

Leadership

MOVING FORWARD

INTRODUCTION

This leadership outline is designed to help identify some of the most basic principles of church leadership. These characteristics should be found in all churches, but unfortunately, many of our church leaders lack true leadership skills. We believe the lack of true leadership prevents the church from moving forward.

Businesses spend millions of dollars in marketing and training. They spend countless hours and money to train their employees to do what they believe will lead them down the road to success. Businesses usually measure success in sales and profitability. They evaluate their quarterly results to determine whether they are profitable. If they are not, changes must be made in order for them to survive and move forward.

In contrast, most of our churches in America are not moving forward at all. Many feel the churches are on cruise control, perhaps more self-centered, ineffective in reaching others for Christ, and have not changed their method of outreach. They may have a great pastor, one who has the skill, charisma, and the drive to preach the gospel. But unfortunately, they may lack the support or leadership needed from others to accomplish any vision or outreach in their community. Some pastors never share the vision God has given to them.

It is lazy and egotistical for any believer to think that the success or failure of any church should rest solely upon the shoulders of their pastor. The true measure of success or failure is in the hands of its leadership. What type of leaders does the church have? Do they have a vision? Does that vision match up to the one that the pastor has? Are the leaders willing to learn or are they bound by fears of inadequacy? I truly believe that everyone can learn a few basic skills that can make them more effective leaders.

So, what makes a good leader? This outline tries to answer that question by examining some of the characteristics, qualities, and examples of what makes a good leader. Leaders provide direction. But unfortunately, too many of our churches in America have become poor examples of what Christianity is all

about. Every church should have quality people: those who lead, encourage, and direct others to become even greater and more effective Christians.

America needs the church like she has never needed her before! People in every community are looking for something real and genuine. They want a real church with real people who really care! This leadership outline is designed to help your church leaders to understand the importance of true leadership and discover ways to make your church even more effective. I pray that this outline will help you and your church to *move forward* in becoming a true and viable force in your community.

Jim L. Fuller
Executive Director of Pastoral Care, Inc.

Chapter One

Definition of Leadership

A Christian leader is someone who is called by God to lead; leads with and through Christ-like character; and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership to take place. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*

Another definition states:

The central task of leadership is influencing God's people toward God's purposes. George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership* (Equipping the church for further outreach)

A Christian leader is one who leads and lives an exemplary spiritual life, a spiritual visionary, one who operates in discernment, and the ability to coordinate or influence others in the church for God's purposes, present and future. Jim L. Fuller, *Executive Director of Pastoral Care, Inc.*

Not everyone who holds a leadership position is truly a leader. Some are elected by popularity while others volunteer or are asked to fill that position.

It is frustrating to find a church that is anxious about following a leader, but has no idea in what direction it's being led. The business sector provides leadership training to its staff over and over again to train them to be the best in the positions they hold. Businesses will evaluate themselves from time to time to see how successful or unsuccessful they are in moving forward. If their goals are not being accomplished, they will implement new strategies to bring a fast turnaround so that they will not be wasting time and energy down a path that is non-productive.

But for the most part, most of our churches in America merely exist. They will travel down a course of tradition or will do the "same ole things" week in and week out, never developing a plan or teaching their leaders to be the best in the positions they hold. Most people expect or hope for different results, such as church growth, without bringing any kind of training or direction to the church (which it vitally needs!). And we wonder why our churches are not growing! In fact, At one time, we were closing more churches each year than new church plants. One statistic a few years ago revealed that we had started 4,000 new churches, but closed over 7,000! If we expect our church to grow and become a

more effective outreach in the community, we must develop a plan of action and train our leaders to become the most effective leaders they can possibly be. Remember, it is all about the Kingdom of God!

An example of Jimmy Carter: He was generally viewed as a good person but was not an effective leader. Some of his ineffectiveness could have been a result of not being able to clearly communicate his goals and visions to other people. Many believe that he became a more effective leader once he was out of office. His poor leadership was frustrating to many Americans. He wasted a golden opportunity!

It can be discouraging to visit a church where God's vision is simply overlooked or not well communicated. This is not to be critical of "good people"...we all need to be good people. But ***true leadership*** means having the qualities to influence and encourage others to become better Christians in our everyday life, allowing that Godly presence to positively influence and affect everyone in their community!

The Bible gives us all kinds of examples of leadership and how the church should be run efficiently. Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 speaks of unity, with us having many members but all working together. We all know the importance of unity. However, it seems as if at times we are more caught up in seeking our own pleasures and desires rather than trying to work together for the Glory of God. ***Unity is a key ingredient for most organizations and with the church, it is a must!*** The church needs to have leaders who will emphasize the importance of true unity.

The church should have certain people who are called into certain positions within the church. God gave us an excellent example in Ephesians 4:11-13, *"God gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."* **God always works through people—people who are available, teachable, and willing to fulfill His purpose.**

The Bible gives us examples of different kinds of leaders: some good and some bad.

So what does a good leader look like? What characteristics do they possess? Is a leader a natural born leader or can they learn? Let's look at a few examples:

Moses—do you think that his wife knew that he would lead the Hebrews out of the land of Egypt? Do you think that Moses did? How about **Gideon**—when he was hiding from the Medianites, do you think he knew he would eventually lead an army to victory over these same Medianites? Do you think that **Joshua** knew when he was a slave in Egypt that someday he would lead the Hebrews into the land of Canaan? How about David? Was he the first choice to be the king? He was actually the 8th of Jesse’s children that was brought forward. Even Jesse could not imagine that David could be qualified to serve as a leader.

