was hurt.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer (1:4; 2:4, 9; 5:19; 6:9, 14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31). He is often found praying, and it is a main theme of the book. He goes to God first with everything that happens in life, just like Daniel. In this first prayer, when he hears about Jerusalem, Nehemiah pleads for God’s love and mercy on His people. He confesses the sins of the people (as did Daniel) and acknowledges that God is righteous. Then he asks God’s help in correcting the situation. He remembers God’s promises in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 30 to one day bring the people back to the land.

Prayer is a very important trait for leaders today as well. We can’t lead others unless we are following the Leader of all Leaders – God Himself. We must spend time in prayer talking and listening to God so we know the direction He wants us to go, as well as how He wants us to lead. If not, we

just go our own way, and that leads to disaster. Nothing of real lasting value can be done without prayer. Praying makes us wait on God instead of rushing in our own direction, opens us to God's plan, and activates our faith so we trust in Him in all we do.

When you hear of a Christian or a church which is struggling, or failing to stay faithful to God, do you criticize and judge, or does your heart break for them because God's heart breaks for them? Do you have compassion and concern for God's people who are not obeying God? Do you pray for God to have mercy on them? Are you concerned for the harm they are doing to God's reputation? Do the needs of your people lead you to faithfully fast and pray for them? Are you a leader who is a man or woman of prayer?

2. A GODLY LEADER IS A PERSON OF PATIENCE AND PLANNING

Nehemiah prayed and fasted for the situation in Jerusalem for four months. During that time God put an idea, a thought, in his mind. He had been praying for someone to go to Jerusalem and correct the situation there – perhaps he should be that person! Then one day the king asked what was bothering him. To be anything but joyful before the king was forbidden, but Nehemiah was honest and told the king he was sad over the state of his home, Jerusalem. Nehemiah had a very good reputation with the king, for the king asked Nehemiah what he would like to do about it. Nehemiah had the courage to tell him the plan God had given him, which was to return and rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-5).

For four months Nehemiah had patiently prayed and waited for God's timing in this. He had prayed, knowing it all depended on God, but he had also done his part and planned what would be needed to do this work in Jerusalem. When the king asked for details about how he proposed to help Jerusalem, Nehemiah had all the answers (Nehemiah 2:6-8). He was patient in prayer, but he made plans so when the time was right he could move ahead. We must patiently wait for God to open doors for us, but when they open we must be prepared to move through them. We must plan ahead for work to be done.

A godly leader is a person who plans. Nehemiah knew the answer to the king's questions about how long he would be gone, what materials and helpers he would need, letters of permission to travel and work, etc. He had anticipated the needs and planned how to take care of them. A godly leader doesn't just pray, he also plans. He does both at once. He is patient for God's timing, but when the time is right, he is ready to move ahead because he has been using the time to prepare. He anticipated the difficulties and made plans to overcome them before they happened. For example, one of the reasons Jerusalem hadn't been rebuilt was because the neighboring nations wanted to keep it weak. They had told the king the Jews were planning to rebel, so he commanded they not rebuild or improve the city or wall. Nehemiah knew that only Artaxerxes could reverse his edict and that Nehemiah would need proof that it had been changed. That is why he asked for the letters. A godly leader patiently plans for the future.

Some leaders today are so anxious to start something, they barely pray about it, but just jump right in and then struggle to make it work. Others will patiently pray and wait, but then when they can begin, they are unable to do so because they aren't prepared to move ahead. They haven't saved enough money or trained the right people or made plans as to how to accomplish it. A godly leader must be patient, but also make good plans.

Are you guilty of quickly starting something new without enough prayer and planning? Or do you hesitate when there is an opportunity because you are afraid to take a chance and do something new? Do you pray and wait, but fail to plan so that when you can begin you don't have the resources you need to make it happen?

3. A GODLY LEADER IS CAREFUL

It took Nehemiah several months to get ready for the trip and more months to travel to Jerusalem. It was almost a full year after hearing about the problem that he finally got to the place where he could do something about it. Some might have been impatient and wanted to get to work right away, but not Nehemiah. He spent time resting up and getting to know the leaders in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:11-12).

He gathered information about the situation there by going out at night and looking at the city and walls by himself (Nehemiah 2:13-16). He did it at night so others wouldn't wonder why he was doing this or try to influence where he went or what he saw. He wanted to gather all the information he could before making any decisions. A decision is only as good as the information it is based on. Too often leaders make quick decisions without all the facts, only to find out later what they decided wasn't the best decision they could have made. Sometimes we take the word of one person only later to find out there was more involved that we didn't know about. If we let one person influence us without finding out all the facts, we won't make wise decisions. We must be patient and gather all the information first. It is during the time we gather information that the Holy Spirit quietly speaks to us and gives us needed direction. We must be sensitive to what He says, not quickly jump to conclusions. A godly leader is careful. He looks before he leaps.

Think of a time you responded too quickly and didn't know all the details. What was the result? Do you do that often? Do you have the necessary patience to withhold judgment or decisions until you have all the facts? What can you do to become more careful in your decisions?

4. A GODLY LEADER KNOWS WHEN TO ACT

Being careful is fine and important, but then there comes a time when a leader must act. After he had gathered all the information that was available, prayed, thought and planned, then Nehemiah took action. He challenged the leaders and the people to move ahead and rebuild the city and its walls (Nehemiah 2:17-18).

It is important to know when to be careful, but also important to know when to take action. Sometimes a leader can move ahead quickly without taking time to gather all the details. Others can hesitate too long and not act when it is time to act. Both extremes must be avoided. We all tend to go to one extreme or the other. My wife and I balance each other out with this. Perhaps God has given you a mate or friend who can help you as well.

Notice, too, how Nehemiah motivated them to act. He didn't blame or criticize. That just discourages people. He identified with them. He said, "You see the trouble WE are in... Come let US rebuilt so WE will no longer be in disgrace" (Nehemiah 2:17-18). A godly leader identifies with the people to motivate them to action, so they want to follow. We saw that a good leader knows where he is going, knows how to get there and knows how to take others there with him. Nehemiah could take others with him because he was one with them. He wasn't just above them, telling them what do. Nehemiah shared his God-given vision and plan to rebuild the city and gave them hope it could be done, so they were willing to follow him.

Do you have a balance between caution and action? Who has God put in your life to help you find that balance? Can you identify with people you counsel, teach or lead so they trust you and willingly follow because you give them hope for the future? Or do you scold and criticize them for where they fail? How does God motivate you, with hope and encouragement or with criticism and condemnation?

5. A GODLY LEADER DELEGATES

When the time is right to act, a godly leader must have the plans ready to move ahead. These plans must include others in the work. He must give direction, but he needs the cooperation and help of others to make it happen. He must wisely delegate the work, no matter the size of the project. That's what Nehemiah did. To rebuild the whole wall he assigned various groups of people to different sections of the wall and made rebuilding it their responsibility (Nehemiah 3:1-32). He was wise in how he did it. He assigned people sections of the wall near their own homes. That way they wouldn't have to travel far to get to work, they would do their best job because they were protecting their own homes, and if attacked while building they would stay to defend their own homes. They were motivated to do a good job, not forced to do something they weren't sure about.

Also, Nehemiah expected everyone to work. Those who were leaders or who were rich were used to having others do work for them. Nehemiah said there were none too good to work, and all were treated the same. No job was too menial for anyone. He set an example of that by helping with the work himself. He worked right along with the people.

Nehemiah prayed and had great faith in God, but he didn't stop there. He planned ahead and he organized the work. He delegated work to others. Faith is not a substitute for organization and delegation. God is an organized God – look at the world around us and how well everything works together. All God does is planned and well organized. Our work should also be that way.

Are you able to delegate work in your ministry, or do you think you need to do everything so it gets done right? Can you trust others to share your work, even if they do things differently than you? Would others say you are organized? Is your time organized so you are able to do all the important things first? If you aren't good at organizing things, who can you get to help you who is good at it?

6. A GODLY LEADER WILL FACE OPPOSITION

When I was younger, I thought that if I was doing what God wanted and doing it God's way then God would bless the work, and it would go ahead with great success. I soon found that isn't true. I'm sure you have found the same thing. In fact, when we are doing God's will God's way, we often get more opposition. The world, the flesh, and Satan and his forces oppose what we do in any way they can.

Nehemiah experienced that as well. The Arabs living nearby, under the leadership of Sanballat, strongly opposed the rebuilding of Jerusalem. They dominated the Jews and took advantage of their broken down walls. They became rich while keeping the Jews poor. When the work on the wall began, they mocked the builders and threatened to kill them and destroy their work (Nehemiah 4:1-14). A godly leader must be able to handle opposition and criticism. There will be ridicule and even threats.

What was Nehemiah's response? He didn't let fear rule, instead he prayed twice for peace, protection and wisdom (Nehemiah 4:4-5, 9). When we face these things we must take them to God in prayer and listen to His encouragement and guidance about what to do (James 1:5). Don't expect God to always remove them; so don't make that your only prayer. For Nehemiah, God didn't stop or remove the opposition. He allowed it to continue so the people would trust more in Him and see His protection and provision. He does the same with us today.

Nehemiah prayed, but he also armed his workers to protect themselves (Nehemiah 4:9). He had them keep working, but also carry weapons with them (Nehemiah 4:15-23). We must pray as if everything depends on God, but also work as if everything depends on us. Use common sense and

defend yourself when necessary, but keep doing what God wants you to do. Don't give in to fear or discouragement. Opposition will come. A godly leader is ready for it and keeps moving ahead.

How do you handle opposition to your ministry? Do you expect God to always prevent it from happening? Are you faithful in praying about every aspect of your ministry and life? Do you do your very best to handle each situation that arises?

7. A GODLY LEADER IS COURAGEOUS

While the people were busy rebuilding the walls and defending themselves against possible attack, the crops were neglected, so there wasn't enough food when harvest came. The people were starving and unable to get food. Those with money loaned it to the poor, but at very high rates, taking advantage of them and their hunger. Many had to sell some of their children into slavery so the whole family didn't die of starvation. This bothered Nehemiah very much. He vowed to stop the practice (Nehemiah 5:10-13) and he did.

We will face times when rich and powerful people take advantage of the weak and poor. A godly leader must stand up for those who can't stand up for themselves. That is what Jesus did, and we must follow His example. Pray for wisdom in how to handle the situation. Ask for advice. Take time to think it through. Then, with God's help, do what must be done to make things right.

Nehemiah confronted the rich and powerful Jews and made them give back what they had unfairly taken. It took courage to do that, for these were the people who controlled the city. Nehemiah needed their support to continue improving Jerusalem. It takes courage to be a godly leader. Doing the right thing is often doing the hard thing. Opposing greed and oppression in the rich and powerful is important, but not easy. Many leaders give in to keep the peace, but that is compromising with sin, and God is never pleased with that. Always do what is right, no matter the cost. Jesus commands it (Matthew 25:34-46; James 1:27).

Do you have courage to defend the helpless and stand against those who oppress them? How do you handle the fear that comes from making enemies when you do what Jesus would do? Think of a time you compromised instead of taking a stand. Was it worth compromising what is right? What should you do next time? Who do you know who you can start helping?

8. A GODLY LEADER HAS INTEGRITY & HUMILITY

Not only did Nehemiah tell the rich what to do, he set an example for them to follow. He was willing to do what he asked of them, even more. Because he was appointed the governor of Israel by the king, he had the right to receive a salary for his services. However, he never took any pay for his work. He never used his position to help himself financially in any way. In fact, he fed 200 people a day at his table and paid for it from his own personal funds (Nehemiah 5:14-19).

A godly leader does not take advantage of his position and privilege. He does not use it for personal gain. He is a person of integrity and honesty. He has a reputation above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2). Nehemiah saw himself as a servant to the people. He was building God's kingdom, not his own.

Nehemiah could have given in to pride because of the importance of his position and all he was able to accomplish in rebuilding Jerusalem and its walls. Everyone respected him. It would have been easy for him to start believing that he was someone special. The same is true of leaders today. Because of the special privileges and blessings God gives us, we can start thinking there is something special about us. Pride is one of Satan's most effective weapons against pastors

(Proverbs 16:18). It is especially dangerous for younger or new leaders (1 Timothy 3:6). Beware for yourself, for none of us are immune. When we think we are beyond being tempted by pride, we must be aware, because feeling that way is pride in action!

Nehemiah stayed humble. He was honest and open: a man of integrity who served the people and set an example for others by not taking a salary for his work. However, that doesn't mean pastors today should not take a salary. Nehemiah was very rich and could afford to support his family without taking a salary. Most of us cannot do that. There are many other ways we can sacrifice for the Lord. Nehemiah's example for us is humility, integrity and service. It's good for people to share with those who have taught them (Galatians 6:6). The Bible says the pastor deserves his wages (1 Timothy 5:17-18). That's the only way we can have time to minister.

