



GLOBAL TRAINING
NETWORK

Spiritual Leadership Principles

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Spiritual Leadership Principles

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Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 1: THE LEADERSHIP DEFICIT

We have a great need for quality leaders in families, businesses and civic organizations, and churches and ministries. This content is adapted from Greg Ogden's book *Leadership Essentials*.

"Our society is increasingly aware that we need parents who cultivate the character and gifts of their children, who establish healthy patterns of life, and who guide their families to make contributions beyond their own circle.

Every headline announcing the latest corporate scandal or organizational failure reminds us that we need a new generation of leaders in the public square – people who discern worthy priorities, who use wise principles, and who have the internal life and skills to guide organizations toward the fulfillment of their mission.

The church and ministries need leaders as well. The church, parachurch ministries, and Christian educational institutions have helped shape the kind of leaders needed in both the home and public square. There is hardly a Christian ministry today, however, that does not desperately need quality people to provide the contexts where mature disciples and dynamic leaders get shaped."

Five Personal Reasons for the Leadership Deficit

1. *"I have not been equipped."*
2. *"I lack a clear job description."*
3. *"I am not the leader type."*
4. *"If only I had a mentor."*
5. *"I do not see the compelling need."*

Four Ministry-based Reasons for the Leadership Deficit

Part of the reason we don't see more leaders rising up to meet the leadership needs of our times has to do with the way Christians "do" church or ministry.

Lack of intentional focus on developing disciples!

Disciple-making gap: *"Shouldn't I be a disciple first?"* The passion to be a leader flows out of the practice of being a disciple. Until our ministries become more intentional about forming the context and pathways by which disciples of Jesus are developed, it will be difficult to develop leaders. Christian discipleship precedes Christian leadership. Leaders can only be made from disciples. A growing network of reproducing and multiplying discipleship groups serves as the development ground from which prospective leaders come.

Pastors often do too much and don't practice Eph 4:11-16.

Diversion Dilemma: *"No pastor has ever helped me develop my leadership."* For years, church staff members, particularly pastors, have been trained to focus on and have been rewarded for "doing" ministry themselves. They have been diverted from the central biblical call of "developing disciples and leaders, thinking, *If I pour myself into developing some people, where will I find the time to keep doing what all the other people expect?* Even when ministry staff recognizes the need for raising leaders, they often confess to feeling a lack of knowledge, tools or discipline to carry out that good intention.

Members feel that pastors are paid to lead and do the work of ministry.

Professionalism pitfall: *“The ministry staff provides the leadership.”* Many ministries find it difficult to raise leaders because of the professionalism of Christian ministry. Our culture’s obsession with experts and credentials has seeped into the church and has created a perceived gulf of competence between professional staff and laypeople. This chasm is especially evident in larger ministries. As a result, lay leaders often feel that they should leave leadership to the “pros”.

Lack of quality leadership training to define what is required.

“Essence” mystery: *“I am not entirely sure what being a leader means.”* There is significant confusion over what constitutes the essence of leadership. Is it, as some secular authorities suggest, the art of getting my way? Is leadership telling others what to do? Is it simply the discipline of holding meetings or drawing up strategic plans? Defining the essence of leadership remains something of a mystery.

What do we mean by Christian Leadership?

Leadership is influence; Christian leadership is Christlike influence.

The goal of Christian leadership is simple: Gather individuals and teams around a common mission and vision in order to combine their gifts to accomplish something bigger than they could do on their own.

What do you see as the greatest reasons for lack of spiritual leadership in the church in your context?

Though leadership is influence and therefore is not restricted to institutional roles, there is a progressive way to think of leadership stages of development within Christian organizations or institutions.

Leadership Progression

1. We start with making disciples.

This may seem like an obvious step, but making disciples, followers of Jesus, precedes and is foundational to Christlike leadership (Matthew 28:19). We get into trouble when we fail to move people toward Christlikeness and the disciplines of the faith as a prerequisite to leadership.

2. Disciples becomes models for others to follow.

Jesus set the example by washing the disciples’ feet. He put himself forth as an example and told his followers to do the same (John 13:1-17). The apostle Paul wrote, “Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ (1 Cor 11:1).

3. We make reproducing disciples.

Reproduction is built into the basic understanding of the identity of a disciple of Jesus. Disciples need to be taught how to reproduce or multiply their influence through others.

4. Gifted leaders build effective teams.

Whether guiding a small discipleship group, leading a Bible study, or being the point person for a strategic team, leadership is steering a group to use their spiritual gifts to accomplish an agreed-upon mission.

5. A few are anointed by God to make an extraordinary impact.

There are exceptionally gifted leaders that God raises up who have a unique gift mix that sets them apart. Throughout Scripture God chose and used powerful leaders to send his people in new directions. Though this still happens, by definition, these leaders are rare.

So we will start with the character of a leader because this is where the Scriptures concentrate its focus.

The Bible is much more concerned about **WHO** a leader is than **WHAT** a leader does.

The New Testament is about reflecting the character of the **Leader** and **Shepherd of the flock, Jesus Christ**.

In the Pastoral Epistles (1+2 Timothy and Titus), Paul gives us lists of qualifications to be an elder in the church. With the exception of “able to teach”, all of the qualifications are related to moral and spiritual character.

The *Character and Posture* of a Christian Leader are essential and a few key elements are highlighted below.

The Character of a Leader

- **Holy** – Focus on the holiness of Christ and seek to reflect this holiness in the character and conduct of your life. Be committed to cultivating the fruit of the Spirit, which is really a summary of the person of Jesus Christ. (Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness/Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control)
- **Habitual** – Develop healthy habits (spiritual disciplines) and rhythms of life that allow the Holy Spirit to continually transform you into the likeness of Christ. (Word, Prayer, Worship, Silence and Solitude, Confession, Thanksgiving, Generosity, Accountability, Rest, Serving, Witnessing, etc.)
- **Humble** – Maybe the greatest character quality of Jesus was his humility. Check your motivation and ambition for leading and align it under the example of Jesus described in Philippians 2:5-8.

The Posture of a Leader

Christian leadership is just as concerned about the means as it is about the end. The manner in which one leads is as vital as what is accomplished.

- **Kneeling (Serving)** – Servant leaders find joy in empowering and equipping others so that they can experience the fulfillment of their God-given calling and giftedness. The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).
- **Teaming (Sharing/Delegating the work)** – Leaders find their greatest satisfaction when they are used by God to empower a group of people (team) to achieve a mission that advances God’s, kingdom. Group members sense the value of the mission and that they are making a contribution based on the use of their gifts.
- **Stewarding (Live out your calling)** – Leaders make their greatest contributions when they are true to their God-given **S.H.A.P.E.** for ministry based on Spiritual gifts, Hearth (passions), natural Abilities, Personality and life Experiences. Christian leaders are people who have discovered their calling and are stewarding it carefully.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Share two things that you learned from this lesson and what you might want to develop in your own leadership style.

Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 2: BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEADERS

Qualities of “Effective Leaders”

Create a list of qualities/character traits of highly effective leaders.

Leadership Qualities/Characteristics	

- What qualities may be missing from our group’s list?
- Are “character” qualities more numerous on our list than a leader’s skills or abilities?
- What do you notice about the relationship between leadership qualities and the Character of God, Fruit of the Spirit, and Spiritual Gifts?

Pointman Leadership Institute: A global leadership training program for police, military, and government personnel has established its TOP 8 leadership qualities that have been consolidated from numerous conferences around the world.

- Integrity (honest, truthful, just, fair)
- Discipline (self-control, organized)
- Loyalty (submission, faithful)
- Diligence (work ethic, perseverance)
- Humility (servanthood, teamwork, learner)
- Optimism (vision)
- Conviction (committed, passion, driven)
- Courage

How does the “Top 8” compare with our list?

As we explore spiritual leadership principles, let’s begin with what the Bible teaches regarding the God-ordained leaders within the church. Since leadership flows out of discipleship, these principles should be increasingly present in the life of every believer.

- We will look first at the definition of the term for God’s spiritual leaders in the church.
- The importance of shared leadership.
- The Biblical qualification for spiritual leaders in the church.
- The importance of servant leadership.
- The role of the spiritual leader: Protect, Feed, Lead, and Care.

1. Definition of Biblical Leadership (Elder)

There are three Greek words used to define those who lead the Church.

