

(English Transcript) Spiritual Leadership Principles Lesson 2 (Part 1)

Biblical Qualifications for Leaders

Welcome back to Lesson 2 of our Spiritual Leadership Principles course. This lesson is entitled Biblical Qualifications for Leaders. We will begin this lesson by brainstorming qualities of effective leaders.

Turn to page 6. In a classroom setting, I would break the group into small groups to develop their list of qualities and discuss. We would then review as a large group.

I will ask you to develop your list. Think of leaders from the past, leaders from the Bible, current leaders in all areas of life. What qualities or characteristics do these leaders have that makes them an effective leader. Please pause the recording now and take a few minutes to brainstorm your qualities of effective leaders and write your responses on page 6.

Pause Recording.

Welcome back. How did you do? Hopefully you have the chart on page six filled with all kinds of qualities and attributes of effective leaders. Let me summarize the qualities that have been shared and brainstormed in our prior classes.

Effective Leadership Qualities

- Leaders are driven. They have a focus.
- They have a strong work ethic.
- They have vision.
- Leaders have perseverance. They endure trials and challenges.
- Leaders are committed.
- Effective leaders value teamwork. They realize that they can't do the work all by themselves.
- Effective leaders are good communicators.
- They are adaptable or flexible.
- Effective leaders are learners. They are continually growing.
- They are courageous.
- They are disciplined.
- Leaders have passion and zeal, a belief in what they're leading.

There are some characteristics that align with the shared attributes of God.

- Wisdom.
- Integrity.
- Faithfulness.
- Love or concern for the people that they're leading. It's not just to focus on the tasks.
- Humble.
- Honest/Truthful.
- Consistent/Steady. They're consistent no matter the environment.

Other qualities seem to align under the Fruit of the Spirit.

- Love.
- Peace. Some may call this a quiet confidence.
- Patience.
- Self-control.
- Gentleness. These leaders are not harsh with others. They possess much power, yet their power is under control. This is the definition of meekness.
- They find joy in their work. Linked to this might be an optimistic perspective. They also understand that the work they are doing is not just a task. There is joy in accomplishing something greater than what they could do by themselves.

Finally, other qualities may fall under the heading of Spiritual Gifts.

- Hospitable.
- Discernment.
- Faith.
- Mercy.
- Wisdom.
- Generosity.
- Able to teach.
- Servant's heart.
- Administration and organization.

This is a great list. I wish I could hear what else was on your list.

Don't get overwhelmed. You may be asking, if this is what it takes to be a leader, no wonder there is a leadership deficit like we talked about in lesson 1. Who has all of the qualities?

Remember, if the focus of spiritual leadership flows out of making disciples, these are all attributes that should be present to varying degrees, in the life of every believer. God is developing these qualities in each of our lives by His grace and through the Holy Spirit.

I hope you noticed something that we talked about in Lesson 1. Most of these qualities deal with character issues (WHO you are) and not skills or competencies (WHAT you do).

I attended a training in the United States hosted by Pointman Leadership Institute. This is a global leadership training group and their primary audience is police, military personnel, first responders, and government officials. This is offered around the world.

Pointman Leadership developed a Top 8 list of leadership leadership qualities across all of the conferences they had conducted in many counties and cultures. These are listed at the top of page 7.

Pointman Leadership Institute's Top 8 Leadership Qualities

1. Integrity (honest, truthful, just, and fair).
2. Discipline (self-controlled, organized).
3. Loyalty (submission, loyal)
4. Diligence (strong work ethic, perseverance).
5. Humility (servanthood, teamwork, learner).
6. Optimism (vision, faith).
7. Conviction (committed, passion, driven)
8. Courageous.

How does this list compare with your list? How does it compare with what I shared?
There is great alignment and consistency.

As we explore spiritual leadership principles, we're going to begin first with what the Bible teaches regarding God-ordained leaders within the church. Since leadership flows out of discipleship, these principles should be increasingly present in the life of every believer. These principles can also be applied outside the church as well.

We will look at the definition for leaders within the church.