If God were rating you, how would He score you on your integrity and honesty? What about your humility? What about your service? Is there any place where you can start improving?

9. A LEADER KEEPS HIS EYES ON GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HIM

Nehemiah not only faced opposition from the rich Jews within Jerusalem, those without also opposed him. When their threats to attack the walls didn't stop the rebuilding, the neighboring Gentiles tried to kill Nehemiah. They tried to lure him into a trap outside the walls where they could kill him (Nehemiah 6:1-4). Nehemiah was too wise to fall for this trap, but he still had to fear for his life. Fear is something all leaders must deal with. Timothy was fearful and wanted to leave Ephesus, but Paul wrote 1 Timothy to him telling him to stay.

When the trap to assassinate him didn't work, the enemies tried using slander and false accusations to undermine his authority. They accused him of selfish motives and untrue schemes (Nehemiah 6:5-9). Nehemiah took it to God in prayer. Rumors can be very dangerous and damaging. The source is hidden, so the lies can not be challenged and corrected. Little things become big things. What is said is exaggerated, inaccurate and designed to hurt the person. It is almost impossible to correct. In fact, the more we do to try to change gossip, the worse it gets. All we can do is pray and leave it to God. Live a godly life so those who are open to seeing the truth about you can see it. Gossip was something Nehemiah had to live with. The Jews who were related to gentiles by marriage kept complaining and criticizing him because his standing up for the poor and weak caused them to stop making money from them.

A third scheme to remove Nehemiah was to bribe a priest to lure Nehemiah into a part of the temple where only priests were allowed to go. He told Nehemiah to come so he would be safe and protected (Nehemiah 6:10-15), but if Nehemiah had done this, God might have struck Him dead for such a blatant disobedience (2 Samuel 6:7). That is what they wanted to have happen.

Nehemiah, though, kept his eyes on his purpose for being there. He didn't let the fear from threats to his life cause him to get discouraged or lose his faith. He focused on what God wanted him to do and didn't let anything else interfere.

Are you aware of the traps Satan and others set to ensnare you? Do you know, and do, what is necessary to have victory over them? When does criticism and gossip hurt you the most? What can you do to get through such times?

10. A LEADER IS A TEAM PLAYER

When Nehemiah first got to Jerusalem, the focus was on rebuilding the walls of the city. When that was completed, it was time for spiritual rebuilding to start. Ezra and others had teamed with

Nehemiah. He didn't try to do everything alone. Nehemiah was the political leader while Ezra was the spiritual leader. Ezra taught the people, and a great revival took place, the first ever recorded among the Jews (Nehemiah 8:4 – 10:39).

Today, too, teamwork is necessary in any ministry. No one man can do it alone. We need help from others, and others are able to do things we aren't gifted to do. Moses needed helpers, so did Paul. Churches in the New Testament had a team of elders who shared the load as each did what he was gifted and trained to do. We, too, need to share the workload with others. Men, include your wife in that group. She is gifted by God to serve in ways you aren't. She can add wisdom and insight that can be very helpful.

Ezra taught God's Word (Nehemiah 8:5-6) and God used it to bring revival. The people stood all day while Ezra taught. When he was done, they didn't want to go home, but stayed to do the same thing the next day. God had put an appetite in them for His Word. Always focus all you do on God's Word. The responsibility of each leader is to teach God's Word (1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:24).

With whom do you share your ministry load? Whose gifts do you use to help you in the work you do? What gifts does your wife have that help you? Do you let her use them? Do you have an appetite to learn God's Word for your own growth and so you can share it with others? Ask God to give you more desire to know the Bible.

11. A GODLY LEADER PERSEVERES WITH THOSE IN SIN

Unfortunately, the story of the Jews in the Old Testament doesn't end with this revival. The last recorded event before 400 years of silence is not a good one. Nehemiah's time away from the king in Babylon ran out, and he returned to his responsibilities in Babylon. His brother replaced him as governor in Jerusalem. For a while things went well after the revival, but gradually the people again drifted from God and into sin. When Nehemiah returned after being away for 11 years, he found things in a very bad state. Gentiles were allowed into the temple store rooms to sell things and the people had stopped tithing. They weren't keeping the Sabbath so they could work more and make more money. They were intermarrying with unbelievers and sinful practices were coming into their worship (Nehemiah 13:4-10). God had sent Malachi to preach to the people, and he addressed these sins but they didn't repent (book of Malachi).

When Nehemiah saw how things were he prayed, as he always did first of all. Then he took the necessary actions to set things right and correct the sinful practices (Nehemiah 13:11-31). It must have been discouraging to him to see that all his hard work had not lasted and needed to be done again. I'm sure God often feels the same way about us!

A godly leader must persevere no matter how many times he has to do the same thing or how long it takes for changes to come. Then, when people go back to sin, we must persevere even longer to get them to change their ways and follow God again. Sometimes it takes great love and great patience to do this, but it's an important trait for a godly leader.

How do you respond when someone you have taught and trained for a long time turns from the Lord? What do you do when your work shows little or no progress for many years? Can you faithfully persevere and continue to serve even when there are no results? Think of how Jesus perseveres with you, and follow that example in how you are with others.

We have seen from the life of Nehemiah that to be a godly leader we must:

1. Pray
2. Have patience and planning

3. Be careful
4. Know when to act
5. Be able to delegate
6. Face opposition
7. Have courage
8. Have integrity and humility
9. Keep our eyes on God's purpose for us
10. Be a team player
11. Persevere with those in sin

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God help you have each of them in your life.

7. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM JESUS

READ the Gospel of Mark

If Jesus were pastoring your church, what would He do to minister to your people? What would He do that you are already doing? What wouldn't He do that you do? What would He do that you are not doing? These are all good questions to think about. Jesus is our example in all things, the One we want to be like. This includes leadership. No one is a better example than Jesus. As we become more like Jesus the man in our lives, we also become more like Jesus the leader. There are many leadership lessons we can learn from Jesus. We'll look at some from the Gospel of Mark.



1. A GODLY LEADER ANSWERS GOD'S CALL

Jesus went to where John the Baptizer was preaching and was baptized by him. God called Jesus to begin His ministry, and Jesus obeyed. This willing response greatly pleased God (Mark 1:11). Our service for God, too, starts with responding to His call. He puts a desire in our heart to serve Him and to help others do so as well. Being a pastor or leader isn't something we decide to do or choose to do, but something God puts in our hearts. That is our motive for following and for staying faithful when things become difficult. We serve because He called us to serve. We do it for His sake, not our own sake.

Do you remember when God first put a desire in your heart to serve Him in ministry? What was it like? How did you respond? Thank Him for calling you. Have you been faithful to His calling and your commitment to follow? Ask Him to help you carry out that calling. Recommit to faithfully serving Him in all you do. Pray for any you know who have been called but aren't serving Him.

2. A GODLY LEADER PREPARES HIMSELF TO SERVE

Jesus immediately went into the wilderness to spend 40 days fasting and praying to prepare Himself to serve God (Mark 1:12-13). He needed to hear from God so He would do just what God wanted, and He needed God's power and protection to do it. Remember, Jesus laid aside the use of His deity so He would live and function as a man (Philippians 2:5-7). He was still God, but He faced everything as a man, the same as we would. That way He showed that a perfect life could be lived (1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). He also knows exactly what we go through, because He went through it all Himself (Hebrews 2:18; 9:35; 1 Peter 4:1-10).

It also meant He needed God's help with everything He did. That's why He would stay up all night praying (Luke 6:12). He needed to prepare Himself for service just like we must do. He did that at the start of His ministry and many times through, especially when facing something new or difficult. Before choosing the twelve, He was up all night praying (Luke 6:12-13), and before being arrested and crucified He went to Gethsemane to pray (Matthew 26:36-56). When He heard of John's death, He went to a lonely place to think about what that meant for Him (Matthew 14:13).

It's important to prepare ourselves spiritually and mentally when we begin our ministry, and keep doing that throughout. Some leaders just rush in and start working without learning and praying. Reading books such as this one and others I have written is a good way to prepare yourself at the start and keep that preparation going. No matter what your age, you need to keep preparing yourself. When I was almost 60 years old, I went back to seminary to learn more and to keep myself able to do my very best for my remaining years. It was time well spent. You may not be able to go to Bible College or seminary, but you can prepare your heart through prayer and your mind through Bible reading. You can learn from others, from books or on line. We have an excellent web site for pastors and church leaders (<http://india.christiantrainingonline.org/>).

What did you do to prepare yourself to serve when God first called you to ministry? What have you been doing since to stay prepared and continue to learn and grow? When you begin something new or difficult, do you take time to prepare yourself by prayer and by learning what you can to help you with it? If Jesus took 40 days when He only had 3 years to minister, then it certainly is important for us as well!

3. A GODLY LEADER MUST HAVE A STRONG DEVOTIONAL LIFE

While we need times of preparation for special challenges during our ministry, we also must have a strong daily devotional life of prayer and Bible study. Jesus would get up early in the morning to have time alone praying (Mark 1:35). As busy as He was, and with all He had to do and all the people who needed Him, Jesus still put spending time with His heavenly Father before anything else. He did this regularly, not just once in a while (Matthew 13:1; 4:13, 42; 15:29; Mark 1:35; 6:46; 9:2; Luke 6:12; 9:10, 28; Luke 4:42; etc.). If Jesus needed time alone with God, we certainly do as well.

One of the lessons I learned from the life of Bacht Sing was the importance of prayer. He would stay up long hours praying, sometimes all night. He needed to know for sure what God wanted him to do or to preach. This seems to be a common trait among people that God has used in a great way.

This time spent with God is not spent telling God what we need Him to do, but instead it is to listen to what He has to say to us. After all, what He has to say to us is much more important than anything we could say to Him! He already knows what we would say. We can hear Him when we are quiet and sensitive to His Holy Spirit speaking to us; when we read His Word and meditate on what it says. It can happen any time or place, but we only hear when we are silent and listening. Please make sure you turn off your cell phone or don't have it with you. Listening to what God has to say is much more important than any phone call!

How much time do you spend listening to God? When you pray, do you talk more than you listen? Could it be that it seems God isn't answering your prayers because you spend your prayer time telling Him what to do instead of discovering what He wants you to do? Have you learned how to listen to His voice when you pray and hear His Spirit when you meditate on His Word? When is the best time and place for you to have uninterrupted time with God?

4. A GODLY LEADER CHALLENGES OTHERS TO BECOME DISCIPLES

Jesus called people to salvation, to repent of their sin, and accept His free gift. Those who responded and followed, He then challenged to discipleship (Mark 1:17; 2:14). He asked them to put Him first, to live for Him, to serve Him, and give up all their plans for themselves. Some still worked at their careers, others left so as to have more time to serve. From this group of those who wanted to

learn more and grow spiritually, He later chose some to be part of His inner circle of twelve. But first He challenged them to not stop at salvation, but to grow in their faith and live for Jesus (2 Peter 3:18).

Who are you calling to be disciples who follow Jesus and live for Him? When someone comes to Jesus for salvation, do you work with them to help them begin learning more about Jesus and the Christian life? Do you follow up with them, encourage them, pray with them and for them, and train them in the basics of prayer and Bible study?

5. A GODLY LEADER TRAINS OTHERS

For the first year and a half of His ministry, Jesus told the people who He was and offered them the kingdom. He did miracles to prove He was from God. Word spread, and soon everyone had heard about His claims. Some believed and followed. But most, including the religious leaders, rejected Him. So for the final year and a half of His ministry, He spent more time with His followers and less time with the multitudes, using parables and times of teaching to train those who responded to His invitation to be disciples and follow Him (Mark 3:14-15). He trained them so they could in turn train others (2 Timothy 2:2). Then after Jesus' resurrection, they were prepared to carry on the work He had begun.

Jesus taught them God's Word and how it applied to their lives. He showed them the importance of knowing and doing God's will instead of their own. He taught them by word and example, and then sent them out to practice and learn by experience (Mark 6:7). Evangelism is important, but just as important is training those who believe so they grow spiritually and live for Jesus. That way they can reach out to evangelize even more people.

Jesus taught any disciples who wanted to grow closer to Him: men, women, teens, and children. His heart went out to the people He loved, and He patiently poured His life into them. He taught them how to pray, to resist temptation, to treat each other, and how to trust Him. He spoke about fasting, persecution, values, and how to not worry about material possessions. He showed them how to spread His message, and then sent them out to try it by themselves. His life was all about winning then training followers.