Peter 5:1-4

To the **elders** among you, I appeal as a fellow **elder** and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ²**Read 1**Be **shepherds** of God’s flock that is under your care, **watching over them**—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

- Elder "Presbuteros" (1 Peter 5:1; Titus 1:5; Acts 20:17)
- Overseer/Bishop "Episkopos" (1 Peter 5:2; 1 Timothy 3:1; Titus 1:7; Acts 20:28)
- Shepherd/Pastor "Poimen" (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28)

These words are interchangeable in their original context... Elder = Overseer = Bishop = Shepherd/Pastor

“Elders lead the church, teach and preach the Word, protect from false teachers, exhort and admonish the saints in sound doctrine, visit the sick and pray, and judge doctrine issues. In biblical terminology, elders shepherd, oversee, lead and care for the local church.” (Alexander Strauch, Biblical Eldership)

Who has a board of Elders overseeing/shepherding your church? If not, what structure do you have in place?

2. Shared Leadership

The biblical norm appears to call for shared leadership among a plurality of Elders.

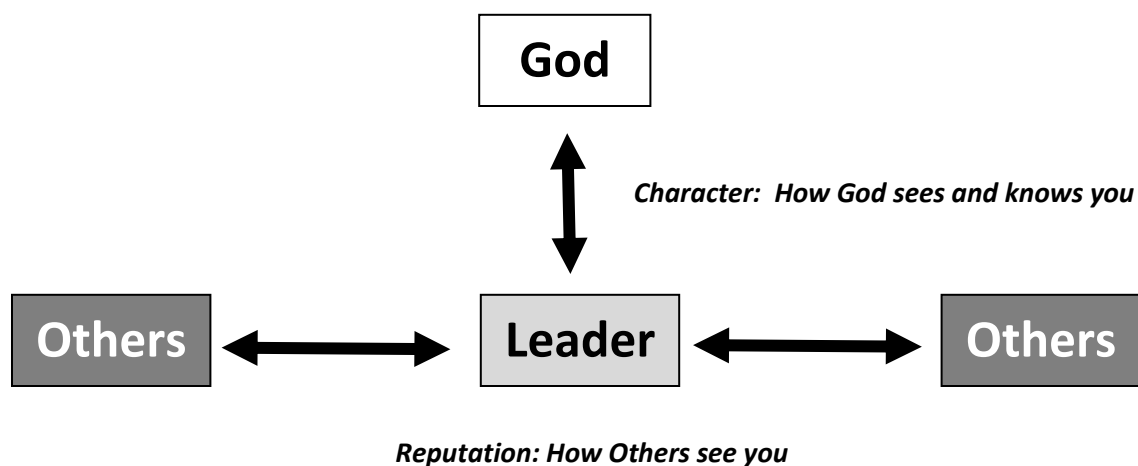
What might be some benefits of shared leadership within a local church?

There are 18 passages that speak of the leadership of the Church and 15 of them are in the PLURAL.

- Acts 15 | Church of Jerusalem was led by elders.
- James 5:14 | The sick will call the elders of the Church.
- Acts 14:23 | And when they had appointed elders for them in every Church.
- Acts 20:17-28 | Paul summoned the elders of the Church to meet him.
- 1 Timothy 5:17 | Let the elders who govern well be considered worthy of double honor.
- Philippians 1:1 | Paul greeted the elders and the deacons.
- Titus 1:5 | Titus was to finish the work in Crete by naming elders in every town.
- 1 Peter 5:1 | Paul urged the elders to shepherd (pastor) God's flock under their care.
- Other passages: Acts 13:1, 15:35; 1 Corinthians 16:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 1:7, 17, 24, James 5:14

Benefits of Plurality of Leadership (Elders)

- Balance people's strengths and weaknesses (we all have blind spots, fatal flaws, distorted judgments)
- Balance spiritual gifts (together we reflect the fullness of Christ)
- Lighten the load (e.g., Moses and Jethro - Ex 18; Cord of three strands - Ecc 4:9-12)
- Promote accountability and strengthen collective wisdom/discernment



3. Qualified Leadership

- Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and list the character traits that should be evident in church leaders.
- What observations can be made from these qualifications for church leaders compared with the qualifications that are emphasized by most secular “leadership experts”?
- Draw a box around your strengths and circle the traits where you desire to grow.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (*Elder / Bishop / Overseer = “Episkopos”*)

³ The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Titus 1:5-9 (*Elder / Bishop / Overseer = “Presbuteros” and “Episkopos”*)

⁵ This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— ⁶ if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷ For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Good Reputation/Love	Self-Controlled	Mature Faith	Healthy Home Life	Skills

Good Reputation/Love

- **Above reproach** (1 Tim 3:2, 10; Titus 1:6-7) | Clean moral and spiritual reputation; blameless.
- **Gentle** (1 Tim 3:3) | Patient, kind, gracious, willingness to yield, understanding of the weakness in others.
- **A good reputation with outsiders** (1 Tim 3:7) | Represent the Lord and the church well with unbelievers.
- **Respectable** (1 Tim 3:2) | Orderly, well-behaved, proper outward demeanor and dress.
- **Not greedy for money** (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7) | Content with God's provisions, not covetous.
- **A lover of what is good** (Titus 1:8) | Helpful, kinds toward others, loving, generous.
- **Holy** (Titus 1:8) | Devoted to God and His Word.
- **Hospitable** (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8) | Unselfish, willing to share, extend sacrificial love and kindness to others.
- **Just** (Titus 1:8) | Fair, impartial, upright.

Self-controlled

- **Self-controlled/Temperate** (1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:8) | "Mental sobriety", stable, self-restrained, good judgement.
- **Not violent** (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7) | Not a "giver of blows", deal with emotional interpersonal conflicts well.
- **Not given to drunkenness** (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7) | Not addicted to wine, not over-indulgent.
- **Not quarrelsome** (1 Tim 3:3) | Peaceable, promoter of unity, show consideration for all men.
- **Not self-willed** (Titus 1:7) | Not stubborn, arrogant or inconsiderate but rather a team player.
- **Not quick-tempered** (Titus 1:7) | Quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry.

Mature faith

- **Not a novice** (1 Timothy 3:6) | Not new in his faith, avoid pride and conceit.
- **Has been tested** (1 Tim 3:10) | Time tested.
- **Holds firmly to the Truth** (Titus 1:9) | Cling firmly to, be devoted, adhere wholeheartedly to the Word.

Healthy home (being married and having children is not a requirement, but if a man does, these must be true)

- **Husband of one wife** (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6) | Above reproach in his sexual and marital life with one woman.
- **Manages his family well** (1 Timothy 3:4, 12) | Steward of his family.
- **Children are obedient and respectful** (1 Tim 3:4; Titus 1:6) | Under control with all dignity, submissive to father.
- **Children are believers** (Titus 1:6)

Skills

- **Able to teach** (1 Tim 3:2) | Knowledge of Scripture, readiness to teach, and ability to communicate well.
- **Able to exhort and admonish** (Titus 1:9) | "Come alongside", encourage by sound doctrine and refute error.

4. Servant Leadership

“If I then, the Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.” John 13:14-15

“After the emperor Constantine elevated Christianity to the status of a state religion in AD 312, the once-persecuted faith became a fierce persecutor of all its opposition. An unscriptural clerical and priestly caste was consumed by the quest for power, position and authority arose. Even Roman emperors had the guiding hand in the development of Christian churches. The pristine character of the New Testament church community was lost. When we read the Gospels, however, we see the principles of brotherly community, love, humility and servanthood at the very heart of Christ’s teaching. Here is a brief summary of our Master’s teaching on this subject.” (Alexander Strauch, Biblical Eldership)

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Matthew 11:29 | Gentle and Humble |
| • Mark 9:33-35 | Humble Servants of All |
| • Mark 10:35-45 | Sacrifice, Service and Suffering |
| • Matthew 23:1-12 | The Humble shall be Exalted |
| • Luke 22:24-27 | One Who Serves |
| • John 13:1-17 | Washing One Another’s Feet |
| • John 13:34-35 | Love |

**How do you see
Humility
Servanthood
Love
illustrated in these passages?**

The Bible provides much practical guidance for the responsibility of leaders within the church. Two helpful passages are **Acts 20:17-38** and **1 Peter 5:1-4**.

- Read each passage and then identify elder responsibilities such as protecting, feeding, leading and caring for the flock.
- Ezekiel 34:1-10 provides a contrast with the “*bad shepherds*” and what should be avoided in biblical leadership within the church. Jesus is the ultimate example of the Good Shepherd.