All of these individuals were not aware of their potential until they placed themselves into the hands of God. The biggest mistake leaders make is: ***Spiritual leaders cannot lead by carnal thinking! All leaders must be Spirit-led! We must rely upon the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit.*** While many leaders may have some God-given talent, our leadership skills and goals are not based upon our finite thinking. Leading the church is not seeking our directive and will. ***To be a spiritual leader, we must seek God’s will!*** It’s just that simple! Leaders lead. They move forward encouraging and influencing as many people as they can towards the purpose and goal God has set for them. As a leader, we cannot be sidetracked from this original goal.

But before we lead, we need to understand who we are leading and for what purpose. If we are to lead the church, we must understand the definition of the church:

Church definition: The church could be a building, denomination or the body of Christ. The most commonly used definition of the church is always people. As a church, we are in the people business, making the difference in the lives of people everyday. We are to simply encourage people, not through force or dictatorship, but through love.

Purpose of the church: Without a clear-cut set of objectives, any organization will suffer. The Bible says, “*Without a vision, the people will perish.*” Proverbs 29:18. What is the purpose of the church? Basically, the scriptures teach us to:

1. Worship God
2. Praise His name
3. Live by the scriptures
4. Salvation—bring as many people with us to Heaven

God is in a relationship business. Let me ask you a question. Was the ultimate goal of God for the Israelites to occupy Canaan? We assume that God delivered

the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt so that he could bring them to the promise land in Canaan. But that's not what God really wanted. ***The key was not the region but the relationship.*** God delivered the Israelites so they could be free to develop intimate relationship with Him. The location was just a means for that relationship to be developed. The reason they spent 40 years in the wilderness was not for God to give them victory in Canaan. The place was assessable, but the relationship was not yet what God wanted it to be. Too many people get caught up with a religion or building when God is really seeking a relationship.

Our ultimate goal as a church leader is surrounded by relationships. It is how we develop those skills in relationships that determine how effective or ineffective we are individually or collectively as a church. Remember, our ultimate goal is to encourage as many people to worship, praise, and live for God as we possibly can.

The other important goal is to take as many people to Heaven as we can. Everything else is really insignificant. It makes no difference what color we paint our building, how we worship, or conduct our services this or that way. It is ultimately out of "His direction" that we know how the church should flow. I believe there is an order for the church and good leaders are those who are obedient, teachable, and willing to do what God wants to do over their own personal interests. Good leaders should respect their pastors and respect God's order for the church.

The following chapters are intended to introduce the different characteristics of being a good leader. Each letter from the word LEADERSHIP contains an important characteristic for every good leader. This is a simple way to remember the skills we all should have. Example: L stands for Lead, E stands for Example, etc. The first section reflects the purpose of a leader is to lead—that means moving forward with the purpose and goal that will be pleasing to God.

CHAPTER TWO

A Leader Must Lead

One of the previous definitions stated is that leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others. Spiritual leadership is moving people on to God's agenda. It should be noted that spiritual leadership is not the same thing as leadership in general. While the two may share many of the same principles, spiritual leadership has certain distinctive qualities that must be understood and practiced if our spiritual leaders are to be successful. There are Five Truths in establishing a new definition:

1. ***The spiritual leader's task is to move people from where they are to where God wants them to be.*** Once God's leaders understand God's will, they will make every effort in pursuing God's purposes. The number one reason why pastors leave the ministry today is that many pastors believe God has given them a vision for the church, but the people are not willing to go there. Moving people may be challenging. That is why an effective leader must rely upon God's leading.
2. ***Spiritual leaders depend upon the Holy Spirit.*** God calls leaders to do something that only God can do. No matter how hard they may try, spiritual leaders cannot produce spiritual changes in lives of people. The Holy Spirit can only do this. Leaders seek to move people on to God's agenda, but all the while they must be aware that only the Holy Spirit can ultimately accomplish this task. We have all heard the saying, "You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make them drink." How true! Only the Holy Spirit can change others.
3. ***Spiritual leaders are accountable to God.*** Whether you are a pastor, teacher, or deacon, all spiritual leadership necessitates an acute sense of accountability. Just as teachers have not taught until students have learned, leaders cannot blame their people for not following. A good leader never makes excuses. True spiritual leadership is taking responsibility for moving people from where they are to where God wants them to be.
4. ***Spiritual leaders can influence all people, not just God's people.*** God is on mission at the local refinery, as well as, at the local church. Although spiritual leaders will generally move God's people to achieve God's purposes, God can also use them to exert significant godly

influences on unbelievers. A good example is Joseph. During the famine, he set a perfect example. God made himself known to an unbelieving society through Joseph. Spiritual leadership can even occur down the middle of everyday life.

My daughter worked as a waitress in a small town restaurant. She would occasionally try to invite her co-workers to church. One of her waitress friends responded, "I think I am better than most Christians". My daughter asked why she felt this way. The waitress stated that she did not like working on Sundays or Wednesdays because the "Christians" are coming. "I see them all dressed up, sitting together, laughing, and having a good time. They also spend time to hold hands to pray before they eat. And then, they give us fits! Christians are the rudest, most demanding, and the least tippers of any group we have. Why should I be a part of that! "

Others are watching us. What type of influence do we portray?

5. ***Spiritual leaders work from God's agenda.*** The greatest obstacle to effective spiritual leadership is people pursuing their own plans rather than seeking God's will. God's concern is not to achieve or advance the leader's dream or goal but to turn his people away from self-centeredness and sinful desires and to draw them into a relationship with Him. As an effective spiritual leader, it is our God-given responsibility to do all we can to lead people on to God's agenda.