Who are you training to carry on the work you are doing? Who are you preparing to be able to go out on their own to minister? What are you doing to help the people you minister to grow in their faith? Do you have patience and love for your people? Does it show in the way you treat them? That's important if you are to be a leader like Jesus.

6. A GODLY LEADER TAKES TIME TO RELAX

No one was busier than Jesus. He had 3 years to spread His message and train others to do so. There was no other plan. Yet He often took time to relax and get away with those closest to Him (Mark 6:31). When He worked, Jesus worked hard. But He wasn't always working. He knew everyone needs time to relax and rest. That's why God created and commanded we all have a Sabbath Day of rest every seven days (Exodus 20:8-11). After feeding 5,000 men, Jesus went away alone to get away from the stress of it all (Matthew 14:23).

This is an important principle Jesus taught His followers. After Jesus returned to heaven, John the disciple lived in Ephesus, and from here he taught and led many churches, but he also raised pigeons as a hobby. One day someone questioned why he should spend so much time on his own pleasure when there was so much work to be done. John took the bow the man was carrying and asked why the string was loose and not tight. The man said if he didn't loosen it when he wasn't using it, the bow would lose its power when it was needed. John said that is why he took time to relax, so

he would be better able to work when the time came. God does not expect us to be at work all the time, he expects us to relax and enjoy life (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). We must be good stewards of our bodies and health, and that means getting away to relax and enjoy life. It's also important we use these times to spend with our family doing things they enjoy and having fun together.

Many times we as Christians feel guilty if we relax and take time for ourselves or our family, yet that is very important for our future wellbeing. I have always liked to run and have run in short races as well as races of many miles. In short races I go as fast as I can, but if I started off that way in a long race I would never finish. I must pace myself so I have energy left at the end. I must go at a slower pace so I can stay consistent my whole life. That's how it is in ministry as well. Working hard every day of the week may mean we accomplish a lot for a while, but we won't be able to keep it up. Our health and our relationships will suffer. We'll lose energy to keep going. A good runner knows just how fast to go to cover the distance in the shortest time without having to stop before the end. The same is true of a good leader.

Do you set a good example to those around you of someone who works hard but also takes time to rest and relax? Do you have one day a week when you don't work at your ministry but spend with your family or do things you enjoy? What do you do to relax? Do you have something you enjoy like John raised pigeons? Would God say you are keeping His command for a day of rest each week? If not, what can you start doing right now to obey Him? It can be any day, since pastors can't rest on Sunday. The day isn't as important as the fact you obey the principle of rest for one day each week.

7. A GODLY LEADER MUST BE A SERVANT

This is the last, but one of the most important lessons we learn from Jesus. It is very important that we become a servant (Mark 9:35; 10:42-45; John 13:1-17; Matthew 20:25-26). Servanthood is more than an action – it starts with a humble heart attitude. Jesus humbled Himself to become a man and served us by dying for us (Philippians 2:8).

One of our biggest difficulties in being like Jesus is dealing with our self-centeredness and selfishness. We think about ourselves first. What is due me? What do I deserve? Who has wronged me? What makes me happy?

The best leaders are first of all servants. The army looks for men who can take orders before they can become officers who give orders. No one can be a good leader for Jesus until he first learns to be a good follower of Jesus (Matthew 16:24). God must come before self, serving must come before being served (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13).

Don't look for a person who can lead to put in a position of leadership. Instead, first look for someone who can serve. They become the best leaders. God's requirements for church leaders have much about serving others, but nothing about being able to lead (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4). The word "leader" is in the Bible 6 times, but "servant" 900 times! Jesus didn't teach His followers how to lead, but He spent much time teaching them to follow. Jesus didn't invite Peter, Andrew, James and John to become leaders, but to be followers of Him. The best leaders in the Bible didn't seek to lead, just to follow and serve: Nehemiah, Moses, Paul, David, Esther, Peter, Gideon, Isaiah, Joseph and others.

A godly leader must give up his or her personal rights to find greatness in service to others, just like Jesus did for us. We are all to be servants, and probably we will all say we are servants. However, how do we respond when someone treats us like their servant? Does our pride rise up, or do we do what we can to serve them?

Leaders for Jesus are to build into the lives of others. Too often we expect others to build our ministry or church, instead of us just being available to help them in any way we can. We are like the coach of a sports team. The coach is there to help the players be all they can be. The players aren't there to build the reputation of the coach. It's the same for men with their families. God puts us in leadership to serve our wives and children, not to have them serve us. If we want to lead like Jesus, we have to become like Jesus.

Would your family say you are a servant who does what is best for them before thinking of yourself? Or would they say you put yourself first and expect them to serve you? Would God say you are a servant leader? When is it hardest for you to serve others? What can you do to become a better servant?

Soon after this, Jesus rode into town on a donkey, proclaiming Himself King and Messiah. He was rejected and crucified, then came back to life and ascended to heaven. His ministry and training were done. Now was the time for those who followed Him to carry on His ministry. They did just that. They started training others to do the same. Those then took up the work and trained another generation. In this way, it passed on to us today. Now we are the leaders God has chosen to train and use to spread His message while training others to carry on as well. Now is our time, our turn. Let's do our very best to serve and lead as He did!

We have seen from the life of Jesus that to be a godly leader we must

1. Answer God's call
2. Prepare ourselves to serve
3. Have a strong devotional life
4. Challenge others to become disciples
5. Train others
6. Take time to relax
7. Be a servant

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God help you have each of them in your life.

8. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM PETER

READ 1 & 2 PETER

Simon Peter was the leader of the disciples (Matthew 9:35-10:4; Mark 6:6-9; Luke 9:1-2). Originally named Simon, Jesus changed it to Peter to describe his eventual strength and stability (Matthew 16:18; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; John 1:42). He was a very outgoing, friendly, talkative person who liked everyone and wanted everyone to like him. Unfortunately, though, he often didn't have a lot of self-discipline. He met Jesus through his brother Andrew who was a follower of John the Baptizer (John 1:40-41). Jesus challenged him to leave his fishing nets and follow Him full time (Matthew 4:13-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 4:31; 5:1-11). Peter was a natural leader, but only because of his forceful personality. It took awhile for him to learn how to be a godly leader. Jesus patiently worked with him through his mistakes to help him become one of the greatest leaders in the early church. He'll do the same with us if we let Him.



1. A GODLY LEADER NEEDS A GODLY WIFE

While there have been those who have been godly leaders without a wife (Moses, Paul and Jesus for example), having a godly wife certainly helps! Peter's wife traveled with him (1 Corinthians 9:5) and was even martyred with him. During Jesus' ministry she took care of her sick mother in her own home. One of Jesus' first miracles was healing the woman (Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39). Peter later wrote about the importance of a husband being considerate and understanding to his wife (1 Peter 3:7). Having a godly wife is a great blessing from God (Proverbs 31). It means we must love our wives as Christ loved the church and be willing to sacrifice and even die for her as He did for us (Ephesians 5). Our wives are our first ministry, our number one sheep. Meeting her needs is more important than meeting those of the people in the church.

Would your wife say she is more important to you than your ministry? Would she say she better understands Jesus' love and sacrifice for her because of your love and sacrifice for her? If you have a faithful, godly wife, do you pray for her and with her every day? That's very important to do!

2. A GODLY LEADER LETS GOD STRETCH HIS FAITH

Throughout His time on earth, Jesus challenged Peter's faith so it would grow stronger. He put Peter in positions where he needed to trust and see Jesus work in his life. After fishing all night and catching nothing, Jesus told him to go back out and try again. He did, and he caught a great amount of fish (Luke 5:4-7). Jesus did this to strengthen Peter's young faith. As Peter got older, the tests got harder, and he learned to trust and obey even when his nets came back empty!

Jesus later told Peter to catch a fish, and in its mouth he would find a coin he should use to pay their taxes (Matthew 17:24-27; Mark 9:33). Peter trusted and obeyed Jesus. As the challenges increased, Jesus called Peter to come to Him walking on top of water (Matthew 14:28-29; John 6:19-20). Peter obeyed, but when he saw the waves he became afraid and started sinking, then he turned

to Jesus for help and was delivered. That is often what happens to us when God stretches our faith as well. We get our eyes off Jesus and onto the circumstances around us. We start sinking. The sooner we get our eyes back on Jesus the better!

Peter's faith grew while he was with Jesus. He was the one who spoke for all and affirmed the deity of Jesus in his great confession of faith (Matthew 16:16; John 6:68-69). In his first letter, 1 Peter, he talks a lot about the importance of faith and submission to God. Of course, he still had failures, like when he denied even knowing Jesus. But he did repent and was restored.

As you look back at your life, can you see God doing things to stretch your faith? What have been some of the hardest times you've had trusting Him? What did you learn from them? Is He stretching your faith in any way right now? Based on what you have learned in the past, how should you respond now?

3. A GODLY LEADER SEES GOD WORK IN SPECIAL WAYS

When God works through us to lead and minister to others, we get a front row seat to watch Him work in their lives. It is one of the great privileges of serving God and letting Him use us. This was certainly true of Peter. He was one of the ones privileged to witness Jesus' miraculous raising of a little girl from death (Matthew 9:23-26, Mark 5:37-43, Luke 8:51-55). He was standing with Jesus when He feed 5,000 men (20,000 people - Matthew 14:13-22; Mark 6:30-46; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15). He saw many other miracles, healings, casting out of demons, etc. He was one of only 3 disciples to see Jesus transfigured on a mountain (Matthew 17:1-3, Mark 9:2-3, Luke 9:29-32). Even better, he was one of the very first to see the empty tomb (Luke 24:12, John 20:3). The resurrected Jesus appeared just to him in person that same day (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5).

After Jesus ascended, Peter, accepting his position as one of the leaders of the early church, had the privilege of watching Jesus work through him to heal a cripple at the temple (Acts 3), disciplining Ananias and Sapphira for their sin (Acts 5), being miraculously released from prison twice (Acts 5, 12), healing Aeneas of paralysis after 8 years (Acts 9) and bringing Dorcas back to life in Joppa (Acts 9). He also was privileged to be present when the first Gentiles, Cornelius and his family, became believers (Acts 10).

There are many times in my ministry when I thanked God for the special privilege of seeing how He works in others' lives. Because He works through me, I can see the change He makes. I am fully aware of what He does, because He uses me to accomplish these things. The same is true of any who are leaders and ministers for Him. He expects more of us who serve Him, but He blesses us more in many ways as well.

Think of a time in your ministry when you saw God work to answer prayer or to change a life. What are some of the blessings you have received as you serve Him? What miraculous works have you seen Him perform? Thank Him for this great privilege, and for being the wonderful, loving God He is!

4. A GODLY LEADER IS HUMBLE

A person can't be a godly leader if he isn't humble. Pride is self-centeredness, but a godly leader must be God-centered. We can't be both at the same time; we are one or the other. Peter had a big problem with pride, and until God taught him to be humble, he wasn't very usable for God. God often teaches us humility by letting us fail when we do something out of pride. That's what happened with Peter as well. Peter wouldn't let Jesus wash his feet when He washed the others (John 13:1-20). Sometimes it's hard to humble ourselves and let God minister to us, to accept His forgiveness for our

sins, to encourage us when discouraged, or to let Him help us when we think we can do something by ourselves. It's important to learn to do that.

Soon after washing his feet, Jesus told Peter he would deny Him (Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34; John 13:38). Peter thought he was too strong and that would never happen (Matthew 26:35; Mark 14:31). He didn't heed Jesus' warning because he trusted in himself. But Peter did deny Jesus three times (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-60; John 18:16-27).

It started with Peter's pride and self-confidence in not letting Jesus wash his feet then insisting Jesus was wrong and he wouldn't deny Jesus. Jesus warned that Satan was going to sift him like wheat, but Peter thought he knew better (Luke 22:31-38). Then in Gethsemane, when Jesus told them to pray they wouldn't fall into temptation, Peter fell asleep and didn't pray. When Jesus was arrested, Peter attacked Malchus, and Jesus again had to correct him. Peter was doing what Peter wanted, not what Jesus wanted. When He was arrested, Jesus told the disciples to flee, but Peter followed, pretending to be someone who didn't know Jesus. Peter's lack of humbly trusting what Jesus said led to his denials. In his pride he thought he wouldn't ever deny Jesus, but he did – 3 times!

When the rooster crowed, Peter remembered Jesus' warning. At that very moment he saw the bloody and beaten Jesus and realized Jesus had heard him curse and deny knowing Him. Terrible shame and guilt came over him. He hadn't wanted to fail Jesus, but he did. He failed in that which was most important to him, staying faithful to Jesus.