Bad Shepherds

- Don’t strengthen the flock
- Don’t heal the sick
- Don’t bind up the wounds
- Don’t bring back the strays
- Don’t search for the lost
- Allow the flock to be scattered

Good Shepherds: Protect, Feed, Lead and Care for the flock. They willingly lay down their lives for the sheep. They know their sheep and their sheep know them.

Biblical Job Description for Leaders

Acts

- Acts 11 :29-30
Elders receive and administer money
- Acts 15
Elders provide counsel and resolve conflict
- **Acts 20:17-38 (Key passage)** →

Paul's Letters to Churches

- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
Give proper recognition, esteem, love, and live in peace with leaders
- Philippians 1:1
Elders identified as overseers

Paul's Instruction to Timothy

- 1 Timothy 3 :1-7, 10
Qualifications for Elders
- 1 Timothy 4 :14
Elders commission and affirm workers
- 1 Timothy 5:17-25
Honor those who rule well, teach and preach; protect Elders from false accusations; discipline of Elders

Paul's Instruction to Titus

- Titus 1 :5-9
Qualifications for Elders

Peter's Instruction to Asian Elders

- 1 Peter 5 :1-4 (Key passage) →
Shepherd God's flock in God's way for God's reward

James Instruction to the Sick

- James 5 :13-15
Pray in faith, anoint with oil, deal with sin

Hebrews : Obey your Leaders

- Hebrews 13:17
Obey and submit to spiritual leaders; Elders keep watch over spiritual life of the flock; the flock should make the work joyful.

What can we learn from Acts 20:17-38

Identify elder responsibilities such as protecting, feeding, leading and caring for the flock.

v.18 _____

v.19 _____

v.20 _____

v.21 _____

v.22-23 _____

v.24 _____

v.25 _____

v.28 _____

v.29 _____

v.31 _____

v.33 _____

v.34 _____

v.35 _____

What responsibilities/attitudes do you see in 1 Peter 5:1-4?

Shepherd God's flock

Willing to serve (motivation/attitude)

Not greedy for financial gain

Not harsh or authoritarian

Sets an example (known by the members)

Read this summary from Alexander Strauch's book, *Biblical Eldership*, and discuss the importance of godly elders in the local church and pray for God to raise up these kinds of leaders in our churches.

In addition to shepherding others in a servant spirit, the elders must humbly and lovingly relate to one another. They must be able to patiently build consensus, compromise, persuade, listen, handle disagreement, forgive, receive rebuke, and correction, confess sin and appreciate the wisdom and perspective of others, even those with whom they disagree.

They must be able to submit to one another, speak kindly and gently to one another, be patient with their fellow colleagues, defer to one another, and speak their minds openly in truth and love.

Stronger and more gifted elders must not use their giftedness, as talented people sometimes do, to force their own way by threatening to leave the church and take their followers with them. Such selfishness creates ugly, carnal power struggles and endangers the unity and peace of the entire congregation.

The solution to this problem is not to revert to one-man rule or to leave the church. That is the easy way out. The Christian solution is to humble oneself, love as Christ loved, wash one another's feet, repent, submit, pray, turn from pride, shun impatience, and honor and love one another.

True elders suffer and bear the brunt of difficult people and problems so that the lambs are not bruised. They bear the misunderstanding and sins of others so that the assembly may live in peace. They lose sleep so that others may rest. They make great personal sacrifices of time and energy for the welfare of others. They see themselves as men under the authority of Christ. They depend on God for wisdom and help, not on their own power and cleverness. They face false teachers' fierce attacks. They guard the community's liberty and freedom in Christ so that the saints are encouraged to develop their gifts, to mature and to serve one another.

Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, page 98

This lesson highlighted biblical leadership criteria such as shared leadership, qualified leadership, and servant leadership focused on protecting, feeding, leading and caring for God's flock that has been placed under their care.

- **Which aspects of biblical spiritual leadership are most needed in the church today?**
- **What impact might there be in the church if leaders consistently modeled these qualities?**

Close out this lesson by summarizing your key learnings with a partner and then spend time praying for each other to continue growing in the character of Christ as a leader.

Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 3: SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES FROM THE LIFE OF NEHEMIAH

What is the difference between Management and Leadership?

John P. Kotter, author and tenured professor at the Harvard Business School, is well known for his work in the field of organizational leadership. In his 1996 book, *Leading Change*, Kotter developed a simple model that defined the difference between Management and Leadership.

Both Management and Leadership are needed to run a business or ministry of any size in an environment marked by rapid change. Often effective managers are promoted into positions of leadership because they were effective managers. There are different skills and competencies required of leaders.

Managers focus on making organizations run efficiently.

- P** Plan and Budget
- O** Organize and Staff
- C** Control and Problem Solve

Leaders help organizations grow, evolve, and adapt to changing circumstances.

- S** Set Direction and Establish Vision
- A** Align constituents
- M** Motivate and Inspire

Long before John Kotter developed these principles of management and leadership, Nehemiah was living them out by the grace of God to accomplish great things for God's glory. Nehemiah was a great leader who also understood the importance of management skills. Let's discover some of these basic, yet timeless leadership qualities.

Leadership Principles from Nehemiah

Background

	Ezra Chapters 1-6		Book of Esther	Ezra Chapters 7-10	Nehemiah
559 BC	536 BC	516 BC	483 BC	458 BC	445 - 425BC
	Return of Zerubbabel (with 50,000 exiles)		Esther becomes Queen	Return of Ezra (with 2,000 exiles)	Return of Nehemiah (with an unknown number of exiles)
	Rebuilding the Temple	Temple completed		Rebuilding the People	Rebuild the Wall
Cyrus 559-530 BC		Darius 521-486 BC	Xerxes 486-465 BC	Artaxerxes 465-425 BC	

Nehemiah continues Ezra's final glimpse of God's people mercifully reestablished in their land after the Babylonian exile and before the long dark intertestamental period of waiting for a greater restoration and revelation of God's deliverance (400 Silent years). Many have noted this book's lessons in leadership. Wise, prayerful Nehemiah leads a third group of exiles back to Jerusalem and there unites the people, amid surrounding opposition to rebuild the city walls and to live as God's people according to His Word. This book also highlights God's faithfulness to His unfaithful people. Nehemiah leads the people toward trust in a strong, trustworthy God. The wall rebuilt under Nehemiah's direction pictures not fearful retreat or isolation but rather God's protection of His people whom He has chosen, and through whom He will accomplish His redemptive plan for the human race.

Overview of the Book of Nehemiah

Chapter 1: The problem, Nehemiah's call and response; prayer of humility and confession; a God established vision.

Chapter 2: Boldness with the king; opposition begins, plan, set direction and establish buy in from those who will do the work.

Chapter 3: Build a team/Build the wall; called to a vision and purpose not just a task.

Chapter 4: Opposition; verbal/mocking - pray and act; threats – pray and act; problem solving; lead by example.

Chapter 5: Sensitive to the needs of the people; confront problems, make sacrifices.

Chapter 6: Opposition increases – external and internal; distraction and deceit; remain focused on integrity; wall completed!

Chapter 7: Delegate leadership; establish leadership criteria.

Chapter 8: Read and teach the Word of God; celebrate with joy and thanksgiving.

Chapter 9: Confession of sin; humility.

Chapter 10: Renew commitments and obey.

Chapter 11+12: Populate Jerusalem; dedication of the wall; serve the Lord; everyone playing their part.

Chapter 13: The work never ends; final reforms – remove foreigners, protect the Sabbath, guard purity of marriages.

Leadership Principles from Nehemiah

We will discuss at least nine leadership principles from the life of Nehemiah that can be applied in any position of leadership. As we continue with this study, the focus is not just on those called to visible and strategic leadership positions such as pastor, elder, missionary, and ministry leader. These principles can apply to any believer called by God to lead in their marriage, family, ministry at church, in their primary vocation, and in the community.

- God's leader **responds to a call**.
- God's **direction and vision** are sought by the leader.
- God's leader **cares for the people** and their situation.
- **Prayer** is essential to know God's will.
- God's leader **builds a team**.
- God's leader **motivates and inspires**.
- God's leader is **not discouraged by adversity**.
- God's leader discovers ways to **resolve conflict**.
- God's leader has God-given **convictions and commitments** that they will not compromise.

1. God's leader **responds to a call** (1:1-4, 5-11)

Read 1:1-4

No amazing appearance of God.

Nehemiah was not a priest, prophet, or king. He was a servant.

Nehemiah just received a simple message from his brother.

God's calling for a leader often comes with the presentation of a problem.