Jesus has established the model for Christian leadership through his obedience to His Father's will. Spiritual leaders understand that God is their leader and He has an order which brings unity, purpose, and hope for everyone. Jesus had the right kind of relationship with his father. Do we?

Three Worthy Goals of any Leader:

1. ***Leading others to spiritual maturity.*** We can take people to places they have never been before. Some has never witnessed first hand the spiritual experiences that others have had. Whose fault is it? Do they have to experience the same things or does God have something extra special for them? In all ways, we should be seeking Him. Matthew 6:33 says, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" Matthew 5:6 says, "*Blessed are they*

which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.”
We can lead others to seek that type of hunger.

Some, unfortunately are like those found in Hebrews 5:12, “*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*”

Leaders lead by example and encouragement.

2. ***Leading others to lead.*** Many of our leaders are so focused on the duties of their position that they often overlook delegating responsibilities to others. We need to mentor others so that they can carry on the work for tomorrow. If we do not train others to lead, we will not have leaders or a church for tomorrow.

Some narrow-minded people complain to their pastors when he/she allows someone else to speak in a service, someone perhaps less trained. Narrow-minded people lack the spiritual insight of the importance of mentoring and training others. If they are not given a chance to fail or succeed, where will they learn? Who better to learn from or “cut your teeth” from than the people who love and care about you. Some people are more interested in themselves than in the health and well-being of the church.

As leaders, we must explain to the general congregation reasons to embrace this philosophy. Each department head must mentor others to bring them along for future leadership roles. This is a church moving forward!

3. ***In all things, bringing glory to God.*** Sometimes a church gets so busy with building programs or growing in numbers that they often fail to honor God. The leader’s goal is to keep this task in the forefront of everything he/she does. All our efforts are for His glory! They are not based upon our own strength, wisdom, goals, or ideals. Through the years, too many ministries across America have failed due to the lack of glorifying God. Perhaps they were too busy patting themselves on the back.

CHAPTER THREE

A Leader Must Lead By Example

Sheep follow a shepherd. People follow leaders who lead by example. How many people like to hear, “Do as I say, not as I do? Do you respect these kinds of people? We, as Christian examples (leaders), should always show others how to lead and to teach that all the scriptures apply to our daily life.

A leader should have some of the following practices:

1. ***Know God.*** This seems very elementary but I have known leaders who were spiritually deficient. They did not have a consistent walk with the Lord. How can we lead others spiritually when we don't know God? How can we know God without reading the scriptures?
2. ***Study the Word.*** The scripture states in 2 Timothy 2:15, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*”. When Billy Graham was asked if he could do anything over again, what would it be. He said, “I have failed so many times, and I would do many things differently. For one thing, I would speak less and study more.” Billy Graham preached to more people and saw more conversions than any other preacher in history, yet he acknowledged that if he had been better prepared, God might have used his life to an even greater extent! Preparation brings profound confidence to leaders.

Studying the Bible also allows us to know more of God, who he is, and how He wants us to live. The Word of God will direct our paths and keep us on the right course. Psalms 119:105 says, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*” It is hard for any believer to follow after the things of God if he/she do not read the word of God. How much more does a leader need the word of God to insure that they stay “true to the course”!

3. ***Reassess and Have a Constant Prayer Life.*** How can leaders get direction if they do not pray? In our busy schedules, we need to slow down long enough to pray and to hear from God. This may seem very elementary to most Christians but there is power in prayer! Prayer can drastically change us and move mountains. Mark 11:23 states, “*For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be*

thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.”

We can bind and loosen things on earth (Matthew 18:18) and “*where two or more can agree as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven*” (Matthew 18:19).

Prayer can change negative attitudes, heal the sick, deliver and set people free, and allows all of us to stay closer to God. As leaders, we must have an active and powerful prayer life. James 5:16 says, “*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*” It is essential for us to have that type of relationship with Him.

4. ***Practice Fasting.*** The Bible states that some things only come through prayer and fasting. Mark 9:29. Fasting is more than doing without food. It could mean giving up something in our lives, sacrificing that time or item to seek and believe in God for something. In other words, we get to the point of getting serious about our need or petition.
5. ***Allow the Holy Spirit to Direct You and Your Decisions.*** We cannot make spiritual decisions based upon carnal knowledge. It is sad to note, some leaders make decisions based on feelings, tradition, or greed. I have had so many church people state that they knew that their pastor was sent by God, only to try to get them voted out a couple of years later, never of which ever asking God for direction for the church. I would later on ask them, “**Did you make this a matter of prayer?**” In every situation, they came back with the same reply, “I do not have to ask God, I know!” Oh how sad! How can we possibly know God’s direction without praying and asking Him to direct our lives and decisions? You see, they seemed to be more driven to lean upon their own decision-making rather than to follow God’s direction.
6. ***Do not be Discouraged.*** God is in control. Even during the darkest of times, God is there! Seek His will and direction. Soon the answer will be on its way! Remember, our time table is not always God’s.

I remember facing the most difficult time of my life. As a church leader, I had always tried to do what was right, to live by the scripture, and to run my business with integrity. My beliefs were challenged by two individuals who walked into my office one day and falsely accused my business of wrongdoing.

I knew the charges were wrong but these two individuals were headstrong on ruining my testimony and discrediting the years of knowing that our lives had been lived according to the scriptures.

At this same time, God was moving me into an additional leadership role, a much higher plane than what I was accustomed to. Through this process, I knew it was God's will for me to move forward, but I was unsure of how these false accusations would affect my testimony or reputation. I had to trust God to bring glory in all that I have done.