Peter learned a lesson he never forgot that night, though. He knew he couldn't trust himself, that he was too weak to have victory without Jesus' help. His pride was broken, and he humbled himself to Jesus. We see a different Peter in the book of Acts. He put his confidence in Jesus, not in himself, and God used him in mighty ways. He wrote, warning others to be alert to Satan's temptations (1 Peter 5:8-9) and to stay humble (1 Peter 3:8; 5:5-7). Learning humility was a very painful lesson for Peter, but it is one he had to learn to be useful for God.

That is true for each of us who would serve Him today as well (Psalm 51:17). Paul, too, had a problem with self-sufficiency and pride. God gave him his "thorn in the flesh" to keep him humble (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). In His love, He will do whatever is necessary to break us from our pride as well.

Would your mate say you have a problem with pride? Pride is easy to see in others but very hard to see in ourselves. Can you listen and learn when someone corrects you? Are you quick to apologize when you hurt someone? Will you admit it when you are wrong about something? Do you blame others when things fail? Are there people you look down on and don't think are as important as you are? Do you think you are due special privileges from God or others because of your position of leadership?

5. A GODLY LEADER IS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Because Peter humbled himself and saw his need for God's help in everything, he allowed the Holy Spirit to minister to him and through him. In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit came on all believers for the first time. It was a one-time event, never repeated again. It was like the birth of Jesus – a unique entrance into this world. All the believers present were filled with the Holy Spirit. That now happens at the moment of salvation for everyone who believes (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14). We are commanded to let the Holy Spirit fill us (Ephesians 5:18), which means we must not allow sin in our lives (Ephesians 4:30) or disobedience (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and courage to lead and minister for God. Before he humbled himself and allowed God's Spirit to work in and through him, Peter was afraid of a servant girl.

Afterwards, he had the courage to speak to thousands (Acts 2:14-36).

How do you know the Holy Spirit is living in and ministering through you? What does God do for you that you wouldn't be able to do without Him? Do you have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control evident in your life (Galatians 5:22-23)? These are proof God's Spirit is in control of your life. Do you have lust, anger, jealousy, not getting along with others, pride, or any kind of sin in your life (Galatians 5:19-21)? These show the flesh, not God's Spirit, is in control. Confess them and ask God to fill you with His Spirit.

6. A GODLY LEADER SERVES AS NEEDED

When Jesus went back to heaven, Peter found himself as the new leader of the disciples. He saw a need and was willing to fulfill it. He said they should choose someone to replace Judas (Acts 1:16-26). He preached on Pentecost (Acts 2). He allowed God to heal the lame man through him (Acts 3). He courageously defied the Sanhedrin (Acts 4) and dealt with the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5). Confronting sin among believers is always hard to do, but it is something we, like Peter, have to do to keep the church pure.

Wherever he was needed, Peter served. He traveled to Samaria to preach and deal with Simon the magician (Acts 8). He was a leader at the Jerusalem Council, which decided Gentiles didn't have to become Jews before they could become Christians (Acts 15). He traveled to wherever his help and encouragement was needed. He visited Lydda (Acts 9:32), he allowed God to heal Aeneas and bring Dorcas back to life through his ministry (Acts 9:40).

Peter was even willing to take the gospel to a Gentile, Cornelius, even though entering a Gentile home was something he had been strictly forbidden to do as a Jew (Acts 10). We must be willing to go wherever God wants and do whatever He asks. He may send us to talk to someone we may think is below us, like Peter felt about Cornelius. But we must obey Him anyway. No one is too rich or too poor for God's love. Others may not think we should minister to those who seem to be beneath us, but if God leads, we must take his Word wherever He wants.

Peter took Mark with him as he traveled and ministered. His purpose was to train Mark so he could minister on his own. Mark wrote a gospel, the Gospel of Mark, based on what he heard Peter say about his time with Jesus. So when you read Mark, you are really reading Peter's words. Make sure you always take someone with you to train when you do ministry. An important part of being a leader is training other leaders!

Peter served in many different ways and places. He did whatever was needed, and he went wherever God sent him. He didn't tell God what he wanted to do or where he wanted to go; he let God decide and then followed His guidance. After all, a good leader first of all must be a good follower!

Does God know He can assign you anything and send you any place He wants? Are you, willing to serve anywhere? Is there anything you don't want to do to serve God? Is there any place you wouldn't go if He sent you? Is there any person or group you wouldn't serve if asked? Is anything too large or hard to trust God to do through you? Does anything seem too unimportant or menial for Him to have you do it? Think of the various places and ways God has used you in the past. Thank Him for each one of them.

7. A GODLY LEADER PREACHES GOD'S WORD

As we look at lessons from Peter's life, we must make sure we make note of the central role the Word of God played in his ministry. In his first message on Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36), Peter

quoted the Old Testament several times. He used the authority of God's Word as the basis of his message, and used various Bible passages to validate what he was preaching about Jesus. That set the pattern he followed throughout his whole ministry.

Peter writes about the inspiration of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21), the importance of the Word in spiritual growth (1 Peter 2:2) and how Scripture brings salvation (1 Peter 1:23). He warned of those who would twist and misuse the Word of God (2 Peter 2:1-22). We, too, must base all we do on the Word of God. We must teach it to others. We must defend it from those who misuse it. That means we need to thoroughly and completely know it. We must continue to spend time learning it better. We must make teaching it to our family and the people to whom we minister a top priority in life. The Word of God is a special trust that leaders must protect and pass on.

Are your messages based on God's Word? Do the people you minister to know the Word so they can use it for their growth? Are they familiar enough to defend the faith against those who would attack it? Do you know the Bible better now than you did a few months ago? Do you study it often enough so you will know it even better in the future? Would God say that His Word has top place in you heart, time and ministry?

8. A GODLY LEADER FACES REJECTION & PERSECUTION

Peter became a faithful, fruitful servant for God and His church. He was one of the main leaders of the early church, and God blessed him and what he did in wonderful ways. But that doesn't mean life was easy for him, that everyone responded to his ministry. Sometimes we think that if we are faithfully doing God's work then He will protect us from opposition and persecution. That isn't so. From the very beginning, Jesus warned His disciples that they would be like sheep among wolves and would be betrayed and beaten, even by their families and friends (Matthew 10:5-11:1; Mark 6:10-13; Luke 9:3-6). Watching what Jesus went through also showed Peter there was a price to be paid for serving and obeying God's will for his life.

Peter's first sermon was a great success, but it also brought persecution. The religious rulers arrested him twice. He was threatened, beaten, and told to not speak of Jesus any more (Acts 4:18). Peter kept on sharing God's Word (1 Peter 3:15). His good friend and fishing partner, James, who was also one of the inner 3 along with John and Peter, was killed by Herod (Acts 12:1-2). He tried to do the same with Peter (Acts 12:3), but God sent an angel to release Peter from prison. Peter was well acquainted with suffering for his faith and wrote about it often (1 Peter 3:13-14; 4:12-19).

Peter had to learn to forgive those who treated him unfairly (Matthew 18:15-35). Jesus told him he had to forgive multiple times a day if necessary. Peter got to practice this often during his life, as will any who follow Jesus. If a leader today isn't able to forgive those who harm and oppose them, whether from within or without the church, he won't be usable for God's work.

Think of some times you faced opposition from other Christians. How did you respond? What about times you were opposed by unbelievers? Did you handle that as you should have, or is there something you should have done differently? Do you fear rejection or criticism by others? Do you fear physical harm? Is there anyone who has hurt you whom you haven't forgiven? If anyone comes to mind pray and ask God to help you forgive them right now.

9. A GODLY LEADER LEARNS FROM HIS SIN

Peter was a godly leader who faithfully served Jesus, but he wasn't perfect. None of us are. There was a time Paul had to rebuke him because of his hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11). However, we never read of Peter doing that again. He sinned, but he learned from his sins and didn't repeat them,

just like he never denied the Lord again. He knew and wrote about the importance of holy living (1 Peter 1:14; 2 Peter 2:1).

What sins have you overcome with Jesus' help? What sins do you most struggle with? What do you need to do to have victory over them? Are there any past sins you are having trouble forgiving yourself for committing? Trust them to Jesus.

10. A GODLY LEADER IS FAITHFUL IN DEATH

Peter lived a life of faithful service to God, and he was also faithful when he died. Eusebius says, "He stood at the foot of his wife's cross and kept repeating to her, 'Remember the Lord, remember the Lord.'" After she died, he himself was crucified and pleaded to be crucified upside down because he was unworthy to die like his Lord. He knew where he was going and was confident of eternal life with Jesus (1 Peter 1:3-4).

Are you afraid of death? Would you be willing to die instead of denying your faith? Most of us never face that, but all of us face living faithfully for Jesus each day of our lives now. Are you living faithfully for Him?

We have seen from the life of Peter that to be a godly leader we must

1. Answer God's call
2. Prepare ourselves to serve
3. Have a strong devotional life
4. Challenge others to become disciples
5. Train others
6. Learn from our sins
7. Be a servant

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God help you have each of them in your life.

9. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM PAUL

READ Acts 27:1 – 28:10

Paul is one of the greatest leaders in the history of the church. God used him in mighty ways to start churches and to write more books in the Bible than anyone else. There are many wonderful leadership lessons we can glean from his life, but we will look at some from the final chapters of the book of Acts, Paul's shipwreck experience. It is said that trials and difficult times bring out the best in leaders, and that is certainly true of Paul.

Paul was converted on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) and went to Arabia to learn and grow spiritually. He spent most of his ministry on three missionary journeys, starting churches and writing letters to other churches (Acts 13-20). After 30 years of ministry, he was arrested in Jerusalem for something he didn't do and eventually transferred to Rome for trial (Acts 21-26). Although traveling as a prisoner in chains, Paul showed his leadership skills in several ways on that trip. There are important lessons we can learn from him.



1. A GODLY LEADER CAN BE TRUSTED

Paul was a prisoner under the authority of a centurion named Julius who was assigned directly to Caesar (Acts 27:1). He was in chains, kept in the hold of the ship. His faithful friend Luke traveled with him at his own expense. In order to accompany Paul, he would have had to sign papers becoming Paul's slave. That was the only way he could go. While Paul gets the recognition and credit for all he did, it wouldn't have been possible without Luke's help and support in addition to his medical skill and help. I have been blessed with several men like that in my life, including P. K. Moses who helps me with my books and conferences in India. He is a fine man of God and a great servant who makes all I do possible.

At the first port where the ship landed, Julius allowed Paul to go ashore to get some medical help for conditions that developed or worsened while in prison (Acts 27:2-3). Paul had friends there who could provide what he needed.

What was unusual was that the Roman soldier, Julius, allowed Paul to go ashore. It means he must have trusted Paul and his friends. If he lost any of his prisoners, he would be put to death, so he had to trust there was no trap on shore to free Paul, and that he would return as promised. What did Paul do to earn such respect and trust from a man who had just met him?

Those who knew Paul were convinced he cared about them and did all he could for their good (Matthew 20:25-28). He could be trusted to keep his word. They knew he wasn't just using them for his own purposes. He treated everyone this way: free and slaves, adults and children, men and women, high social standing and low standing. Jesus did the same thing. Paul served others and didn't expect them to serve him. Trust comes through integrity and character (1 Timothy 3:2, 7).

Do people trust you? Do you have a reputation, even among those who don't know you, of being honest and keeping your word? Do the people you work with know you put their needs before your own? Do you treat all the same, whatever their age, sex, wealth or social status?

2. A GODLY LEADER TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO LEAD

From that port they sailed for a few days until landing at another port (Acts 27:4-5). There they switched to a larger ship carrying grain from Egypt to Rome (Acts 27:6), which would be safer for sailing in the open sea. There were 276 passengers on board. As they traveled on the new ship, they tried sailing against the winds, and it was hard sailing. They again landed, this time at a place on the island of Crete (Acts 27:7-9a). By now it was early October and too late to make the long sail to Rome. Strong winds and hurricane conditions were beginning, making sailing too dangerous until the spring. In fact, despite being a prisoner, Paul warned the leaders that it would be dangerous trying to go on (Acts 27:9b). Trying to cross now could be very dangerous.

It wasn't Paul's place to speak. The captain and the owner of the ship had the final say, yet Paul spoke up. That was a courageous thing to do. He had a strong conviction about what needed to be done so he shared it. He was gentle and polite, but he put himself into the position of a leader. He didn't criticize or put down the others. Nor did he demand to have his way. He didn't use anger to force his will. But he did state what he felt.