How did Nehemiah respond when confronted with the problem?

What breaks your heart?

Read 1:5-11

What observations to see in Nehemiah's prayer?

Through prayer, God's vision is beginning to develop in Nehemiah's heart.

Key Point: The clarity of the call and the vision to follow, will provide a foundation for perseverance in the face of opposition and challenges.

Identify an example in your life where you were presented with a problem that broke your heart and you were motivated to respond to this divine calling.

2. God's **direction and vision** are sought by the leader (2:1-10, 11-20)

"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare." Japanese Proverb

"People do not follow programs, but leaders who inspire them. They act when a vision stirs in them a reckless hope of something greater than themselves, hope of fulfillment they never before dared to aspire to. And hope is passed from person to person ... Hope bursts into flames when leaders begin to act." John White, Excellence in Leadership

- a. Godly leaders have a clear vision of God's purpose and plan (Nehemiah 2:11-12).
- b. Plan first before implementation.
- c. Be skillful in organizing and preparing for the work.
- d. God's vision is usually simple ("Rebuild the Wall")

Read 2:1-10

God began to develop the vision for Nehemiah as a result of prayer and meditation.

He was prepared to ask the king for specific resources needed for this journey to Jerusalem and the project.

Nehemiah received permission from the King to return to Jerusalem.

Read 2:11-20

Leaders often see what others are not able to see.

An effective leader evaluates a situation before acting.

When he arrived, the first thing he did was to take a private tour around the city wall to assess the damage and formulate a plan for rebuilding it. Leaders plan before implementing.

Leaders are responsible for helping others understand the scope of the problem and align them around the vision.

Why do you think Nehemiah started in such a quiet/humble manner?

Why do you think he brought a few others with him to assess the scope of the problem?

How did the clarity of the vision help Nehemiah to begin to face opposition before the project even started?

3. God's leader **cares for the people** and their situation (2:10, 17-20; 5:6-13, 14-19, 10:28-39)

- a. Godly leaders have a genuine love for people who are created in the image and likeness of God.
- b. Leaders protect their people from harm and danger.
- c. Leaders demonstrate empathy toward the people (4:10-12, 5:1-5)

God does not call a leader to just accomplish a task! God works through His people to accomplish His purposes. Leaders must have a heart for God's people which will help to motivate and inspire them to pursue God's plans with excellence.

Read 5:1-13

What is the problem and how does Nehemiah demonstrate love and concern for the people?

4. **Prayer** is essential to know God's will (1:4,6; 2:4; 4:4,9; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29)

What/Who do you rely on when not relying on God?

Prayer is a theme throughout this book.

- Chapter 1: God's calling and vision come through prayer.
- Chapter 2: Clarity of vision, wisdom, boldness, and discernment provided as a result of prayer.
- Chapter 4-6: In the face of opposition, Nehemiah prayed first and then acted

PRAY: Pray about everything, Pray continually, Pray and Act, Pray in the moment, Pray over extended seasons, Pray out of God's Word, Pray with thanksgiving, Pray focused upward on God, Pray with honesty and humility, Pray in the Spirit, ...

5. God's leader ***builds a team*** (2:18, chapter 3)

Chapter 3 is filled with a list of names, heads of families, people working where they live, diversity of backgrounds, unified around common vision, greater creativity and innovation, balance of gifts and abilities.

- a. Godly leaders organize and delegate, doing only what they (should!) can do and equipping and empowering others to do what they can do (Nehemiah 2:6-8; chapter 3).
- b. Leaders are delegators more than doers, a team player rather than a soloist!

Effective leaders recruit teams and delegate responsibility to others. After Nehemiah had assessed the situation and formulated a plan of attack, he shared his plan with others and allowed them to help him with the work. Effective leaders realize their dependence on others and that it takes many hands to accomplish a great task.

No place for micro-management.

Personal invitations are essential when building a team (avoid email, text, and working through a third party).

Focus on delegating responsibility with authority. Why are both needed?

Are you doing too much in your leadership style?

Do you find it hard to delegate? Why?

Is your church or team more like a bus or an ant hill?

6. God's leader ***motivates and inspires*** (chapters 2-12) (8:1-8, 9-18, 12:27-43)

Effective leaders inspire unity and commitment among their team members. Nehemiah led his people in the face of intense opposition; yet, by his leadership, the people did not run away. They continued the work until it was finished. They worked together with one person rebuilding his section of the wall, while his partner stood guard to protect him from attack.

Effective leaders give praise and thanksgiving to God for all things. After Ezra, the priest read from the Book of the Law, Nehemiah called on the Levites who were set apart as priests to God to stand up and praise the Lord for all He had done to help them succeed in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah led by example (Ch 4), cared for the people (Ch 5), taught the Word (Ch 8), celebrated (Ch 8 and 12).

Implementing all of these leadership principles actually contributes to motivating and inspiring team members and is a testimony to the power of vision, faith and unity provided through effective leadership.

1. **Clear vision and purpose** (Calling)
(Principles #1 and #2)
2. **Engage the people** (sense of ownership, shared vision, teams, care for the people)
(Principles #3 and #5)
3. **Divine Confidence** (Rooted in faith in God's promises, remind people continually of God's favor and faithfulness)
(Principle #4)
4. **Perseverance and Encouragement** (Remain committed to vision even when discouraged, Refresh vision)
(Principles #6 and #7)
5. **Planning and Organization** (Plan, Address challenges and develop solutions, execute the plan and report progress, pay attention to details)
(Principles #2 and #8)
6. **Celebrate and Gratitude** (Along the way, end of the project, create sense of community/unity)
(Principle #6)

Share examples of how you motivate and inspire the teams that you lead.

7. God's leader is ***not discouraged by adversity*** (4:1-10; 6:1-9)

- a. Godly leaders are determined to persevere (Nehemiah 4:1-10).
- b. They exhibit courage in the face of danger.
- c. Leaders refuse to throw in the towel or drop out of the race.
- d. Leaders view opposition as part of the leadership challenge.

Effective leaders are not afraid to stand up to intense opposition. After the Israelites had begun rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, some opposition arose from other occupants within the Palestine area. Nehemiah remained steadfast and courageous and rallied his people to continue the work.

"Leading disciples know that whether they finish the journey of leadership well depends greatly on how effectively they cope with the crushing emotions that can beset them in the effort to do good. They are careful to take the deliberate and repeated steps required to keep rising above these painful pressures so that they may complete their mission."

8. God's leader discovers ways to **resolve conflict** (chapter 5, 13).
 - a. Leaders care for the whole organization.
 - b. Leaders confront issues immediately and biblically (Matthew 5:24, 7:1-5, 18:15-17)

Here's a simple process for working through conflict.

Take the problem seriously (Neh 5:6)

- don't ignore it
- If team unity is threatened, respond to it.
- Anger can be ok (if sin is involved).

Pause, Pray, Ponder (Neh 5:7)

- Think and pray before you speak.
- Get alone with God.
- James 1:19-20 (Quick to Listen, Slow to speak, Slow to anger)
- Godly wisdom needed (James 3:13-18)

Present the Problem and Propose a Solution (Neh 5:7)

- Confront individually and privately
- Go to the source
- Call back to the standard of God's Word (Truth)

Publicly deal with division (if needed) (Neh 5:7)

- Include others based on the visibility of the issue.
- Nehemiah called an assembly. This took guts to confront the leaders who probably were funding the project.

Set and example of unselfishness (Neh 5:10)

- Nehemiah worked on the wall day and night, He protected the people, He prayed, He cared for the people, He helped the poor.
- Most conflicts revolve around selfish desires and unmet expectations

9. God's leader has God-given **convictions and commitments** that they will not compromise (Nehemiah 13:8-24).

- a. Integrity triumphs expediency.
 - b. Scripture triumphs culture.
 - c. Biblical conviction triumphs over popular opinion

Effective leaders stand fast on core values. After the wall had been rebuilt, the Israelite people began to do things that were not pleasing to God. Nehemiah was deeply upset by this and called his people to account.

Effective leaders establish all operations on the Word of God. When he first heard about the desolation of the wall in Jerusalem, he called on God. When he encountered opposition from other ethnic groups, he prayed for God's protection. After the wall was rebuilt, Nehemiah called for Ezra the priest to open the Book of the Law and read from it.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Summary of Nehemiah's spiritual leadership principles by chapter by chapter.