Later on, a civic leader came up to me and said, "I have noticed your life from afar and know you are a godly man. I also know of the accusations that were brought against you." This man went on to say, "These things would have destroyed me but I noticed that your demeanor and your testimony did not ever change." He went on to say, "What you have is real!" Wow! At the worst time of my life, I was a bit discouraged until I turned everything over to God. Through it all, my testimony is much stronger than it ever was. If you notice, this compliment was not made by Christian leaders or someone inside the church but from a non-believer. Our leadership skills should be noticed to everyone, inside or outside the church, whether someone is watching or not watching. Do not be discouraged, my friend. Make an example for everyone to see!

Our testimony needs to be real! Through that realness, we are able to lead others by example, even those who are not followers of Christ. What better examples can we serve than letting others see Christ in us! ***Leaders have a higher calling and example to fill*** compared to others. Let me ask you a question, what type of testimony would it have been if I gave into my feelings of fear, frustration, anger, and lived in a defeated lifestyle? People need to see and witness a living example of victory and how God can help anyone through difficult times. It's easy to show-off a victorious life when everything is going well. But when things aren't going so well, when we lose our jobs, experience a serious illness or surgery, or perhaps lose a child or loved one. How do people view your testimony?

Again, leaders need to be able to apply the word of God in their daily lives to be a walking testimony, a living example, Christ-like at all times. Leaders will share their experiences and the Word with others without being fear of being so pressed for time or being so caught up with their role that they are of no earthly good. I am reminded of the scriptures we often refer to as the story of the Good Samaritan. If you noticed, the most likely people, the priest and Levite, passed

by without helping or showing compassion for their fellow man. The most unlikely person, the Samaritan, showed mercy.

I remember the time I was first elected to a board position. I thought that I had spiritually arrived. This event in my life serving together with other spiritual leaders, visioning us being in the “heavenlies” all the time, and making godly decisions that would impact the world. But soon my vision became quickly tarnished.

At the first meeting, I found myself between two men of whom I admired and respected, arguing over money and questioned expansion. I meekly commented, “Where is our faith?”

One of the gentlemen stood and said, “You show me money and I’ll show you my faith!”

They continued to argue until they noticed that I was crying. Suddenly, they seemed to have compassion and softly asked what was wrong? Being hurt, I said, “If we are the spiritual leaders of the church and cannot get along with each other, then how can we possibly expect that others in our church can?”

These two men quietly sat down and began to think of what I had just said. Both men resigned shortly afterward, not at my request, but because they saw they had become stumbling blocks and poor examples for the church. One of these men told me on his deathbed later, “The things I thought were so important in life, aren’t so important after all.”

How sad is it to see people realize what they thought was right is totally wrong. Their heart had become so self-consumed, hardened, lost the vision of what was important--God’s plan, not ours! Leaders lead, they do not have to dictate or get their own way...it is all about God’s way!

Leadership is a reflection of what God wants to accomplish through us to build His Kingdom. Leadership should never be critical but should be objectively looking for certain individuals inside the church to serve as leaders, those who God has gifted. It is to those people that he can entrust one of His most precious and treasured gifts: His vision. Only a true leader knows God’s vision because of his ongoing relationship with Him. God is all about relationships. Leaders should know where they are in Christ and where the church is heading. A godly leader will always see the bigger picture, never developing a haughty or unreasonable spirit, nor trying to self-impose their wishes over Gods.

Leading by example may not be popular. It takes work and it takes commitment. I know of a minister who was very proud of how big his church had grown. He had all the important people in the community attending his church. One day while looking over his congregation, he heard God whisper something in his ear, “Are you pleasing me or are pleasing others?” The pastor wrestled with that statement all week long. After much prayer and meditation, he realized that he was actually trying to please men and compromising his actual preaching of the Word of God.

At the next week’s service, he boldly stood up and proclaimed to his congregation that from that time forward, he was not going to compromise the Word of God anymore and promised to seek God’s approval from now on. Once the pastor started preaching against sin and promoting repentance, he lost some of his key people. The church attendance fell off for awhile. He realized that his church had not been established upon solid ground—the Word of God. Soon the numbers began to increase, repentance began to flow within that community, people were seeing a real church, and God received the glory. You see, the church once again became the lighthouse God wanted. The leaders of the church became spiritual examples and walking testimonies of God’s Word. While church numbers are important, it is much more important to help as many people make heaven as possible. In this real example, there are two different ways of doing things: our way or His way. Both produces numbers but only one produces fruit. Our ways are flawed and limited but His ways are unlimited!

Leading by example shows our faithfulness. How do we expect others to be faithful to the house of God if the leadership is not faithful? What about promptness to carry out your leadership role, whether you are a musician or teacher, all efforts and energy should radiate with the glory of God? How about forgiveness? All leaders should be full of love and forgiveness. How many times did the Bible say we should forgive someone? All should be setting an example for everyone to see!

CHAPTER FOUR

A Leader Has a Positive Attitude

Let's have an attitude of gratitude! I love that statement. Our attitude dictates how we think and act every moment of the day. In my Insurance career, I had recruited some incredibly gifted and talented people, only to find that they had developed or were programmed with a negative thought process that impeded their sales. Some were able to change and became successful, others could not overcome their negative thoughts.

Attitude is a habit of thought, so if you want to change your attitude, you must change the way you think. We live in a negative world and we must guard against such negative thinking. While we live in this world, we must remember we don't have to act like the world. The Bible instructs us to not be conformed to this world but "*be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*". (Romans 12:2) As a Christian, we have a wonderful opportunity to show others how to live out the scriptures. By virtue of our role, we must nurture positive attitudes. We need to get away from our "stinking thinking."