We will discuss the importance of shared leadership.

We will examine the biblical qualifications for spiritual leaders in the church.

And the importance of servant leadership.

The role of a spiritual leader is to protect, feed, lead, and care for those under the leader's responsibility. This is true in context of a church ministry.

But what the Top 8 list reveals is that these biblical principles are relevant in any area of life, and in any type of organization or team or task that we are leading.

Let's continue with the Definition of Biblical Leadership

Notice that there are three Greek words used to define those who lead the church.
Let's read 1 Peter 5:1 - 4.

"To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's suffering who also share in the glory to be revealed. 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; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away"

In this passage, there are three different words that are used for leader in this one passage. These three words are synonymous. They each describe the one leadership role referred to as Elder.

The word “elder” is the Greek word “Presbuteros”. You see that in verse 1, “to the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder.” This word is also used Titus 1:5 and Acts 20:17.

The second word is the word for “overseer or bishop”. The Greek word is “Episkopos”.

We see this in 1 Peter 5:2. It is the word used in the phrase “watching over them”. There is an oversight role for the leaders within the church. This word is also used in 1 Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:7, and Acts 20:28.

The third word used for the elder of the church is the word “shepherd or pastor”. The Greek word is “Poimen” in verse 2. “So be shepherds of God's flock that's under your care”. This word is also used in Acts 20:28.

These words, in essence, are interchangeable in the original context. The word elder is equal to overseer, is equal to bishop, is equal to shepherd or pastor.

Some have said that the word “elder” describes the nature of the person demonstrating the qualities of the leader. The overseer word describes the function or the work to be done. The word for shepherd or pastor reveals the heart of the leader and his responsibilities.

There is a helpful quote from Alexander Strauch at the bottom of page 7 to summarize these thoughts.

“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 doctrinal issues. In biblical terminology, elders shepherd, oversee, lead, and care for the local church.”

When we talk about leadership within the church, we are not talking about “being the boss”. There is an oversight role, this is true. But leaders also care, and feed and protect in addition to leading.

Do you have a board of elders overseeing and shepherding your church?

And if you don't, what structure do you have in place?

How is it working?

Is it biblical?

Is it aligned with what the principles in this lesson?

On page 8 we will transition to the next aspect of spiritual leadership, Shared Leadership.

The biblical norm appears to call for shared leadership among a plurality of elders (leaders).

What are some of the benefits of shared leadership within a local church?

- Balancing people's strengths and weaknesses. We each have blind spots and fatal flaws. Shared leadership helps to elevate the strengths and minimize the weaknesses across the leadership team. Together you are stronger than by yourself.
- There is a fuller representation of spiritual gifts. Together, you are reflecting more of the character of Christ because no one person possesses all the spiritual gifts. As a leadership team, discernment, teaching, giving, mercy, encouragement, faith, leadership, administration, teaching prayer, may be some of the gifts that are present in the plurality of leaders. This will be a healthier leadership group reflecting more of the character of Christ in that leadership body.
- The plurality of leaders or elders will help to lighten the load. We see that principle in Exodus 18 when Moses's father-in-law, Jethro, saw all the work that Moses was doing and he said that Moses would be crushed if he continued in that manner. So Moses chose 70 godly men to share the leadership responsibilities with him. You see the same principle in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. One person can get things done, but there will be limitations. Two are better than one, three are better than two. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.
- Shared leadership also promotes accountability. It's easy to lie to yourself. It is easy to fool one other person. When you are accountable to one another and you give the freedom to encourage and to confront each other, spiritual health and protection will be promoted.

You may be wondering where does the Bible say there should be shared leadership?
What is wrong with a single pastor leading a church by himself?

There are 18 passages in the New Testament that speak about elders (leaders) in the church. 15 of those 18 passages refer to Elders in the plural. Some of these are listed on page 8.