1. Identify your calling (1:1-11)
2. Pray about everything (2:1-8)
3. Maintain honesty (2:9-20)
4. Delegate and motivate (3:1-32, 12:44-47, 13:13)
5. Couple prayer and action (4:1-23)
6. Demonstrate integrity (5:1-13)
7. Serve and care for your followers (5:14-19)
8. Maintain focus (6:1-14)
9. Depend on the Lord (6:15-7:4)
10. Teach the Word (8:1-8)
11. Celebrate accomplishments (8:9-18, 12:27-43)
12. Assume ownership of problems and mistakes (9:1-10:27)
13. Give generously (10:20-39)
14. Take the first step (11:1-36)
15. Repeat the process with a renewed vision (13:1-30)

Based on the 9 leadership principles from Nehemiah's life and the 15 principles summarized above:

- Which principles are most evident in your leadership approach?

- Which principles would you like to develop?

Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 4: LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES FROM JESUS AND THE GOSPELS

Jesus demonstrated each of the principles from the life of Nehemiah.

Share some practical and specific examples of leadership principles from Jesus that we see in the Gospels.

A proper Christology (theology of Christ) sheds light on the key leadership traits of Jesus from Philippians 2:5-11.

- Jesus is God
- Jesus is man (incarnation) HUMILITY
- Jesus is Savior (Crucifixion) OBEDIENCE and SERVANTHOOD
- Jesus is Lord (Resurrection and Ascension) EMPOWERMENT and DELEGATION

1. Jesus humbled himself and allowed the Father to exalt him.

[HUMILITY]

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

2. Jesus followed his Father's will rather than sought a position.

[OBEDIENCE + SERVANTHOOD]

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. (John 6:38)
Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work." (John 4:34)

3. Jesus defined greatness as being a servant.

[OBEDIENCE + SERVANTHOOD]

And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." (Mark 9:33-37)

4. Jesus left his place at the head table to serve the needs of others.

[OBEDIENCE + SERVANTHOOD]

He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13:4-5)

5. Jesus shared responsibility and authority with those he called to lead.

[EMPOWER + DELEGATE]

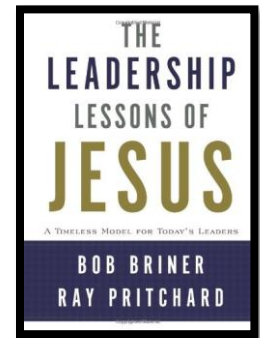
And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. (Luke 9:1-2)

6. Jesus built a team to carry out a vision worldwide.

[EMPOWER + DELEGATE]

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Leadership Lessons of Jesus: A Timeless Model for Today's Leaders
by Bob Briner & Ray Pritchard (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1997)



Here are 30 lessons from Jesus of the 75 shared in this book. Read through this list and highlight (**on page 35**) the principles that you think are most impactful and relevant to your current position/area of responsibility.

1. Speaking the Truth [Character/Truth]

The relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist demonstrates that truth is always the first and most important element of the spokesperson's message and that a quality spokesperson continues to speak the truth even in tough times when the truth may be unpopular. [Page 6]

2. Bold Recruitment [Team]

When you feel called to lead, and when you discover someone you really want and need to be involved in your endeavor, do not be coy. Follow the example of Jesus and ask them to join you. People want to be asked and feel needed. Even when they say no--and some will--they will feel good about themselves and about you simply because you asked. [Page 20]

3. The Power of a Personal Invitation [Team]

Real leaders rise to the challenge of personally inviting to the team those persons necessary for the greatest success. No other invitations have the power and appeal of the one-on-one method. Jesus asked people to follow Him, and so should you. [Page 20]

4. The Importance of Leadership and Management

A leader knows the difference between leadership and management, and values both. He is ready to respond in positive ways to the unexpected, consistently analyzing situations and responding with boldness as he is led by the Holy Spirit. [Page 42]

5. Looking Beneath the Surface [Team]

In choosing Matthew, a despised tax collector, Jesus certainly went against conventional wisdom, looking far beneath the surface of Matthew's unpopular profession to teach us quite an important leadership lesson: a wise leader builds his or her time very carefully. Choices are made not on appearance and appeal but on deeply, prayerfully considered values. [Page 48]

6. Strength in Diversity [Team]

By choosing Matthew, Jesus showed that a leader should consider diversity when building his team--all kinds of diversity, particularly diversity of talent, temperament, and experience. A less thoughtful leader puts together a homogeneous team of look a likes who may also think alike because of their similar backgrounds and experiences--a 2 much weaker team than one built with diversity in mind. We often think that diversity weakens a team when, in fact, the opposite is true. Men like Matthew and Peter (a tax collector and a fisherman, respectively) should have been at each other's throats-- imagine a longshoreman having to work with an IRS agent. But Jesus saw something in these men and was not afraid to choose them both for the same team. [Page 48-49]

7. Consistent Leadership

Never fall into the trap of thinking that because something is inherently better it will automatically succeed. Competent, compelling leadership must be exercised to ensure that even the best things endure. [Page 56]

8. Constant Values - Changing Methods

According to author Tom Peters, innovative companies do two things very well: (1) they remain true to their core values, and (2) they continue to evolve and change their methods of doing business. [Page 56]

9. Open to Change

“We have always done it this way” is not a validating concept for a leader; a quality leader instead asks “Why?” and “Can we do it better?” When convinced a new way is better, a leader immediately begins to establish a new tradition, one better than the old. A leader believes in the old saying, “He has the right to criticize who has the heart to help.” Simply blasting an old tradition is not leadership. [Page 58]

10. Expect Opposition [Conflict]

A wise leader understands that no matter how pure the motive or how effective the action, there will always be those who oppose his or her leadership. A leader should not be surprised or debilitated by opposition because it will come. [Page 60]

11. Unwarranted Criticism [Conflict]

Not all are called to be leaders. In fact, this is a good test of leadership: can you handle unwarranted criticism? Many can cope with rational criticism, but only a select few can both understand and effectively deal with the kind of criticism that has no logical basis. [Page 61]

12. Relationships with Other Believers

... a very special, close relationship with a small group of followers in an absolute essential for the effective leader. [Page 64]

13. Speaking to Large Groups [Communication]

There are certainly occasions when a leader needs to address the crowds. The effective leader works to develop skills, sensitivity, and comfort with crowds and small groups. While some are more naturally gifted in one setting than in others, it is possible to improve in both areas. If you aspire to be a leader (or perhaps a better leader), assess your strengths and weaknesses in each area and work to improve. [Page 65]

14. Attention to Details

A friend once asked Michelangelo why he had labored so long over the intricate details of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, details so tiny no one would ever notice. “After all,” the friend said, “who will know whether it is perfect or not?” “I will,” the artist replied. [Page 67]

15. The Call to Leadership [Calling]

There is no tragedy in failing to become a leader if we face up to the possibility of leadership squarely, honestly, and in an attitude of submission to God’s will. If we prayerfully examine opportunities to lead and are then obedient, we will be successful as either a leader or a follower. Tragedies occur when we fail to take on leadership responsibilities that we are clearly called to fulfill, or when we pursue or demand leadership responsibilities without objectively and prayerfully examining our ability to lead. When either of these occur, people are hurt, resources are wasted, and good opportunities for growth are retarded. Are you willing to pay the high price of leadership? Examine yourself--see if you really can or want to be a leader. Ask God to guide you. [Page 81]

16. Unity [Team]

Unity rarely just happens. It must be sought and taught. In my basketball experience, the leadership that produced most of the team’s unity came from a player rather than from the coach; the titular leader is not always the one who instills unity in his or her team. Conversely, unity can be easily destroyed by almost anyone. A wise leader does all he or she can to build with those who contribute to unity while eliminating the cause of disunity from the team. When Jesus said that a house divided against itself cannot stand, He spoke a truth applicable to every kind of human endeavor. Unity is essential. Do not be afraid to eliminate the source of disunity from your enterprise--it is your responsibility as a leader. [Page 86]

17. Not Everyone Appreciates Good Leadership

Winston Churchill was perhaps the greatest leader of the twentieth century. His magnificent, courageous leadership of the British people during the darkest days of World War 2 inspired freedom-loving people everywhere. Yet, in the first election after his leadership helped to secure victory over the Nazis, he was immediately voted out of office! This is an example of what leaders often face. Universal appreciation does not always follow great leadership. [Page 88]

18. A Vision [Shared Vision]

Good leaders have a vision; better leaders share a vision; the best leaders invite others to join them in spreading this vision. In this way, the best leaders create a sense of intimacy with hundreds, thousands, and even millions of followers, which explains why some feel that they know great world leaders even though they have never met. Shared vision binds leaders and followers together in a way that little else can. [Page 91]