There is a story of the young psychology student serving in the Army. He decided to test a theory. Drawing kitchen duty, he was given a job of passing out apricots at the end of the chow line. He asked the first few soldiers that came by, "You don't want any apricots, do you?" 90% said, "No." Then he tried the positive approach: "You do want apricots, don't you?" About half answered, "Uh, yeah, I'll take some." Then he tried a third test, based upon fundamental either/or selling techniques. This time he asked, "One dish of apricots or two?" And in spite of the fact the soldiers don't like Army apricots, 40% took two dishes and 50% took one!" It's all about attitude! Wow! 90% stated "no" at the beginning but later on 90% said "yes". Why? **It is all about influence and attitude.**

In the book, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, there was an alarming statistic. When asked about the purpose of the church, 90% of the pastors stated that it was for reaching the lost, 10% stated that it was for the members. But when they asked the church membership, 90% stated that the church is there for them, only 10% stated that the church is there to reach the lost! No wonder the direction of the church is faltering. We are not communicating a positive attitude and true direction for the church. Leaders must communicate a positive attitude, then and only then will people follow.

Listed below are the effects your attitude has on you:

1. ***Your basic attitude affects your belief in your potential for success.*** A negative attitude causes you to doubt your ability to achieve, while your belief in your potential makes you willing to take the necessary actions for success. Positive attitudes breed positive results!
2. ***Your attitude determines how you perceive a challenge.*** A positive attitude lets you see a challenge as an opportunity rather than a threat. It allows us to see the task much clearer and have the energy needed to succeed.
3. ***Your attitude determines your confidence.*** People with negative attitudes think, “I can’t ...” or “I doubt...” In contrast, each time you act from a positive attitude, your self-confidence is enhanced, your ability to achieve is proven, and you know you can succeed. Your confidence level rises as your faith rises.
4. ***Your attitude affects how you see opportunity.*** People who have negative attitudes bury their ability to see opportunity. They only see roadblocks. By bringing glory to God, a positive attitude opens your eyes to so many opportunities. Your challenge becomes which opportunity you choose.

You see, a leader is not identified by his/her title, but by his/her mindset and actions, which happens to bring unity. Unity is always vitally needed in the church. It is the glue, which holds everyone together. Remember leaders are in the people business. It is all about relationships.

Godly leaders have an advantage that others in this world do not have—that is God! When our hearts are close to God and are obedient to His direction, God can do miracles. He wants us to be ever changing with our thoughts, speech, behavior, and actions. It may be a gradual process but the scriptures state, “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” Philippians 4:13. With God’s help, we can and will change for His glory. With His help, we can do all things!

The first area of change is ***our thoughts***. We need to avoid such thoughts as “I can’t” or “I’m afraid”. Look at all the people in the Bible who first thought they could not do anything, such as Moses, Gideon, Peter, etc. and later, see the powerful hand of God working in their lives. Before they were powerful, they had to first change the way they thought.

Another way to change our thinking is to apply the scriptures to our lives. Philippians 4:8 states, “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*”. Let me ask a simple question, “What things do we bring in our minds?” We have all heard the old phrase, Garbage in, Garbage out, which is so true. A Christian should guard his/her mind so that it becomes the mind of Christ. Once we do that, the negativism around us will not affect us.

Secondly, we need to change **our speech patterns**. How often do we use negative words in our everyday speech, to either explain a situation or even ourselves? As a Christian, our words should be full of grace, wisdom, and direction. Colossians 4:6 says, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. As we draw closer to God, our words should be distanced from those of this world. James 3:12 gives us an illustration of the normal course for the Christian Leader. “Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.” Our speech should always bring glory to God and be a good Christian example for Him.

Thirdly, we need to modify **our behavior**. If we are who we say we are a Christian, then our behavior should be reflective of this. A leader exemplifies a pure behavior, not of anger, haughtiness, unforgiveness, nor an un-teachable spirit, dishonesty, etc. We should no longer be of this world but be producing fruit (our outward appearance and actions) that gives the glory to God.

Attitudes are habits. They are hard to change overnight. Psychologists estimate that we use less than a third of our actual potential. If we are now using only 30% of our potential, what would happen if we choose to increase our potential only 3%, a total of 33%? This is really 10% more than what you were using before. A successful leader continually measures his/her progress from time to time. The benefits greatly outweigh the challenge.

All great leaders have to have a great attitude. The benefits are:

1. Increased enthusiasm.
2. Freedom from the limitations of fear.
3. Increased creativity.
4. Enjoyment in taking the initiative.

5. Joy when using more of your God-given potential.
6. Boundless opportunities.
7. Abundance of positive friends and colleagues.
8. Increased efficiency in utilizing your time and energy.

The last thing is to *enjoy your leadership position*. I have seen many leaders who looked as if they were sucking on lemons, sour-faced people who stated that they were full of joy, only to display inward and outward characteristics I did not want. Having the right people in a leadership position makes all the difference in the world! Laughter and being around those who are pleasant can bring enjoyment in our leadership role. We can laugh and enjoy the position God has placed us with.