God expects pastors to be leaders (1 Peter 5:1-4). For some that is easy, but for others very hard. Being a leader came naturally to Peter for he liked to be surrounded by people who would listen to him. But it wasn't until he learned to put Jesus first in his life that he became a godly leader. For those who are shy or reserved it's harder to be in front of others and make decisions for the group. I am that kind of person. It's always been hard for me to initiate and lead. I do better at finding what the majority want and going that way, or letting someone more outgoing than I take over leadership. But I know that isn't right. Since God gave me leadership over the people and ministry under my responsibility, He also will give me the guidance I need to lead them. I need to trust that what God wants is right and best, and follow it. It's especially hard for me when someone criticizes me or opposes my leadership. Being a leader isn't about being popular and liked by everyone. It's not about pleasing the people but about pleasing God. That is what Paul did, and what we all must do.

Is it hard or easy for you to lead? If it is easy, do you make sure you are doing what God wants and not just what you want? If it is hard, what do you do to have victory over your fear and stand for what you know God wants? Can you think of a time you initiated and lead as God wanted? How did it turn out? Think about a time you hesitated to lead, or went your own way instead of God's way? How did that turn out?

3. A GODLY LEADER IS STRONG DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

Although Paul didn't think it was the right thing to do, the captain and owner of the ship both decided to sail. They wanted to get to a better place to spend the winter until they could go the rest of the way to Rome. They only needed to go 40 miles, and it seemed like a safe gamble (Acts 27:11-13). After they started the short trip the weather quickly changed and a hurricane swept over them (Acts 27:14-15). They couldn't control the direction of the ship and did all they could to keep the ship from sinking, even throwing all the cargo and equipment overboard to lighten the ship (Acts 27:16-19).

The storm continued without stopping for many days. Everyone was awake trying to help keep the ship afloat. It was impossible to eat or sleep. At any moment the ship could break apart and they would drown. The emotional and physical stress was tremendous, and after many days of this they were exhausted and gave up hope of surviving (Acts 27:20-21a).

It was at this time that Paul's leadership instincts came into play. He stood up and reminded

everyone that if they had listened to him they wouldn't have had this happen (Acts 27:21). He wasn't trying to show that he was right and they were wrong, he wanted them to realize he knew what he was talking about. They didn't listen to him before, but now maybe they would. Paul tells everyone to not fear dying, for God had assured him that they would all survive. The ship would be lost, but they would be safe (Acts 27:22-24). Paul believed what God told him and confidently passed it on to the others. He wasn't expecting people to follow him, but to trust and follow God. God had spoken, and what He said would come about.

Are you able to declare God's truth, especially during difficult times? Can you call people to follow God and trust in His Word and promises? Are you able to clearly discern God's leading for you and your ministry so you can pass it on to others? Do you stick to it no matter how difficult the circumstances become? Can you lead with authority because you know it is God who is leading and you are just following Him (Matthew 7:28-29)?

4. A GODLY LEADER ENCOURAGES OTHERS

A godly leader always tries to encourage and build up the people he leads. He doesn't criticize, scold, or get angry with them. We all respond to encouragement better than criticism. That's how God Himself deals with us as well. That's what Paul did with the people on the ship, even though their refusal to listen to his advice got them into this situation. He encouraged them by affirming his trust in God (Acts 27:25-26). He set an example of one who wasn't afraid, but believed in God and trusted His promises.

Paul gave the people hope that they would live. He looked beyond the current circumstances to what God had promised. He was open and honest with the people, and they respected and trusted him.

That doesn't mean Paul never corrected people, for he did (Galatians 2:11-14). But he did by speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Jesus says we are to go to the person in private first, not bring it up in public unless he refuses to repent (Matthew 18:15-18). Even then, the whole purpose is to restore, not condemn. That's what God does with us (Romans 8:1).

Do people come to you for encouragement during difficult times? Are you good at encouraging people? Do you do what you can to help even those who haven't taken your advice and have gotten into trouble because of it? Are you able to privately correct others in love? Can you control your anger and frustration, replacing it with compassion and sympathy? Are you able to treat others the way God treats you?

5. A GODLY LEADER STANDS AGAINST SIN

After 2 weeks of being violently tossed around by hurricane, the ship finally started approaching land (Acts 27:27-28). That meant the water became shallower and the danger of hitting rocks and being broken up were much greater (Acts 27:29). There was no way the people could swim to shore in that kind of weather.

While waiting for the morning light, some of the sailors tried to take a lifeboat to make it to shore by themselves. This would have left the rest of the ship without their help the next day when it was greatly needed. Paul discovered what they were doing and warned Julius that they must be stopped or everyone would drown (Acts 27:30-31).

It seems Paul's leadership was now respected and trusted. Julius listened to what he said and acted on his suggestion (Acts 27:32). Paul has proven himself and they willingly followed him. Giving

someone a title does not automatically confer leadership. Those who show others they have their best interests in mind and know how to meet their needs earn it. As a prisoner who most likely would die a cruel death in Rome, Paul should have been the one trying to escape. Instead, he stopped others from doing so for the good of the group. He is not looking out for himself and personal gain, but for the good of everyone.

Notice, too, that Paul didn't confront the fleeing sailors himself, but went to the one in authority to do so. He followed the chain of command. There are times we may be tempted to take things into our own hands, but it is better to work with the authority, be it the father of a family, the local government, or the head of a business. The same is true when dealing with people who are part of someone else's ministry or church.

Are you able to stand against sin, no matter who does it or for what reason? Can you point it out in love, privately at first, in a way that will restore the offending person? Do you work through those who are in authority over the person instead of taking things into your own hands? Can you point out sin no matter what others say to criticize you for doing so?

6. A GODLY LEADER SETS A GOOD EXAMPLE

Knowing the next day would be hard for everyone, Paul urged the people to eat to gain some much-needed strength (Acts 27:33-34). He set an example by starting to eat first (Acts 27:35). This encouraged everyone to do the same thing (Acts 27:36).

As leaders of the people in our ministry and children in our family, we must set a good example for them. We can't expect them to do what we say unless we first do it ourselves. We are always being watched, even when we don't think so. Little things, which we may not even notice, are observed by others. We need to keep a good reputation among unbelievers, but we also need to set a standard for believers. By setting a good example, we also show others how to live for Jesus and how to respond under various situations. We can't expect our children or our people to do what we say if we aren't doing it ourselves!

What example do you set for your children? What about the people in your ministry? Do you see any bad habits or traits in them, which they picked up from following you? When have you set a good example for others? When have you set a bad example? Whose example do you watch and follow? Why?

7. A GODLY LEADER USES ANY OPPORTUNITY TO MINISTER

The next day developed as Paul had said. The ship got closer to the shore before breaking up and sinking, but all the people drifted to shore on boards from the ship (Acts 27:37-41). The soldiers were about to kill the prisoners before leaving the ship, because if any escaped they would die, but out of respect for Paul and what he had done Julius stopped the plan (Acts 27:37-40). Everyone was saved (Acts 27:41). But the story isn't quite over yet.

On shore they built a fire to get warm and dry. There was a poisonous snake in the wood Paul picked up, and it bit him. Some thought that was judgment on him because he didn't drown in the sea. However, he didn't show any adverse effects of the poison (Acts 28:1-6) and the people were very impressed.

The chief official of the island welcomed them into his home. His father was in bed, very sick. Paul prayed for him and he was healed. Others on the island who were sick came, and Paul prayed for all of them. All were healed. Paul was able to minister to everyone and share the gospel to all on

the island. They provided for the shipwrecked people all winter and helped supply them when it was time to leave (Acts 28:7-10).

Despite being tired, wet, and hungry, and having just been bitten by a poisonous snake, Paul saw an opportunity to pray for someone in need and did so. As a result, God opened the door for him to minister to everyone on the island. We see that throughout Paul's whole life. He was always looking for opportunities to minister and took advantage of all he could. God says we, too, must always be ready to minister by word or deed (1 Peter 3:15).

Are you always ready and willing to minister to others in any way you can, no matter how bad the time or what is happening in your life? Do you sometimes hesitate to reach out and help someone if you are busy? Do you really pray for all those whom you tell that you will? Do you ask God for opportunities each day to minister for Him, and then look for them throughout the day? Or do you sometimes get so busy doing what you have planned that you don't notice the needs of others around you?

This is just one incident in Paul's life. Many other lessons can be learned from other aspects of his life and ministry. This is a good example of leadership under tough circumstances. They are good lessons for us to follow.

We have seen from the life of Paul that to be a godly leader we must

1. Be trustworthy
2. Take the initiative to lead
3. Be strong during difficult times
4. Encourage others
5. Stand against sin
6. Set a good example
7. Use any opportunity to minister

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God help you have each of them in your life.

10. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM WOMEN

We have learned many important lessons from looking at Bible men who were leaders. However, not only men lead, but women also. Women aren't to pastor churches (1 Timothy 2:9-15; 3:2-5), but there are many other leadership positions open to them in ministry: leading other women or children, ministering under a husband or pastor by helping him in whatever way possible, ministering to needy women in the church when it is difficult for the pastor to do so (this is especially valuable), evangelizing and discipling women and children. Often, women have insight men don't into problems and situations; they can give guidance and wisdom from a female perspective to male leaders when asked. Men would do well to trust advice that comes from a mature, godly woman. Women can do all that men do except have authority over men (1 Timothy 2:9-15).



The lessons we have seen so far from men can apply to women leaders as well. Also, these lessons from Bible women who were leaders can apply to men. So men, don't skip this chapter thinking it is just for women!

Let's look at some of these women in the Bible who played significant roles during their time on earth.

1. A GODLY LEADER CAN BE DECEIVED BY SATAN

Very soon after God created **Eve**, Satan attacked her in Eden. You may wonder how she was a leader, but clearly she had influence over Adam. That's why Satan tempted her first – so she would sway Adam (Genesis 3). Adam wasn't being the leader a husband should be. He was with her and didn't stop her from sinning (Genesis 3:6) even though he knew fully well it is disobedience (1 Timothy 2:14). Satan knew who was the influential one and tempted that one. Eve was deceived into thinking she was doing something good (1 Timothy 2:14). Adam knew better. Satan defeated both of them at one time!

We must watch out, for Satan will attack us as well. Sometimes he attacks like a lion (1 Peter 5:8), but usually he uses lies and deception (John 8:44). Like with Adam, he often works through those closest to us, those who influence us and who we want to please. Leaders must be careful Satan doesn't deceive them, and those close to them who may be deceived by Satan aren't influencing them.

Do you feel you are above being deceived by Satan or those close to you? If so, you are in great danger of it happening. Do friends and well-meaning people easily deceive you? Is it hard for you to say no to someone close to you? When have you been deceived? When have you believed and acted on something that was a lie? What can you do to protect yourself from Satan's deceptions?

2. A GODLY LEADER GIVES WILLINGLY TO OTHERS

In Genesis 24 we read about Abraham's servant seeking a bride for Isaac. He selected **Rebekah** because she was willing to give him a drink and water his camels as well. Leaders give

when asked. In giving to others, we are really giving to Jesus, what we do for them we do for Him (Matthew 25:34-40). Godly leaders serve by putting the needs of others before their own. It was long, hard work for her to draw enough water out of a well for many thirsty camels, yet she did it willingly. It wasn't convenient or easy, and she didn't even know the person she was helping. Like Rebekah, a godly leader gives willingly to others.

Are you quick to willingly give to others in need? Will you go out of your way and sacrifice to help someone you don't know, someone who can't pay you back? Will you help someone even when no one knows the good deed you have done? This starts in your family, so do you sacrifice to willingly serve others in your family?

3. A GODLY LEADER CONFRONTS HYPOCRISY

Tamar had been wronged by her family and deserted by the father-in-law who was to care for her after her husband died (Genesis 38). She resorted to extreme measures to secure what was really hers. When what she did was discovered and she was blamed, she pointed out to all who the real sinner was – her father-in-law Judah. He was honest enough to admit it was his entire fault. Tamar had the courage to point out hypocrisy in someone in a very powerful position over her. As leaders we, too, must confront hypocrisy when we see it. It takes courage, for seldom do people repent as Judah did. Still, if we ignore it, we are helping them continue in sin by covering up their sin. That makes us also guilty of the sin.