19. Good Seed Produces Good Fruit in God's Time

Leaders who cannot handle rejection, defeat, or delay do not last. Leaders who must win everything every time are short-lived with limited success. Leaders must believe that if they sow good seed, some will fall on good soil. Some will produce good things. Even though they may not see good results immediately or even in their lifetime. Jesus teaches us that good seed will produce good fruit. We cannot be discouraged by a lack of response, but we must trust God to bring about the harvest in His own time and His own way. [Page 93]

20. Staying on Course [Vision]

It is always important to emphasize the “up side” in communicating with followers. While keeping expectations real and preparing for the tough times is important, it is vital to show followers the potential fruit of staying the course, of being faithful to the mission. [Page 98]

21. Good Stewards of Our Resources

Jesus repeatedly teaches that it is not how much we have that counts, but what we do with what we have. Leaders must help followers understand this principle and hold them accountable to it. [Page 104]

22. Faithfulness [Calling/Vision]

We may not understand how God's plan works, but we can know that He is faithful. We can know that if we lead faithfully He will bless our leadership efforts. We may not always “win” as the world measures winning, but as we plant good seed, a good harvest will result. Leaders are called to faithfulness more than they are called to success. [Page 106]

23. Making Contact

When Tom Peters writes about “management by walking around,” his writing is based on this understanding. Leaders need to be aware of the effect they have on those they lead. Successful leaders, from great football coaches to great generals, understand this and make their “little” contacts really count. [Page 108]

24. God Uses Small Things

The Bible often celebrates small things. It was little David, not the giant Goliath. It was Gideon's small band, not the enemy hordes. It was the widow's mite, not the Pharisee's largesse. It was the cup of cold water in His name, not the grandstand play. Sometimes it is better to “think small.” [Page 109]

25. Giving of Self

...a leader does not, cannot, help others without giving of himself or herself. Leadership is costly. [Page 125]

26. Planning for the Future

Christian leaders have a particular responsibility to plan for succession and the future of their enterprise. If they are to be good stewards of the leadership responsibility God has given them, they must do their best to prepare their own well-trained, experienced Peter, James, and John to smoothly and seamlessly assume command when they move on.

27. You Cannot Please Everyone

Leadership brings out both the best and the worst in people. Wise leaders understand this, accepting it as a natural part of leadership, and try to emphasize the best and minimize the worst. Recognize that your motives will always be questioned by some and that, even when you are performing at your best, creating the most good for the most people, some will “take offense.” Unfortunately, those offended will often be people closest to you or those you have known the longest. [Page 132]

28. The Benefit of Leaving Home

I have seen a lot of leadership talent wasted due to a refusal to leave home. Although it is good to have a strong appreciation and affection for home, returning periodically to visit as Jesus did, maximized leadership usually occurs away from home. Those who insist on staying at home often fail to fulfill their leadership potential. Peter, James, and John did not become leaders by lingering in Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee, but by traveling to Jerusalem. “Come follow me” almost always means following away from home for maximum leadership effect, although there is nothing wrong with returning home if that is where the Lord has called you to be. For most of us, however, leaving home is part of God’s plan for our leadership. [Page 134] Balance

29. Balance

Some leaders hold their authority too closely, strangling on the demands of the mundane and the minutiae of daily life. Some delegate too broadly, dissipating the potential effects of their authority. [Page 136]

30. Making Decisions

In wherever the enterprise--a home, Sunday school class, church, or business--work hard as you lead to understand the extent of your authority, and then exercise it. Be the person to stop an appropriate part of “the buck.” A leader, by definition, is a “buck stopper,” one who makes decisions and accepts the responsibility for them. [Page 136]

Which of these principles are most relevant for your area of responsibility?

Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 5: GOD'S VIEW OF HOLINESS

In order to be an effective Christian leader you have to be at ease with God's view of holiness. In order to move ahead as a Christian leader, we need to be fully aware of and in total agreement with 5 key understandings.

1. Sin is always wrong and is to be avoided.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

"Abstain from every form of evil."

2 Timothy 2:22

"So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

The issue is purity! The leaders that God is looking for are men and women who will pursue being pure in thought, word and deed!

We must strive to be like Joseph in Genesis 39. Remember what Joseph said when he was being pursued and tempted by Potiphar's wife? He did not say, "How can I do such a wicked thing?" He said, "How can I do such a wicked thing **against God!**"

Joseph understood God's view of holiness and it motivated him to resist temptation and pursue a holy life...even though it landed him in prison! Regardless of the consequences, Joseph recognized the **issue is purity**.

ACTIVITY

1. Discuss purity and temptation. Where are you consistently tempted? What do you do to resist the temptation and maintain purity?
2. Why do we tend to water down God's standards of holiness and purity?
3. Why are we tempted to think, "In my circumstances is it sometimes okay to lower my standard?"

God's view of holiness is purity. We have to understand that every impure thought, every harsh word and every inappropriate action moves us further and further from God's view of holiness. When we sin, we are choosing to drag God through our impurity. We have to learn to be like Joseph... ***"How can I do such a wicked thing against God?"***

2. We need to be accountable.

Leadership tends to isolate individuals and the temptation to live life without measures of accountability often occurs. As leaders rise in their Christian circles, isolation can cause a leader to soon be without any measures of accountability and so you must choose to build accountability with trusted Godly friends.

Level 1: marriage and family

Level 2: members of church/ministry team

Divide staff into groups of 3 (men with men and women with women) for a one-year commitment of accountability. Create groups that will share with each other where they would like to be held accountable. Once a month schedule time for the staff to meet in their accountability groups of 3 and hold each other accountable. No reporting is required or kept. This is simply Christian men and women choosing to live lives of purity and seeking help and counsel from one another.

Level 3: two close friends

Give each other permission to ask one another the hard questions of life. Was there an action I took or did not take that reflected poorly on my commitment to honor God with my life? Did I look at, touch or read something inappropriate? How am I honoring my wife and children? Have I lied with any of my responses?

GROUP ACTIVITY

1. How have you have seen leaders become isolated from Biblical accountability?
2. What levels of accountability should you have in your life today?
3. How will you build levels of appropriate accountability in your life?
4. What will be your accountability plan?

3. We need to live a life without secrets.

We are being programmed by technology to have secrets. We are being told to protect ourselves by having a password for our phone, our computer and other private areas of our life. While these passwords are needed, so that no one takes advantage of you or your property, we are also creating an unnecessary culture of secrecy. I love technology and the advantages it provides, but I do not like the culture of secrecy that seems to be increasing with each new device.

I am not so naïve as to think that everyone must know everything you are doing all the time, but there should be someone before whom you live a secret-free life. Your spouse, your parents, your children, a trusted friend. Someplace in your life where there is an absence of secrets.

I am trying to live a life without secrets. Not everyone has to know everything about my life but there should be someone I trust who knows my secrets, my shortcomings, my weaknesses, my vulnerabilities. The fewer secrets I maintain, the simpler and less complex my life is to live.

PERSONAL ACTIVITY

1. Where and what are you tempted to keep secret? Why?
2. Is there an area of your life that you should keep as a secret? Why?
3. What is the difference between keeping a secret and keeping a confidence?

4. We need to know God desires to use clean vessels.

Psalm 66:18

“If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”

David learned that his secrets of lust and adultery actually blocked his privilege of intercession with God. God simply did not listen to David when his life was crowded with impure secrets. David’s ability to pray and effectively lead was limited by the very secrets he kept.

In Joshua 7, the nation Israel learned the same painful lesson. Remember they had great success at Jericho and then at Ai they sustained a great loss. Why? What was the difference?

The nation had not fully obeyed God and God, therefore, removed the victory from them. God had told them not to take any spoils of war and one man, Achan, ignored God’s directive.

So in Joshua 7 the nation lines up by tribes and God calls out the tribe of Judah. Next the tribe of Judah is lined up by clans and God singles out the Zerahite clan. The Zerahite clan is lined up by families and God isolates the family of Zimri. Then Zimri lines his family up by man and God identifies Achan as the one who had disobeyed God and God severely punishes Achan and his family.

Why did God do this? He wanted this new nation of Israel to know one thing. At all costs, they had to obey God. God would not even allow one man, in one family, of one clan, in one tribe, to get away with disobedience. God would not give away victory while there was a rebellious, unclean vessel in the community.