There are 5 key reasons to laugh:

1. **Laughter is good for you.** It is good for your health. Laughter and having a good time has shown to lower blood pressure, boost the immune system, and add years to your life.
2. **Laughter is powerful.** Those who know how to use laughter usually know how to persuade others. The ability to use humor at times can defuse difficult and tense situations. The power of laughter can change your world.
3. **Laughter is fun to be around.** It is fun to be around people who laugh a lot. They are upbeat and positive, rather than being discouraging and judgmental. Laughter breeds laughter.
4. **Laughter is a good teacher.** One father wanting to teach his daughter a lesson on over packing for an overnight stay with her cousin, simply pouted and said, "I didn't know that you were planning on moving out." The girl laughed and agreed. There are many ways to teach someone, the softest way is usually the best.
5. **Laughter is better than tears.** No life is perfect, but laughter is better than sadness. Find the positive in everything and laugh even at the things you have no control over. **I'll choose laughter anytime.**

Other Positive Attitude Tips:

- Learn to lighten up, live a little and laugh a lot.
- Be flexible, do not take things so serious.
- Be sensitive to differences in sense of humor.

- Consider the timing of your humor.
- Don't laugh at others, laugh with others. (Cross Dialog)
- Laugh when there is nothing you can do but laugh.
- Laughter is more than good medicine—it is the best medicine!

Christian leaders know they must pursue God in order to gain a better perspective on what they should do with the resources and opportunities entrusted to them by God.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Christian Leader Must Have Discernment

A math problem:

Question: Three frogs sat on a log and one decided to jump off. How many frogs were left on the log?

Answer: Three

Explanation: Although most everyone answers “two”, the correct answer is “three”. Just because that frog decided to jump off the log does not necessarily mean that it actually did it. There is a gap between what you decide and what actually happens. So many times we assume...only to find out later, we are in big trouble for “jumping before knowing all the facts”.

What happens to our attitude when conflict appears?

As a leader, do we allow a person who is angry or being spiritually immature change our positive attitude or direction for the church? Absolutely not! But in truth, so many church leaders are afraid of confronting a negative person or one who has a haughty spirit. By not confronting this person, the direction of the church is driven by those who have little or no godly direction or call. They just want their way on whatever is bothering them. We have all heard, “The squeaky wheel gets greased.” That principle will never be a fundamental goal of Christ’s church. Leaders must lead and teach others. Please remember, **a crisis is not necessarily a negative situation**. It is simply a turning point at which your ability to lead is tested. How will we react? Are you confident in your leadership skills? Are you falling back on your own skills or are you allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you in love?

Jesus gave us perfect examples of discernment. When scribes and publicans approached Christ with a question, trying to entrap him, he was able to see through the real question or issue. When people approach a leader with a complaint or issue, we must ask ourselves whether this complaint or issue is a real issue or is there some other underlying reason that really needs to be addressed? We need to ask ourselves, what background did these people come from? Are they trying to take advantage of you or just having a bad day? Are

they trying to take out frustrations on anyone who will listen? Do they have problems at home? Or are they just trying to get their own way? So many different analogies! That is why it is vitally important for all leaders to rely upon the direction of the Holy Spirit, to guide and lead us. Only a spirit-led person can begin to solve these situations. Once we understand the real problem, we then can bring a loving solution to that individual or situation. Remember, it is all about relationships!

One area that most Christian leaders often forget is that it is probably wise to assume that most people have not been in church all their lives and there may be differences of opinions, and some of those opinions may be contradictory to the Word of God. 2 Timothy 2:20, 21 states, *“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.”* A true leader is one who has been tried by fire and comes out honorably for the glory of God.

In a time of crisis, whose vision would you rather rely upon, yours or God's?

CHAPTER SIX

A Leader Must Educate and Encourage Others

There are many aspects of being an effective leader. A good example is one of a ship captain. As the ship approaches its destination, the crew begins its lookout for the first sign of land. The captain, a veteran seaman, has sailed the seven seas and has experienced every possible kind of sailing condition. His crew, on the other hand, is much less experienced. He helps them to learn how to discern, whether a distant shape is a rock or whale. He shows them how to scan the horizon and how to recognize when their eyes are playing tricks on them. Eventually the captain is no longer needed to be on deck watching for land. Now his crew is experienced enough to know how to do that.

Spiritual leaders often have an advantage over those they lead. Leaders may have walked with God for many years. They come to recognize when the Spirit's still, small voice is speaking. They know when an opportunity has the mark of God upon it and to know how to teach others to fulfill God's Word. So, like the sea captain, leaders do not resign themselves to always being the ones who sees God. A good leader teaches others to know Him better.

Forgiveness, love, and unity are all qualities of a true leader. If a leader knows the truth but withholds it, he/she is not considered to be a good and righteous leader. I sat on a board with a member who did not make one of our board meetings and a person (someone who did not attend our board meeting) stated that I fought and yelled at everyone. I asked the board member if he has ever seen this behavior in me before? He said, "no, that is what bothers me". I told him that this was not the truth and suggested he ask other board members to verify this. The board member stated that he did not want to do this. When asked who made this accusation, he refused to tell me. I then asked him if he will go to that person to tell them the truth. He said no, it was good enough for him to know. I suggested if he resign from the board due to his lack of leadership of refusing to stop dissention and gossip in the church.

We are to educate and instruct when we know the truth. The Bible says, "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*". John 8:32.

A good example of being tested is when others complain about their pastor being gone for a few days or complaining about them taking another vacation. A good leader looks at this as a great opportunity! Openly state, "Praise the

Lord!” All pastors need rest and meditation on God’s Word. A restful and healthy pastor brings a much better sermon and direction for his congregation. “Well, he should be visiting the sick or visiting people in the church.” You may want to respond: “that is what the deacons or elders of the church are suppose to do. Can I read you the scriptures?” Due to the pastor’s busy schedule, we as leaders should understand that most pastors do not have much time for visitation, unless someone is really sick.