Can you think of a time you had the courage to confront someone in hypocrisy? What happened? Has there been a time you were afraid to confront a person in sin? Have you confessed your sin of fear? Do you know anyone living in hypocrisy, or any other sin, that God wants you to challenge? Plan when and how to go about doing so (make sure you speak the truth in love, not judgment – Ephesians 4:15)

4. A GODLY LEADER PROTECTS THE HELPLESS

Miriam is known as a great leader of the women of Israel (Exodus 15:20-21). However, this started when she was a young girl. When all the boy babies in Egypt were to be killed, she put herself in danger to protect her younger brother Moses (Exodus 2). Because of her, Moses was rescued and spared. He went on to become the one to deliver the Jews out of Egyptian bondage. It's all because of Miriam protecting him when he was helpless. You see, leaders defend the helpless. It may not always be easy. We may be opposed when we do so. Jesus protected the helpless (John 8:1-11), and we are like Him when we do the same. When we do, we set an example of courage and compassion for others to follow as well.

How willing are you to go out of your way to defend someone who is being hurt or taken advantage of? Do you help those who can't or don't even thank you? Are you willing to be criticized because you protected someone who couldn't protect himself or herself? Are you afraid of bullies and those who take advantage of others?

5. A GODLY LEADER ENCOURAGES THEIR FOLLOWERS

Deborah is the only female judge in Israel's history. She was one of the best judges. There weren't men willing to serve, so God used her. She worked with a male general who led their armies against their enemies. Deborah didn't fight in the battle, but she did encourage those who fought and urge them on by assuring them that victory was theirs (Judges 4). Godly leaders are cheerleaders for

others. They encourage, motivate and inspire their followers.

Do you go out of your way to encourage others? Do you say things to help them face what is going on in their lives? Do you criticize or condemn those struggling under heavy burdens, or do you do what you can to help them?

6. A GODLY LEADER HAS COURAGE

In the book of Esther, **Esther**, an Israelite, became one of the king's wives. Haman opposed all Jews and tried to have them annihilated. He would have succeeded had it not been for Esther's courage to bring this to the attention of the king. Approaching the king without an invitation could result in certain death, but Esther risked it and God was with her. She was willing to do the right thing for her people. Since no one knew she was a Jew, she would have been spared, but she didn't take the easy way out. Leaders must have the courage to face anyone at any time. We may feel fear, but can't let it keep us from doing the right thing.

Do you have courage to do what is right for others, even if it puts you in great danger? Do you struggle with fear of what others may think of you or do to you? How can you have victory over your fear?

7. A GODLY LEADER IS LOYAL TO THEIR FRIENDS

Loyalty is important for all Christians. Standing by our friends no matter what they are facing is crucial. Jesus does it with us. Sometimes there is a price to pay, a sacrifice to make. No matter what, we must stay loyal. **Ruth** gave up a future marriage and family in her own country in order to go to a foreign land where she would be rejected just to take care of her aged mother-in-law who had no one to help her (Ruth 1). She said, "Where you go I will go, where you live I will live. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16-18). Godly leaders must be loyal to their friends, to those who have helped them in the past or present.

Would those who know you say you are a loyal person? Do you remember those who have helped you in the past and do what you can to help them now? Do you sacrifice for your friends, even if they can't do anything to help you?

8. A GODLY LEADER ISN'T TOO BUSY TO DO WHAT'S IMPORTANT

Mary and **Martha** were friends of Jesus (Luke 10). He often went to their home. But one time Martha was busy preparing food when it would have been better for her to spend time with Jesus as her sister Mary was doing. Martha wasn't doing anything wrong; in fact making food for Jesus and the others was good work. But she was missing something better – sitting with Jesus and learning from Him. We can learn from this story the importance of prioritizing our time. We, too, can be so busy doing good things that we miss the best. If we are too busy to spend time with Jesus each day, or to help someone in need, or to serve our family, then we are like Martha. Godly leaders stay flexible so they can recognize and do what is most important, even if it isn't what they had planned to do.

Are you too busy to spend quality time in prayer and Bible study each day? Do you neglect your family because of the demands of the church? Can you stop what you are doing to listen to someone in need and pray with him or her? Can you interrupt your schedule when something unexpected comes along?

9. A GODLY LEADER CORRECTS WITH LOVE

The last woman we will look at is Priscilla, a gifted teacher and writer in the early church. She ministered under the authority of her husband Aquila. When the gifted preacher Apollos spoke in their church, she realized he left out something important in his teaching. Priscilla, her husband with her, took him aside and “explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18). She didn’t interrupt him in public, but talked to him privately afterwards. She was tactful and careful in how she approached the topic and how she presented the truth to him. She didn’t shame or embarrass him. What she did was to help and improve him, not hurt him in any way. She spoke the truth in love and gentleness (Ephesians 4:15), but she did speak the truth. When you need to do this, remember the Golden Rule and talk to others the way you would want them to talk to you if you were in need of correction (Matthew 7:12).

Are you able to correct others with gentleness? Is there someone you know now that needs correcting? How can you best do this, remembering the Golden Rule? How do you respond when someone tries to correct something in you? Do you humbly listen and learn, or do you react in anger?

There are many other fine women in the Bible from whom we can learn much more. Take some time to read about them and look for lessons from their lives. From these women we learn that a godly leader:

1. Can be deceived by Satan (Eve)
2. Gives willingly to others (Rebekah)
3. Confronts hypocrisy (Tamar)
4. Helps the helpless (Miriam)
5. Encourages their followers (Deborah)
6. Has courage (Esther)
7. Is loyal to their friends (Ruth)
8. Isn’t too busy to do what’s important (Martha)

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God help you have each of them in your life.

11. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE AUTHOR

I have decided to include a chapter summarizing lessons I have learned in my life. I have ministered for almost 50 years, about 40 of them pastoring a church. I do not in any way claim to be on the same level as the Bible leaders we have already seen, but God has patiently been working in me and I want to testify to what He has done in me. If He can do these things for me, then He can do them for you as well.

1. A GODLY LEADER KNOWS GOD DOESN'T NEED HIM BUT HE NEEDS GOD

The first and most important lesson I'd like to share is that God doesn't need me, but I need Him. While that may seem obvious, and while it's something we have always known in our heads, it seems to take awhile for us to really plunge into the depths of this truth.

When I started in ministry, I was very excited at the opportunity to use my gifts and talents for God. There was so much I wanted to accomplish. I was "expecting great things from God and doing great things for God." I knew I needed His help to carry out these desires, but I had no doubt with God's assistance they would happen. The older I got, though, the more clearly I saw that I had nothing to offer. It's not a teamwork operation; it's all His grace and mercy. I feel like a little boy thinking he can hit a baseball a mile when it is really his father standing behind him, wrapping his arms around his son and holding the bat with him that is making contact with the ball. Without my heavenly Father's arms wrapped around me, I'd miss it by a mile every time. Every once in awhile, when I insist on doing things my way, God let's me see how unable I am to produce what I desire.

Truly it's not about me; it's all about Him! As I slowly but surely mature spiritually, I find God keeps getting bigger and bigger. I, by comparison, keep getting smaller and smaller. And that's not a bad feeling! There's something freeing about "letting go and letting God." While I've chased quantity in ministry, God is more interested in quality. When I think I have nothing to offer but a bad example, He does something to encourage me to keep on going.

There's a real peace that comes with letting God be God, with recognizing He doesn't need me to run His Kingdom down here, to humbly come to the conclusion that I can't do ANYthing without Him. When that becomes more than words but takes on reality in my life, then I start listening to Him more. I spend less time asking Him to help me with what I am doing and more asking Him what He wants me to do. I see some of my biggest plans lying in ruins by the wayside, but I find He has used me to touch lives at times and in ways I didn't expect. I'm learning that people come before program. I'm here to serve my people; they aren't here to serve my program. I've got more peace and more patience because I know that if I am in His will, then He will bring whatever results He wants whenever He wants them. God doesn't measure success by numbers (people, dollars, possessions, etc.) but by faithfulness. So I spend more and more time making sure I am doing what He wants and less and less trying to get Him to prop up and bless my plans (Galatians 2:20; Romans 12:1-2).

If God withheld His grace and help from your life, what would it be like? What could you accomplish for Him on your own, without His help? How often do you try to do this? How natural is it for you to give credit to God for EVERYthing that happens?

2. A GODLY LEADER KNOWS THE MORE HE GROWS THE MORE HE NEEDS TO GROW

As I have grown spiritually over the years, my awareness of Who and What God really is has matured. Instead of feeling like I am closer to the goal of Christlikeness, I feel like I am further and further away. I see more and more areas in my life that just don't measure up to His perfection. When

I start getting victory in one area of weakness, I then find five more places where work is needed! The more I grow, the more I become aware of how far I still have to grow! The greater God becomes in my mind and heart, the larger the gap between Him and myself grows.

It's encouraging to me to know that Paul experienced this as well. At the start of his ministry, he wrote that he was the least of all apostles. Later, he said he was the least of all believers. At the end, he recognized he was the least of all people. That's the way it works: the more we grow the more we know we need to grow. It's like opening a wardrobe door and finding a whole new 'Narnia' in your life that needs to come under the control of the Holy Spirit!

I look forward to the remaining years of my life, knowing God will continue to work in me. Despite all the work that needs to be done, I can look back over the years and see where He has changed me. I know He will continue to do so. There will always be areas in my life that need work. Some need a lot of work, while others have made progress over the years. It's like a sculptor carving a model. First, he painfully removes large chunks of marble that aren't part of the final product, then he starts sanding, and finally polishing. Next he moves to another part and starts with the hammer and chisel again. Can you see Him working that way in your life? Think about it and you'll see His work. He's the master sculptor and is committed to making you into the image of His Son. His work may be painful sometimes, but the product is always worth it! (Philippians 1:6; Romans 7:14-19)

Where have you grown spiritually the most in the last year? Why? Where is God working on you right now to stretch and mature you? What can you do to help with the work He is doing in you?

3. A GODLY LEADER HAS INTIMACY WITH GOD AS HIS NUMBER 1 GOAL

Intimacy doesn't come naturally or easily for me. It's easier to hide behind my work and stay busy. However, there has always been a deep desire in my heart to know God deeper, to really connect with Him in the fullest way possible. Early on in my ministry I made 'intimacy' with God my number one goal. Paul's words to the Philippians (3:7-14) about wanting to "know" Jesus have taken root in my heart. I want to know Him, not just know about Him!

As I look back on my life, I can see God slowly but surely bringing that about in my life. He has used my wife and children to teach me about emotional intimacy. It takes time, both quality and quantity, to develop real intimacy. That is true of any relationship, including our relationship with God. There is a big price to pay for it: time, vulnerability and humility are just a part.

Dallas Willard once said, "The greatest enemy of intimacy with God is service for God." It's so easy to get wrapped up in producing more and more. We start seeing others, and even God, in terms of how they can help us accomplish more in life. Working with God and others to achieve a common goal is safe and predictable. Men especially, who are naturally production oriented and thrive on challenges and competition, can easily replace relationship to God with service for God.

I've found, though, that nothing substitutes for intimacy with God. The time spent in prayer and worship, when His Spirit ministers to me, can become times of sweet fellowship, which I desire more than anything else. My time spent with Him can't just be about work-related issues (what to do when, how, etc.). It must be about relationship – my need for Him, my love for Him, my worship of Him, etc. It's the same in marriage. Relationships don't grow when communication is just about how to more efficiently function together towards a common goal. Relationships grow when we listen to our mates, speak from our hearts, share our love and appreciation of them and let them love us in return.

There is no simple formula for intimacy. It has to be something you desire more than anything else, or it won't happen. It takes time, vulnerability and humility. But it is definitely worth it. It's what heaven will be all about! It's a taste of heaven on earth now. Sure, we'll be serving God in heaven,

but it will be based on true intimacy with Him. Why wait till then when we can start experiencing it now? (Philippians 3:10; Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you say you are in your intimacy with your mate? On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you say you are in your intimacy with God? Honestly ask yourself what keeps your intimacy with God from growing. What roadblocks are in the way? What can you do about them?

4. A GODLY LEADER KNOWS WE CAN'T EVALUATE OUR WORTH BY THE USE OF OUR GIFTS

Another important truth I've learned is not to evaluate my worth or growth as a person just by my ability to use the gifts God has given me. My spiritual gifts are mainly teaching/preaching and counseling. As I've practiced them for four decades, I can see that there has been growth and improvement in these areas. My wife says I'm the best I've ever been at ministry. I should be, since I've spent thousands of hours over the years honing these skills. It's nice to look back and see the improvement made and efficiency attained in these areas.

I thank God for this, because it is His grace and His Spirit that has brought these about. However I've no illusion that I could have done this on my own. I know what these 'skills' would look like should He withdraw His Spirit and His help from me. On my own I would be a real failure in these areas. He gets the credit for them.