Like the nation of Israel learned and as David learned, we too must learn that **leadership is all about purity**. God wants to use clean vessels and He simply will not use unclean and disobedient followers.

As we advance in influence as Christian leaders, the same rules of purity apply from bottom to top. Do not think that as you advance in leadership, the principles of purity and obedience apply less and less to you.

We have to fight the temptation of thinking that the more influence we gain, the less God’s principles of purity apply to us.

5. **We need to know God understands no one is perfect.**

If you are like me, by now you are feeling rather guilty, unworthy and maybe a little dirty as you think about your shortcomings and failures as a believer and leader. That is why I am so thankful for this fifth principle, namely, God knows that none of us are perfect and so He graciously includes confession as a part of His plan of restoration and forgiveness.

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

God has not left us to wallow in our guilt and sin. He understands that we are not perfect and that we will fail. He has also provided the process for being restored. It is called confession. Confession is agreeing with God that what we did was wrong, it was inappropriate and it was contrary to God's holy nature.

We do not have to go out and flog ourselves. We do not have to do penance for our sins, nor do we have to wear a scarlet letter. We just have to agree with God that what we did was wrong (sin). Then with a clean slate and renewed purpose, we set about to live a life of purity and holiness that will please our heavenly Father.

God knows we will fail, so He invites us into this wonderful, cleansing process called confession. Confession allows us to continue on in our pursuit of holiness. Lack of confession or long periods between confession, places a great strain on our relationship with God. God wants us to maintain short accounts with Him.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

List the 5 things we must understand about God's view of holiness.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Identify the principle that you may need to develop and what steps will you take to begin to grow in that area?

Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 6: GOD'S VIEW OF PROMOTION

If there ever was a category of leadership that is as different as night and day, it is God's view of promotion vs. man's view of promotion. Humanity says *"fight and scream for everything you can in order to get ahead"* and God says *"if you want to be first in my kingdom, you have to be willing to be last"*! You get ahead in God's kingdom by moving to the back of the line!

"But many who are first will be last, and the last first." (Matthew 19:30)

"So the last will be first, and the first last." (Matthew 20:16)

When it comes to leading, these have to be some of the hardest verses for us to swallow. You lead by serving. You get ahead by being willing to be last. You are not supposed to elbow your way to the front. You are not supposed to lie and cheat to get ahead. You are not to bully. You are not to lord over others. You do not get ahead by pushing others down.

You serve. You give preference to others. In all things.

You do not act out of your prejudices. You treat everyone with the same respect and dignity.

You esteem others better than yourself. You share. You give. You sacrifice. You give up what may rightfully be yours to honor someone else.

Remember in Luke 9:46-48 where the disciples were arguing among themselves about who would be the greatest in the kingdom? Jesus reads their minds and sets a child before them and teaches them that whoever receives the child, receives Jesus. Then Jesus says, "He who is least among you, this is the one who is great."

ACTIVITY

1. How does the secular world teach us to get ahead?
2. Why is Jesus' teaching on promotion so hard to accept?
3. Where are you tempted to push others aside in your Christian circles?

God is not looking for the individual with the greatest skills. God is looking for the individual with the greatest heart. In God's economy the one with the greatest heart is the one who is willing to move to the back of the line.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

1. Make a list of where you are tempted to be first in your home, your family, your marriage, your church, and in your community.
2. Identify Biblical stories that will help you when you are tempted to be first.

We need to learn how to take on the lowly tasks for the glory of God. When you begin to learn how to put others first, then God can do His part in promoting you.

Be willing to serve anywhere and allow God to give you the advancement that He determines.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

1. What are the characteristics of someone who lords it over others?
2. What are the characteristics of someone who is willing to serve?
3. How can you identify servant leaders in your Christian community?
4. List at least 3 servant leader characteristics that you can begin to adopt into your life?

Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 7: GOD'S VIEW OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

This lesson is not an exhaustive study on all the spiritual gifts in the Bible, but rather a brief examination of WHO gives spiritual gifts. The reason this is so important to spiritual leadership is because too many believers spend their time chasing after gifts they have not been given. In this wasted chase, they may not realize they are insulting the author and distributor of the gifts.

You see God decides who gets which gifts! It is not up to you, but it is up to God. You are not left to chase after an elusive gift that you will never obtain. Rather, you have been perfectly crafted by God and given a supernatural ability to accomplish incredible kingdom work with the spiritual gifts that God has deemed best for you.

“All these (gifts) are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”
1 Corinthians 12:11

“But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.” 1 Corinthians 12:18

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers....” Ephesians 4:11

Definition: *Spiritual gifts are divine abilities distributed by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God's design and grace for the common good of the body of Christ.*

Spiritual gifts are divine abilities...

They are endowments or special gifts given by God that enable us to make our unique contribution. They are not natural talents, but divine abilities that enable us to do ministry.

distributed by the Holy Spirit...

These divine abilities created by God are given to believers through the Holy Spirit when we become members of the body of Christ. Not only does the Holy Spirit distribute the gifts, He also empowers us in our use of them.

according to God's design and grace...

There is no Christian without a spiritual gift. Every believer has at least one. Gifts equip believers to fulfill the Lord's purpose by reflecting His design for their lives.

for the common good of the body of Christ...

Your spiritual gift(s) are not for you, but given to you for others. The divine abilities you have been given enable you to meet the needs of others and the church as a whole. Each of us can make a kingdom impact. Our gifts allow us to serve one another better. They enable us to glorify God and edify others.

God himself has determined what spiritual gift(s) you received the moment you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. The Creator of the universe, the Giver of life, and the One who sustains you every day has chosen a specific gift or gifts for you to develop and use for His kingdom work.

The same God who made you tall or short, who gave you curly hair or straight hair, who has each of your days numbered, also has chosen particular gifts that will be just what you need to make you feel satisfied, fulfilled and productive in the kingdom of God.

Too many times we see Christians wishing they had a gift they did not receive from God and they are forever frustrated because God made them to be an evangelist and they are trying to be teacher. Or God gifted them as administrators and they are trying to become preachers.

In their pursuit of a gift that has not been given to them, believers are failing to develop and use the very gift God has given to them. In their dream to become something that God never intended for them, they are missing out on their personal divine plan to joy and satisfaction.

Benefits of knowing your spiritual gift(s).

Personal

- Once you know your spiritual gifts, you know your spiritual job description.
- When you know your spiritual gifts, your ministry will be more focused.
- You will be more fruitful and fulfilled. (John 15:8, 11)

Church

- There is more unity and harmony in churches that teach and develop gift-based ministries.
- There is less pride and false humility in churches with gift-based ministries.
- Maturity and growth in churches.

Kingdom

- God is glorified and people are edified

GROUP ACTIVITY

1. How do you think God feels when we pursue a gift other than that which He has given us?
2. Do you think Satan may have a hand in trying to get us to pursue an “unintended” gift?
3. Are you satisfied with the gift(s) God has given to you? Why or why not?

Here are a two truths to keep in mind as you consider your spiritual giftedness.

1. *All the gifts have value*

There are no worthless gifts. That would be like saying God created someone who has more value to Him than another person. Every individual on the face of the earth is of equal value in God's eyes. No one is inferior and no spiritual gift is inferior.

You will find your personal value and self-worth as you discover and develop your God intended and God given spiritual gift(s). To ignore a God given gift and pursue a gift God never intended for you is to look the Creator in the eye and tell Him you know what you need better than He does.

2. *All the gifts are necessary and needed*

Every church needs a full complement of God given spiritual gifts to be fully functioning and to be as effective as God intends that local church to be. When we pursue a spiritual gift that God did not give us, we are choosing to limit the functionality of our community of believers. We are putting our own desires ahead of those around us and we are robbing our community of what God has designed and intended.

Note: For further study on spiritual gifts, look at Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:7-16, and 1 Peter 4:7-11. Here are some summary truths related to God's view of spiritual gifts based on these passages.