Most pastors spend a considerable amount of time visiting the sick in the hospital, preparing sermons, praying for direction of the church, and many other duties that most people really do not think about. A good leader protects and defends his/her pastor from being “bound” from every suggestion or idea that can tie up a pastor from doing what he/she is called to do.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A True Leader Seeks Righteousness

The Bible says, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”*. Matthew 6:33. Many Christians quote this scripture as a way to get things they selfishly desire but God wants every true leader to diligently seek Him and His ways. God’s ways are righteous. *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”*. 2 Corinthians 5:21. Righteousness separates us from the world. It is turning our lives totally over to him. True righteousness will bring a complete change.

Unrighteousness will separate us from God. It never ceases to amaze me that some believers live as if they can be both righteous and unrighteous. The Bible states that **“no man can serve two masters**: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”. Matthew 6:24. Revelation 3:15 says, “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot”.

A righteous person does not sit on top of the fence, swaying one way or the other, desiring to have the benefits of both. James 1:8 says, *“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways”*. What type of example can a leader give to others in the church (and outside of the church) when they are double minded?

Righteousness in our leadership encourages others to **“turn about face”** from their sinful ways and follow Him. Light will always expose the darkness. True righteousness will encourage others to realize that their ways may not be God’s ways. *“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame”*. 1 Corinthians 15:34.

The church should be full of righteousness but in plain truth, it is not. The church should be a powerful influence on everyone in his/her community but the sad truth, it is not!!! What if everyone who professed to be a Christian would actually live by the Word of God and turn everything over to Him? The results would be remarkable!!! Every church would be a powerful, living force in its community and nation!

The church in America seems to have lost its understanding of the Word. As a society, we have an attitude of “wanting our cake and eating it too”. The problem with this type of thinking is that too many people want a part of

Christianity but also to be a part of this world. We want to profess one thing but in reality, have an underlying desire to satisfy our flesh. How sad. That is why non-Christians state this as the number one reason why they are not attending church. They see Christians as professing one thing but living an entirely different life.

But there is hope. As leaders, we must encourage righteousness within the body of Christ. Even if others are not living in righteousness, an effective Godly leader must live by a different set of standards (higher standards), those which are set by the Word of God. By setting an example, we are showing others it can be done. By setting a pure and righteous example, God will bless our efforts and bless the church. *“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”*. 1 Timothy 6:11.

Let me encourage you to maintain a righteous standard so that others can be encouraged to do the same and make a difference in the lives of people in the workplace, church, and community. Remember that God always uses people who are willing, teachable, and available to do his work and who live according to His Word.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A True Leader has a Heart of Servanthood

True Humility—meeting the needs of others

Servant leadership flows from the love leaders have for their people. Leaders cannot truly serve people they do not love. They may perform acts of service, but their followers will rightly perceive their actions as insincere or manipulative unless they emanate from genuine concern and love. It was the love Jesus showed to his disciples (even Judas, whose feet he washed as lovingly as the other eleven) that secured their lifelong loyalty.

Leaders who are unable to love their people and who are unwilling to consider their needs are insecure in their own identity. Why was Jesus able to humble himself and wash his disciple's filthy feet? Jesus knew where he had come from and where he was going. He was secure in knowing who He was. We should also be secure in our leadership role.

The second requirement for servant leadership is self-knowledge. Leaders must know and accept who they are. They understand their limitations and weaknesses. Insecure people worry about how other people perceive them and cannot be the effective leaders as they should be. Secure people are not weighed down by fears or seeking praise and acceptance from their peers. Secure people are free to serve.

Thirdly, Christ-like servant leaders must understand who they serve. Spiritual leaders are not their people's servant; they are God's. All actions of a Godly leader are for God's purposes and are intended to bring glory to Him!

When Jesus was serving the twelve, He was giving them an example from above. Jesus was always aware that He was the Teacher and Lord of his disciples. John 13:13. When Jesus finished washing their feet, He concluded, *"For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."* John 13:15. Jesus was not only serving his disciples; He was teaching them. Jesus was demonstrating the character and work of the kingdom.

Submission to authority figures

Being a servant may include duties that are outside of your leadership position. I knew a person who I greatly admired at one of our churches. He and his wife

were extremely active in the church. He was a godly man and was involved in most every activity or function in the church. She was a leader in the ladies group and volunteered to help out with some of the children's programs. Both were perfect examples of Godly Christian leaders, ones whom any pastor or church would greatly love to have.

One day this man asked me, "You know we have been leaders in the church for about 5-6 years, do you know why we are here?"

I answered, "Because of the pastor?" He stated "No." I responded, "Is it because of our praise and worship leader?"

He again replied, "no." He went on to say that the reason why he is in the church today and is so active in the church is simply because I had shaken his hand when he first visited our church. He stated that he did not feel particularly welcomed at our church and went on to say, "I vowed to walk out and never set my feet back in this building again. No one seemed to notice that we were here. But just about the time I was walking out the door, you stuck out your hand, smiled, and showed a sincere interest in us!"

Wow, I was blown away. One of the best workers and dedicated Christians I had ever seen would have never been a blessing and worker within our church if I hadn't been obedient and been led by the Lord to greet them. It was not my responsibility, role, or usual work I did in the church but nevertheless was used for His glory. I wonder how many people leave our churches each week feeling unwanted. Some may have qualities that we may not ever see. Some could possibly exceed our own leadership needs. A good leader is willing to step outside of his/her box, doing the small things, looking for opportunities, listening to the Holy Spirit, etc. You never know, God may be sending someone your way. Will we pass the test of keeping that special person active and connected in a future leadership role? Or will we pass by them, being preoccupied by our own set of duties we have to perform?