- Acts 15, it says, when they came together for the Council of Jerusalem, the church of Jerusalem was led by elders.
- James chapter 5:14, "...sick will call the elders of the church to come and pray for them."
- Acts 14:23, "...and when they appointed elders for them in every church..."
- Acts 20:17-28, Paul summoned the elders of the church in Ephesus to meet him.
- 1 Timothy 5:17, "...let the elders who govern well be considered worthy of double honor."
- Philippians 1, Paul greeted the elders and the deacons in the church in Philippi.
- 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 God's flock that's under their care
- And there are other passages listed.

Shared leadership is a strength. It flows from the character of the Trinity. We see plurality in Jesus calling not just one apostle, but twelve apostles. We see the same principle of plurality of leadership throughout Acts and the writings of Peter, John, Paul and James in the New Testament.

This principle can be applied to whatever area of leadership we may be called. You may currently be the only leader in your church. As you consider this principle, focus on making disciples and ask God to raise up leaders to share the work with as soon as possible.

The picture at the bottom of the page serves as a helpful reminder regarding character and reputation. Leaders are always being watched. Reputation is how others see us. People can only see our outward behaviors.

Character though, is how God sees and knows the leader. He not only sees our every action, but he can see our heart as well. Shared leadership is a source of wonderful blessing and strength.

We will transition to a discussion related to Qualified Leadership on page 9.

You will see two passages that should be very familiar. As you listen and read along to the 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 passages, circle the numerous criteria for a qualified leader in the church.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

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

Titus 1:5-9

“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 – 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. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach, must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. 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.”

Have you ever wondered how we should select leaders in the church?

These two passages provide essential guidance for this task. What are the qualities to look for in godly leaders? It is instructive that most, if not all of these qualities, were included in our list at the beginning of this lesson. What this tells me is that effective leadership whether in the church or the world, is based on solid biblical foundation.

At the bottom of the page, you have a chart with five different columns with different headings. One heading is "Good reputation/Love". The second is "Self-control". The third is "Mature faith". The fourth is "Healthy home life". And then the last column includes "Skills, abilities, things that leaders do".

Pause the recording now and take a few minutes to group the list of leadership criteria into these five categories. When you complete that task, continue listening to the lesson.

Pause recording now.

If you turn to page 10, you will see my attempt to group these leadership criteria into the five categories. These might vary from individual to individual. But this going through this process may help you make a few important observations.

Under the heading of Good Reputation/Love, I included:

- Being above reproach, gentle, good reputation, respectable, not being greedy for money, holy, a lover of what is good, hospitable and just

Under the heading of Self-Control:

- Self-controlled/Temperate, not violent, not drunken, not quarrelsome, not self-willed, not quick tempered.

Under Mature Faith:

- We need to be a growing disciple, not a novice, not someone who's new, they must be tested.
- They also must hold firmly to the truth. They are wholeheartedly committed to the Word of God

Under Healthy Home:

- Husband of one wife, meaning they're a one-woman man. At a minimum, they're not a polygamist, they don't have more than one wife. It does not mean they have to be married, but if they are married, they are a one-woman man.
- They manage their family well.
- Children are obedient and respectful, they are under control with all dignity. It doesn't mean that children never make mistakes.

Under Skills:

- Knowledge of the Scriptures, readiness to teach, ability to communicate well, and the ability to exhort and to admonish, to come alongside, to encourage, through the scriptures, by sound doctrine, and to refute error.

In a classroom setting we would take time to discuss each of these criteria.

Where do we get into trouble when we ignore these criteria when selecting leaders?

What is the benefit of using these criteria to select leaders?

I hope you see a key point that we introduced in Lesson 1.

God seems most concerned about WHO we are (our character) and not just about WHAT we do (skills that we bring to a leadership role).

We are all called to work with excellence, to work at things with all of our heart, as working for the Lord and not for men. But WHO we are, that seems to be very important on God's list of leadership criteria.

We have started with the criteria for elders in the church. Whatever is applicable for the leaders of the church must be helpful and instructive for every disciple who is leading in various ways in the church and their personal lives.

Let's stop here as we conclude Lesson 2 - Part 1.

When we return, we will continue with Part 2 on page 11.