- Spiritual gifts are for the common good of the church.
- Spiritual gifts are for the building up of the church.
- Spiritual gifts are for serving one another.
- Spiritual gifts are given by God to every believer for a unique and necessary purpose in ministry.
- Spiritual gifts appear to be distributed at the time of salvation.
- Spiritual gifts are not the same as the fruit of the Spirit, natural talents and abilities.
- Spiritual gifts do not disqualify us from obeying God's commands outside of our giftedness. Every member of the body of Christ is commanded to minister in many of the gifted areas, whether we possess that particular gift or not. For example, all believers are to demonstrate faith, wisdom, encouragement, mercy, give generously, serve faithfully, witness boldly, teach what Jesus has commanded, be devoted to prayer, etc.
- Spiritual gifts are useless if not exercised in love.
- Beware when any specific gift is promoted as evidence of salvation or spiritual blessing.
- Beware when a church service or ministry focuses on spiritual gifts and their manifestation rather than the Giver of the gifts and His agenda.
- Beware of comparing spiritual gifts with others.
- Beware of using spiritual gifts in the flesh to fulfill personal needs or to impress others.
- Beware of confusing spiritual gifts with spiritual fruit and evidence of spiritual growth and maturity.

Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 8: GOD'S VIEW OF TEACHERS AND MINISTRY

Too many spiritual leaders have the idea that ministry is an easy way of life. Nothing could be further from the truth. The ministry is work, hard work and it is a 24/7 lifestyle. It is not for the lazy individual and it is not for the person who wants to cruise through life on easy street. As a matter of fact, Scripture warns people away from becoming teachers and spiritual leaders because it is so difficult and so critically important.

“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” (James 3:1)

James warns us that teachers, spiritual leaders will be judged more strictly. When you exercise any sort of leadership over someone else, especially spiritual leadership, you answer to a higher authority. This is God's work and God keeps His eye on those who are influencing others in kingdom matters.

The context of James 3 is the tongue and James uses 3 illustrations to show how powerful the tongue of the teacher can be. In each illustration something very small has a very large impact.

1. A Bit: A small bit in a horse's mouth can control this powerful animal
2. A Rudder: The small rudder on the back of a boat can turn the entire boat.
3. A Spark: a small spark can start a large fire.

The point is the small tongue can and does have a very large impact and has the potential to do great good as well as harm.

“But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.” (James 3:8-10)

Spiritual leaders must come to grips with the tremendous influence they may have over other people. They must learn to control this small tongue so that it does not become a runaway horse or a wild fire.

In high school we enjoyed a retreat with our church where an excellent, well-known speaker came in and taught us for the week. He really did an outstanding job, but on the last day we played a practical joke on the speaker that he did not think was funny. He lost his temper and screamed at the handful of guilty students. Today, 50 years later, I cannot remember anything of what he preached on, but I can remember word for word the anger of his uncontrolled tongue.

In contrast to that, a kind word said at the right time is something very special.

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.” (Proverbs 25:11)

ACTIVITY

1. Tell each other about an individual who spoke skillfully into your life.
2. What made them special to you? What did they do that you can put into practice?
3. Who are 5-10 individuals whose lives you can speak into this month?

As we stated earlier, ministry is not for the faint of heart. Ministry is real work. It takes real sweat and persistent prayer. Ministry is filled with heartbreak. Any time you work with people you will be disappointed.

Never go into spiritual leadership thinking this is easy. It is not. This is why the apostle Paul teaches Timothy to do the WORK of an evangelist.

*“As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”
(2 Timothy 4:5)*

Notice what Paul says in the book of Acts:

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.” (Acts 20:28-31)

Did you see what Paul said? Night and day he watched over them for 3 years, through his tears! That is what true spiritual leadership looks like. It is not simple or easy; it takes determined effort and work.

In Romans Paul says it this way:

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2)

What is acceptable to God?

Again, lest you think that spiritual leadership is easy, notice what the author of Hebrews says:

“Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy— wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised.” (Hebrews 11:35b-39)

We are not trying to scare you away from becoming the spiritual leader God intended. But you must not be naïve and unaware that there is a price to be paid to be a spiritual leader.

Notice Paul's description of his ministry life:

“Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift atsea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.” (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

Few of us will have a harder ministry life than Paul, but some of you may. In order to be an effective spiritual leader, you will have to count the cost of ministry. There is a price to pay and spiritual leadership is not for everyone.

ACTIVITY

1. How do the people in your community view the life of ministry?
2. How would you describe your view of ministry?
3. What tempts you to be lazy in ministry?
4. What motivates you to work hard in ministry?

Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 9: GOD'S VIEW OF AUTHORITY

Around the world we see many abuses of authority and power. Dictators who ruthlessly control their nations, political leaders who oppressively rule with iron fists and men who seek to dominate and control women. Unfortunately, with so many examples of inappropriate authoritative leaders around the world, false impressions of authority and leadership have crept into the Christian community, the church and Christian homes.

We see denominations exercising legalistic rules, we see pastors running their churches like dictators, and heads of households treating their spouses and children as personal servants.

So what does the Bible have to say about authority and power? Who has the authority? How is power to be used? What does authority have to do with spiritual leadership? How are we to lead in the community, in the church and in our homes?

1. God Has All Authority

Paul makes this very clear in Romans.

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." (Romans 13:1)

Authority is not something to be grasped or taken, but rather God's rule delegated by God as He determines.

"He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings." (Daniel 2:21a)

Daniel teaches us that it is God who places or allows any king or president to be in power. Therefore, as Paul said in Romans 13:1 we are to submit to all governing authorities because they are allowed to be there by God's authority. When we come across situations where leaders over us disregard God and His Word, we are directed to obey God rather than man.

"But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'" (Acts 5:29)

2. Authority Is Delegated by God to Jesus Christ and His Disciples

*“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’”
(Matthew 28:18)*

God has all authority and He empowers His son, Jesus Christ, with all authority, who then in turn authorizes us as His disciples to go into the world with divine power and authority.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20)

As followers of Jesus Christ, we have been granted kingdom authority for kingdom purposes. However, this kingdom authority comes with all the other principles of the kingdom like submission, honoring others, serving others and putting others interests ahead of our own interests.

Never is authority granted to abuse others, take advantage of others, humiliate others or cause anyone to feel inferior to a leader. In many cases, godless individuals do these very things, but this is not God's intention and is never to be the standard for spiritual leaders. When there is an abuse of power, God can just as easily remove someone since God allowed them to become a leader in the first place.

The lesson for spiritual leaders is to follow the pattern of Scripture on authority and not the pattern of the world. Authority is not the prize for the one who manages to get to the top. Authority is not permission to take advantage of those around you. Biblical authority is a God designed and God delegated power to lead, make decisions and influence others.

Some look at a dictionary definition for authority – “power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior : persons in command” (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary 1967) – and conclude that once they are in a position of authority they can now bark out orders and demand total allegiance.

When a dictator does this, it is an abuse of power. When a pastor does this, it is also an abuse of power. When a spouse does this, once again it is an abuse of power. Just because God has placed one in a position of authority he is not given the license to abuse, order, dictate, harm or disparage any other human being.

Authority is not control and domination. Authority is recognizing that God has delegated leadership to you and you are now responsible to lead like Jesus led. Jesus led with grace, humility, putting others before himself, sacrificially, prayerfully and with great tact.

Spiritual leaders lead like Jesus and do not allow their delegated authority to become an excuse to rule or lord over others. Spiritual leaders are servant leaders, gracious leaders, humble leaders and prayerful leaders.

1. Where do you see abuse of power in your community?
2. Where are you tempted to “Lord it over” others in your church context? How?
3. How about in your home?

Spiritual Leadership Principles

LESSON 10: GOD'S VIEW OF JOY AND REWARDS

After Lesson 8, some of you may be tempted to give up your calling to ministry, but before you do, know that along with the hard work of ministry there are also great joys and rewards. The ministry is very fulfilling and satisfying. Even on the hard days, there is no greater fulfillment than to see your God given spiritual gifts being used for the glory of God in kingdom pursuits. To see people come to faith in Jesus Christ and to see them grow in their spiritual walk provides a satisfaction that is beyond words. The apostle John said it well:

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." (2 John 1:4)

What type of spiritual leader will you choose to become?

Jesus himself tells us spiritual leaders need to nourish and feed the spiritual sheep.

"He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'" (John 21:17)

In the Old Testament Ezekiel spoke against the spiritual leaders of Israel for failing to be the leaders God wanted them to be. We can learn much from what they failed to do.

ACTIVITY

1. Read through Ezekiel 34 and identify areas where the spiritual leaders were at fault.
2. Write a positive job description of what a spiritual leader should be doing by turning Ezekiel's criticisms into positive actions we can do as spiritual leaders.

We have looked at many areas of a spiritual leader's life and the final choices are now up to you. What type of spiritual leader will you become?

An inappropriate one like Ezekiel criticized? Or, will you be able to say what Paul said as an experienced spiritual leader?

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

What crown will be waiting for you in heaven?