It's important for me to realize that truth because if I don't, I start thinking that somehow I am pretty good as a person because of what I do. It's easy for us, especially for men, to evaluate ourselves by what we do instead of who we are. Who I am as a person, though, is entirely different than what I've learned to do in using the gifts God has given me. I am not defined by what I produce but by who I am inside, separate from how I perform my ministry duties.

When God looks at me, He isn't impressed by my last sermon or counseling session. He looks at my heart, at the real me. Judas was skilled in ministry, so much so that he was trusted with the moneybag. No one suspected Judas when Jesus said someone would betray Him. Judas was probably one of the most talented and personable disciples. He could function very well. But none of that mattered, did it?

I don't want to use God's gifts to impress others, God or myself. I can enjoy what He has given me and does through me, but I can't take credit for it myself. Neither can I evaluate myself as a human being just by how I can perform. And neither can you. So if you are getting more effective and skillful in using the gifts and talents God has given you – great! But don't take credit for it. Don't use that to evaluate your worth or your spiritual growth. Thank God for using you and doing those things through you, but don't take credit for them. They are what you do (by God's grace), not who you are! (1 Corinthians 15:10; romans 15:17)

How much emphasis do you put on the successful use of your spiritual gifts? Are you tempted to take pride in them? If God removed His grace and power from your life, what would change? How do you measure your spiritual growth? How does God measure it?

5. A GODLY LEADER REALIZES HUMILITY NEVER COMES NATURALLY

As I think of the lessons I have learned in my life of ministry, I must include my battle with pride. Pride can be a very subtle thing, but it is extremely dangerous! When I think I have it licked in one area of life, it pops up in another. Not only that, but it's very hard for me to recognize it in my own life! I can pick it out in others quite easily, but am almost totally blinded to it in my own life.

The best I can do is to keep asking God to show me pride and to keep me from it. I truly don't want to be acting in pride. But I also am often unaware of it in its early stages. Daily I must ask God to keep me from it, to show it to me, and to help me keep from it. I've learned to have a healthy respect for the damage it can do and the deceitful ways it can manifest itself. It's not a matter of 'if' it hits me, but 'when' it hits, for it certainly will.

My wife has been my biggest help in pointing out pride to me before I recognize it. Wanting to always be right, reacting against constructive criticism, little critical things I say about others, attitudes to other ministries who compete with or do things differently than mine, these and others are subtle ways she can see pride before I see it. Admitting my failures without feeling like a failure is hard for me. Loving myself and letting others love me when I'm wrong isn't easy. It's all about pride.

Pride is at the root of all sin. Self-centeredness is the opposite of God-centeredness and other-centeredness. It's such a large part of our 'flesh' that we will have to deal with it as long as we live in these bodies. Thank God for His patience and mercy with us! (Proverbs 11:1; 16:18; Daniel 4:37)

Where or when is your biggest problem with pride? What can you do about it? How do you respond to criticism? How critical are you of others who challenge you? Ask your mate or best friend to honestly tell you where they see pride in your life. Ask them to tell you every time they see you reacting in pride. Write down a detailed list of where pride manifests itself in your life. Pray about this every day for the next week.

6. A GODLY LEADER KNOWS HIS WIFE IS WORTH MORE THAN RUBIES

God has blessed me with a wonderful wife. Without her, I wouldn't be where I am today. The longer I am married to her, the more I appreciate the fine person she is, and the more I thank God for such a special gift. Her behind-the-scenes work and faithfulness in my life and ministry is invaluable. Her faithful, deep prayer life accomplishes more for the Kingdom than my frantic business. She is my greatest prayer supporter.

Through her I have learned about God's unconditional love for me, because I've seen it demonstrated through her. I understand God can and will forgive, for she has exemplified that time and time again. I can trust His faithfulness better because I see it lived out in her life.

Sometimes we think we could accomplish more in life if it weren't for the needs of our mates and families. We can resent the time they take. Perhaps I could have done more in quantity without my wife and family, but that wouldn't have lasted. The quality would have been far less, and even so, I'm sure I would have burnt out or disqualified myself in some way without her.

Learning to meet her needs first doesn't take away from my ministry; it enriches it by maturing me. Whatever I put into her I get back many times over. Learning to put someone before myself hasn't been easy, but has been essential in marriage and ministry.

The older I get and the further I go in life and ministry, the more I realize that a good wife IS worth far more than rubies. And so is a good husband for you women reading this! (Ecclesiastes 31:10-12, 30-31; 1 Peter 3:7).

How much do you truly value your mate? How much do you resent the demands they put on you? What do you truly sacrifice to meet your mate's needs? What more should you be doing? When is the last time you told them how much they mean to you? Do so now (some time today).

7. A GODLY LEADER REMEMBERS HIS FAMILY IS HIS FIRST MINISTRY

As I look back on my life, I have a perspective that many of you who are younger don't have. My children are grown, most of them married and on their own. My impact on their lives has largely been made. I thank God that He convicted me at the start of ministry of the importance of making my family my number one congregation. Others have come and gone, but my family is still my family. There is no one I have had more influence on or ever will have more influence on than my children and my wife.

Jesus' top priority while on earth was His 'family' of disciples, not the crowds, and not new programs and projects. He put them and their needs first, often withdrawing from the crowds or sending others away to spend time with the disciples. His pattern is ours to follow today. There is no one you will reproduce yourself in more completely than your children. And you WILL reproduce yourself in them, for good or for bad. You can't abdicate; you will totally influence their lives. The only question is what the influence will be, not if you will have influence. Children are like soft clay, which you are forming and molding into whatever image you choose. Even if you are too busy to be with them much, that forms an image of rejection and unimportance in them. You are forming them and will form them more than anyone else.

It's a shame that many pastor's children have a reputation for rebellion and disobedience. Whose fault is that? God Himself says that if we can't manage our families, then we can't manage His church. Your children need you more than your church. It's too bad we get our ego so wrapped up in our service for God and our 'success' in the eyes of others that we miss what is most important. God gave us our children to disciple for Him. Nothing is more important! He will never lead us to neglect our children for the sake of other things. They are precious to Him and He entrusts them to us. He will never give us too much to do so that we don't have time for them. That comes from wrong priorities.

My children are grown and mostly gone, but one of my greatest joys in life is watching them serve the Lord and follow Him. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (3 John 4). Each one of them has chosen to stay faithful to God and serve Him wholeheartedly. I take great pleasure in that, although I don't take credit for it. That is between them and God, and there are too many factors involved for me to think I did that. I can rest in the fact that, as far as I was able at the time, I did my best to love them and teach them about God. I certainly wasn't perfect, and I did have responsibilities that demanded time and attention, but I always knew they were my number one priority, and I greatly enjoyed raising them for the Lord. God gets the credit for how they turned out, but I am thankful I don't have to live with too many regrets. As they say, no one on their deathbed wishes they would have spent more time at work! Make sure this is right in your life now. (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6; Proverbs 22:6)

I'm sure you would agree and say your family is your number 1 priority, but what if you had to prove it? What hard proof can you present that shows you put your children before your work? If your children would be old enough to talk (and perhaps they are) would they say that they know they come before your work?

8. A GODLY LEADER REALIZES THE BIBLE GETS BETTER EVERY YEAR

In college and seminary I developed a great appreciation for the Bible as the living, inspired Word of God. I came away with an awesome respect for it. It is the main tool of my trade. My knowledge of it and skill in using it has grown as I have grown. As I look back on my lifetime as a Christian, I realize there has been a subtle change in my attitude to the Bible. I respect it more than ever, but I've also been developing a real love for it! I love it because it reveals God, and the more I know about Him, the more I love Him.

No longer is it just a tool to help me accomplish my ministry, it has become my lifeline to God, my anchor and rock in life. I not only like and appreciate it, I find myself totally needing it. The better I know the facts of the Bible, the more I realize there is a depth to it that can never be fathomed in this life. I am learning it with more than my mind, but also with my heart. It has become very precious and special to me.

My involvement in spiritual warfare ministry has taught me that it is only God's Word that carries authority, not mine or anyone else's. Satan and his demons must obey God's Word when we use it. There is real power in the Word of God when we believe and quote it. That's how Jesus overcame temptations in the wilderness, and it's the sword of the Spirit, which Paul talks about – our only offensive weapon.

The Bible becomes more amazing to me as I go on in life. The more I know, the less I find I really know! It's simple enough for a child to understand, but the greatest scholar can spend a lifetime in just one part of it and never get to the full depth of it. It speaks to our mind, emotions and spirit all at once.

The older I become, and therefore the less of life I have left to live, the harder I cling to God's promises, not just about this life but also about the future. I'm not as interested in covering a lot of ground in my reading and study (quantity) but in going deeper in just a few verses (quality). Don't rush your reading, go slow, meditate, mull over a verse or phrase, ask God to speak to you through it and listen to what He says. Go deep, don't go fast. (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:9-11; Hebrews 4:12)

Where are you in your growing love for the Bible? Is it just a tool of your trade, or the living Word of God, which speaks truth to your heart? How much time each day do you spend in devotional reading and study of the Word? What is your favorite Bible passage or promise? Why?

9. A GODLY LEADER KNOWS SATAN IS REAL BUT GOD IS GREATER

When I started pastoring almost 50 years ago, I never imagined I'd have a ministry in spiritual warfare. I didn't even know what spiritual warfare was until about 25 years ago. I knew some Christians who struggled with sin and didn't seem to have victory no matter how hard they tried or how much they trusted God. No amount of counseling helped. It seemed like something greater than them was controlling them. One of my own children was being influenced by something evil as well. God in his mercy brought some men into my life who taught me about spiritual warfare and deliverance from demonizing.

Paul says "we are not ignorant of Satan's devices" (2Corinthians 2:5-11) but I was very ignorant. Since that time I have been ministering to those in need of spiritual warfare counseling. I have read many books and talked to lots of people. God has been teaching me and helping me learn how to help those who are attacked by Satan and his forces. The greatest impact this has had on me personally is to deepen my faith in God and to better appreciate the power of the cross. All hail the power of Jesus' name! (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:10-12)

How aware are YOU of the enemy's schemes against you, your family and your ministry? If Satan were to oppose you or your ministry, what kinds of things might he use to discourage and defeat you? What can you do to have victory over this?

These are just some of the lessons God has been teaching me in life. I encourage you to make a list of lessons He has been teaching you. It will help you appreciate all He has done in your life. I'd love to read them if you don't mind sharing them. Send them to

jerry@ChristianTrainingOrganization.org

I've shared some lessons I've learned in my life:

1. God doesn't need me, I need Him
2. The more I grow, the further away I am
3. Intimacy with God is still my number one goal
4. We can't evaluate our worth by the use of our gifts
5. Humility never comes naturally
6. A good wife is worth more than rubies
7. My family is my first ministry
8. The Bible gets better every year
9. Satan is real, but God is greater

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God help you have each of them in your life.

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13. LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM 1 TIMOTHY 3 & TITUS 1

READ 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

When we think of leadership, we usually think of what the person does, his actions in carrying out his role as leader. However, outer actions are based on inner character, not our personality or knowledge. Leadership is first of all something we ARE, not just something we DO. Paul lists qualifications for godly leaders in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Each and every one has to do with inner integrity and maturity. They are not just a list from which we can pick and choose. They go together to describe one person – a godly leader. The only one who has ever totally fulfilled this whole list is Jesus; so the more we grow in these qualities the more we become like Him. Let's look at these requirements for leadership.



1. A GODLY LEADER MUST WANT TO BE A GODLY LEADER

The first thing Paul says is that a person must want to be a godly leader. He must “set his heart on it” and “desire” it (1 Timothy 3:1). Never talk someone into serving, no matter how good a leader you think they may become. God must put that desire in their hearts, and then they must respond to that by being willing to follow and serve. Without these fundamental truths, no one will make a godly leader. No one!

When did God put it in your heart to serve Him? Was it hard for you to commit to doing so? Have you changed your mind about wanting to serve Him? Reaffirm your commitment to serve Him. If you wonder if He called you, I can assure you that if you want to serve Him then that desire has come from Him, unless you just want to serve out of pride or greed.

2. A GODLY LEADER HAS GODLY INNER QUALITIES

For those who are called and respond by wanting to serve, Paul has 25 character traits that describe a godly leader. It takes a lifetime of spiritual growth to attain these, and no one but Jesus has ever attained all of them to perfection. It is a process we begin and continue throughout our lives.

The first inner quality listed is **balance** (1 Timothy 3:2). It refers to someone who is even tempered and avoids extremes, someone not easily deceived or carried away, someone who is always stable and steady and who doesn't fall apart under pressure.

Sensible (1 Timothy 3:2) is similar but a bit different. This person is self controlled, reasonable and makes good decisions because they approach problems with maturity and experience. They do a good job when hard decisions have to be made.

Also a godly leader must be **disciplined** (Titus 1:8). This means literally “strength under control.” A godly leader doesn't overindulge in food, sleep or anything else. He knows when to say no (Proverbs 25:28). He is not easy prey to temptation or someone who spends too much money. He does not let anger, pride, greed or laziness control him.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate yourself on balance and self-control in your life? How would your mate or best friends rate you? Do you have self-control when you need it? Do others come to you for advice in tough situations because you have a reputation of making wise decisions?

3. A GODLY LEADER HAS GODLY INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

To be a godly leader means we need to get along with others. Paul lists several qualities God expects godly leaders to have so they treat others correctly.

A godly leader cannot be **quick-tempered** (Titus 1:7) or **violent** (1 Timothy 3:3). He cannot get angry quickly or easily, or be someone who argues a lot with others (Proverbs 29:22). That includes how he treats his wife and children as well. He must remain calm under pressure. There is a godly anger, righteous indignation, like when Jesus sent the moneychangers out of the temple, but it must be done under control and only against sin that demands it. Even then we must be very, very careful we don't end up in sin ourselves (Ephesians 4:26).

Paul adds that a leader can't be **quarrelsome** (1 Timothy 3:3). He can't be someone who is known for arguing. He can't insult others who insult him or criticize others. He can't be a person who dominates the conversation and must always be right about everything (Proverbs 20:3). Instead, a godly leader must be willing to listen, open to learn, and able to change his opinion when necessary.

This person doesn't have to have his or her own way all the time. They are not **overbearing** (Titus 1:7), not arrogant or prideful. They get along with others and work well as part of a team.

After saying what we are not to be like with others, Paul also says what we are to be like: **gentle** (1 Timothy 3:3). This has the idea of patience with others, being kind and considerate. It means being willing to yield, to forgive and to overlook an offense. People never feel put down or criticized by this person.

Would your wife or children say you get angry a lot? Do they think you always have to be right? Are you willing to listen to them and change your mind if they make good sense? Do others see you as someone who is patient and kind in all your dealings with everyone, no matter their situation in life?

3. A GODLY LEADER HAS A GODLY REPUTATION

These quality traits deals with how others feel about a leader and what they say behind their back. It has to do with how they describe you to others. It is very important for every Christian to have a good reputation, for we represent Jesus. This is especially important for leaders. Here is what God says our reputations should be like.

He describes the reputation of a godly leader as being **above reproach** (1 Timothy 3:2) and **blameless** (Titus 1:6-7). "Above reproach" means literally "without wrinkles" and speaks of a garment that is smooth and free from folds. Leaders are to have no questionable conduct, no secret sins and no unresolved conflicts with others. We can't have others saying we cheated them or thinking that we have greed or pride. "Blameless" is similar. It is a legal term and refers to someone who is not accused of any wrong doing of any kind. We don't have to be perfect as leaders, but when we offend someone or do something wrong we must immediately humble ourselves, apologize and make it right.

In addition, Paul says we are to be **respectable** (1 Timothy 3:2). This refers to a person who is worthy of respect and honor, a Christian gentleman.

One way this happens is by being **upright** (Titus 1:8) in all our dealings with others. That

means we are to be fair and honest, keep our promises, pay our bills on time, keep our word and always speak kindly of others.

Furthermore, we are to be **hospitable** (Titus 1:8) to those in need. In Paul's day there were no hotels, so people traveling had to depend on others for housing. A godly leader has to have an attitude of sacrifice and caring, being willing to share what they have with others.

The result of all these is that we will have a **good reputation with outsiders** (1 Timothy 3:7). Others in the community think of us with respect and honor. Even if they don't agree with what we believe about Jesus, they know we are good, honest and trustworthy people.

What kind of a reputation do you have in your community? What do those who aren't Christians think of you? What about Christians that don't attend your church, how do they speak of you? Do people know your word is good and trust what you say? Do people think better of Jesus because they know you represent Him?

4. A GODLY LEADER HAS A GODLY SPIRITUAL LIFE

Another list of character traits that Paul mentions focuses on a leader's individual spiritual growth and maturity. This, too, is very important for all leaders.

A godly leader must be **holy** (Titus 1:8). He must be a man or woman who lives for God and pleases God. He does his best to make sure there is no sin in what he thinks or does. None of us can ever be perfect, but we must make sure there is no unconfessed sin in our lives. Others should be able to sense the presence of God in his life. He needs to have matured in his Christian walk so he is becoming more holy.

He also needs to mature in His Christian knowledge. Paul says a godly leader must **hold fast to sound doctrine** (Titus 1:9). He must be able to explain and defend the truth of the Word. He must show it in operation as he lives his daily life.

Because it takes time to mature in our daily life and Bible knowledge, Paul also says a leader is **not to be a new convert** (1 Timothy 3:6). The word refers to a new, tender plant, which needs sun and water to grow strong. New believers need to learn God's Word and apply it to their lives. It takes time to mature and grow spiritually. Paul warns that if there isn't enough time for this to happen, the new leader can become proud because of his position and fall in sin. When a Christian has been growing for awhile, they can be put in positions of assisting another leader so they can be trained and learn, but they must be under someone's authority and accountable to them until they are mature enough to handle leadership without becoming proud or self-centered.

The final qualification related to his spiritual life is that a leader must be **able to teach** (1 Timothy 3:2). This means first of all that he must have a teachable spirit and be willing to learn and grow spiritually while growing in Bible knowledge. Then he must be able to communicate God's truth to others. Not all leaders are gifted in teaching, but all must do their best to share God's truth with others in any way they can. We are not all gifted in evangelism or prayer, either, but we need to do our best anyway. The same is true of leaders being teachers. This is the only quality that touches upon a leadership skill. The fact that that skill is teaching the Bible shows how very, very important it is for God's Word to be taught by everyone.

Are you growing in holiness and victory over sin? Are there any sins in your life that are defeating you? What must you do to have victory in those areas? Are you faithfully studying and learning the Bible? Can you discern error and show others God's truth from the Word? Do you do your best to communicate God's truth to others? Are you still maturing and growing in your faith and knowledge?

6. A GODLY LEADER HAS A GODLY FAMILY LIFE

Paul goes into more detail when he talks about a leader's family life than he does for any of the other qualities he mentions. A godly family sets an important example for others. Having a godly family also shows the leader will be able to lead those in his ministry to holiness as well. In addition, the family is a leader's most important priority, much more so than their ministry. For all these reasons, being a godly father and husband is most important.

Paul says a godly leader must be a **husband of one wife** (1 Timothy 3:2). Literally in the original language this means "a one woman man" and refers to his faithfulness and loyalty to the woman who is his wife. It doesn't mean a man can't remarry after divorce or if his wife dies. A leader who has been divorced comes under the area of how it affects his reputation to those around him. "Husband of one wife" means a man must be committed to his wife and marriage and show it by all he says and does. He must treat all other women with respect as he would a sister. A leader doesn't have to have a perfect marriage, but he must be doing all he can to meet his wife's needs and see to it that they grow closer and stronger as a couple.

A godly leader must be a good husband, and also a good father. He must **manage his own household well** (1 Timothy 3:4-5). "Manage" means "to stand before and lead." That means he must plan for the future, set godly priorities, provide what is needed and handle family problems. He must do this in an orderly fashion. Home is the best training ground for church leadership because a family is like a miniature church with the same needs and problems. If a man can't lead his family in a godly way, he won't be able to do it on a larger scale with a church, either. A godly pastor serves his wife and children as his most important sheep, and then he serves the rest of the people in the church after them.

This means that he will have **children who obey him** (Titus 1:6; 1 Timothy 3:4). They are to "obey with proper respect" (1 Timothy 3:4). They must "behave and not be open to a charge of being wild and disobedient" (Titus 1:6). This means they respect and obey God and their parents. There are times when younger children, and even teens, may rebel and refuse to obey, but a godly father will discipline them in love and gentleness so they learn to obey. If a man can't deal with his children when they go astray, how can he deal with those in the church who rebel and cause problems for others? His children don't have to be perfect, but as they reach adulthood they should display respect and honor for their parents. This shows they have been raised with love and discipline.

Would your wife say you are a faithful, loyal husband who puts her needs before your own and before the needs of others in your ministry? Would she say that you always treat her with love and respect? Would she say you lead your family in a godly way? Or would she say you treat others better than you treat her and your children? Do your children know you love them? Do they respect and trust you, even when they don't agree with you?

7. A GODLY LEADER HAS GODLY PERSONAL HABITS

The last group of qualifications we will look at has to do with the personal habits of a godly leader. These deal with personal thoughts and actions, which others may not see or know. We can keep these hidden from others and pretend to be something we aren't. That is hypocrisy and is a sin God hates! Real character is what we are like when no one is watching us. These traits are things that others may not see or know, but they make us who we really are.

The first two characteristics have to do with our attitude to money and material possessions. We are **not to love money** (1 Timothy 3:3). Money and possessions are not to be our main goal in

life. We are not to take pride in them or trust them to provide for our needs. This has nothing to do with how much money or possessions we have, it has to do with our attitude to them. We can be guilty of these even though we have very little material things. It is very easy for money or things to become an idol, something we put before God. That is sin (1 John 5:21).

Paul also says we are **not to pursue dishonest gain** (Titus 1:7). This means we are not to do anything dishonest to gain more money or possessions. We must be totally fair and honest in all our dealings with others.

Instead of loving money and possessions, Paul says we must **love what is good** (Titus 1:8). We must support good people, good causes and good ideas. We must truly love what is good in life and turn from all other things.

A final trait Paul includes is that a godly leader must **not be given to drunkenness** (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7). A godly leader must have self-control so he doesn't get drunk on alcohol. That means we must have self-control over anything that can be taken to excess, like eating too much or resting and sleeping too much. It also refers to self-control over other things like greed and lust.

Search your own heart and ask God to show you (Psalm 139:23-24) if there is greed in your heart. Do you love money and possessions more than you should? Is there anything in your life that God would say is an idol? If so, confess it and remove it. How is your self-control? Do you do things that Jesus wouldn't do? If so, confess them and remove them immediately.

This list of characteristics and traits is not something we can attain quickly or easily. It takes a lifetime to even come close. Even then, none of us will attain all of these. They are a goal to reach because they are all traits we need to become more like Jesus. While they are specifically commanded for leaders, they are a good pattern for all Christians to follow. I hope looking at these has motivated you to become more like Jesus in how you think and act.

Qualities for leadership in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. A godly leader must:

1. Want to be a godly leader
2. Have godly inner qualities
3. Have godly interpersonal relationships
4. Have a good reputation
5. Have a godly spiritual life
6. Have a godly family
7. Have godly personal habits

Do you have these? Which are evident in your life now? Which are you lacking? What do you need to do to start to improve? Pray about these things and ask God help you have each of them in your life.

CONCLUSION

Being a leader is not easy, but it is a very special, honorable, noble work (1 Timothy 3:1). Leaders are held to high standards, so respect all who are in places of Christian leadership. Leaders face greater temptations because of their position and because Satan opposes them all the more, so pray for all the church leaders you know. Leaders bear heavier burdens, so support them in any way you can. Godly leadership is not easy, but it is a great honor and responsibility, and a privilege to spend our lives serving Jesus in this way. Thank Him for that honor and commit yourself to being the best godly leader possible.

The best way to start is to pick 2 or 3 qualities that God convicted you of as you read the book. These are areas where He wants you to work to improve. Write them down, and behind each one write some things you need to start (or stop) doing to improve in these areas. Pray about each one and ask God to help you with it. Put the list with your Bible so you can be reminded to pray about these things every day. Then you'll start seeing improvement that will make you more like Jesus.

I encourage you to study various Bible people as part of your own Bible reading and sermon preparation. Look for lessons you can learn from them. They are a great source of help in godly leadership. I'd appreciate hearing from you as well. I'd like your comments about this book as well as sharing lessons God has taught you about Godly leadership. You can write me at jerry@ChristianTrainingOrganization.org. Look for me when you get to heaven and we can have a great time of fellowship together then! Thanks and God bless!

END OF BOOK REFLECTION QUESTIONS

To help you get more out of this book, think about the following questions and how you would answer them. You can write down your answers if you want, or just meditate on them. The answers don't get turned in; they are for your benefit.

Which person in this book are you like? Why?

Which person did you learn most from? What did you learn?

List some things you need to do to improve your leadership skills?

Who has God put in your life to mentor and train?

Where are your strengths in leadership? In what ways are you a good leader?

Where are your weaknesses in leadership? Where do you need to improve?