A good leader will understand the importance of a team concept. As a part of that team, we are submissive to God, the pastor, other leaders, and anyone we may serve. Being submissive is not a weakness. It is a God-given skill and knowledge of allowing Him to use your talents, abilities, and willingness for His will and purpose. Again, it is not about us, it is all about Him and His will. People who are self-centered can never be submissive nor can be an effective servant. Christ gave us an idea of how God views servanthood. He stated, "*Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find doing*".

Matthew 24:46. God is pleased to find us being faithful and consistent in His work. Matthew 25:23 says, "*Well done thy good and faithful servant*". Will God find us being good and faithful? I believe a servant-driven leader catches the eye of God. If we want to really please Him and be an effective leader, we must be a good servant. Again, it is all about His will and being willing and submissive to follow His example.

CHAPTER NINE

It's All About His Will/Not Our Will

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen”. Most all of us know this prayer by heart. Being a true leader is to follow His Word.

Everything is done for God’s will. God made the earth and every living creature to worship Him. *“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him”.*
Colossians 1:16

The problem in following God’s will is the struggle we have with our minds and with our own desires. A carnal mind (worldly mind) is one that is opposite of God or enmity with God. When we become Christians, we turn away from our former desires and simply follow Christ. A godly leader never seeks his own will (desires) but seeks the desires of God (righteousness). Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, *“for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”.* Romans 8:7. A godly leader must turn away from carnal thinking.

A part of being a godly leader is to understand that God’s wisdom is much better than ours. *“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”.* Colossians 1:9. We can eliminate a lot of headaches if we can only trust and lean upon God’s direction and will over ours, asking Him to fill us with spiritual understanding and knowledge.

One of the biggest stumbling blocks in the churches today is the unwillingness to forgive. ***We have to teach forgiveness!!!*** Unforgiveness is seeking our own will rather than being submissive to God’s Word. God’s will clearly spell out that every Christian must forgive. It is a major ingredient for us following Christ, staying inside of His will, and being separate from the world. *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your*

trespasses”. Matthew 6:9-15. God cannot move through people who are not willing to forgive, nor can they be godly leaders.

God wants us to walk in His perfect will, omitting those things that will so easily beset us, and be faithful in pleasing Him. Heb 12:1 says, *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us”*. Hebrews 13: 20,21 states, *“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen”*. Being perfect is doing every good work of God! It is all about following His will over ours.

CHAPTER TEN

A True Leader Has Integrity

Integrity: It is who you are. Integrity is not what you imagine or wish to be. It is real and measurable and includes such traits as:

- Taking responsibility
- Being honest
- Keeping your word
- Being faithful in the little things

You cannot pretend to have integrity. The new obstacles and opportunities you face each day will draw out what is inside you. If your foundation is one of integrity, your decisions will bear that out. If not, that too will become evident.

The Toyota manufacturers have tried to maintain integrity and quality in the workmanship of their automobiles. Recently, there has been a recall on the accelerator pedal. At first it seemed a normal recall and that Toyota was consistent with their long-standing commitment to excellence. Soon, the American people found out that someone in Toyota had tried to cover up details of other faults and even death related accidents. What happened to their integrity?

Integrity, like reputations, takes so many years to develop and nurture. If not maintained, the true character of a person comes out, perhaps not immediately but given time, everyone can see what we are made of.

If one has integrity, it does not matter whether anyone is watching or not. Your behavior and actions will be honorable. God expects every Christian to be honorable in all he/she does. So many times, Christians and the church lose their integrity to their community due to inconsistent living or professing one thing and secretly living another. A lack of integrity will eventually unmask its ugliness. There is no glory or honor living a hypocritical lie.

The Bible also speaks of sanctification. Different denominations have different views of when a person becomes sanctified. But most will agree that sanctification is a separation from sin and dedication of our lives fully and more completely to God. The scriptures teach us to follow a life of: *“holiness which no man shall see the Lord.”* By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command: *“Be ye holy, for I am holy.”* Sanctification is realized in the

believer by recognizing one's identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith submitting God's Word over our own desires. Some say it is at a point in which we completely turn ourselves over to God, being more Christ-like, totally separating us from the things of this world.

When a believer or leader lives by the Word, has the Word deeply hid in his/her heart, and tries to live a holy life, the mark of integrity has to radiate. People no longer see an ordinary man or woman, they can only see the fruit of the Spirit and other godly characteristics which marks that man or woman of integrity. A leader with integrity will always be truthful, fair, and his/her decisions and life will be measured according to the Word.

A leader without integrity loses the respect from those around him/her and within the community. People will only respect those who are marked with integrity.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A True Leader Will Persevere

I remember a person who attended our church. She was gifted with so many ideas and seemed full of all kinds of energy. One day she had an idea to invite about 15-20 churches to a weekend carnival for the benefit of providing fun and activities for the kids. She had ideas of playing games, sports, having concessions, balloons, clowns, etc. She suggested inviting churches within 60 miles within our own denomination. People in the church embraced this idea and worked hard together. All the while this person was encouraging everyone to continue to work hard. The day came for the carnival. Everyone was excited. But as time passed by, no other churches showed up. We all questioned why no one was coming. Finally someone went over to this lady and asked why aren't these other churches coming? She said, "I don't know." Finally it was determined that she never got anyone to send out notices to the other churches. She finally stated, "This is not my carnival and I am not in charge, I only came up with the idea." We found out later, that she has done this everywhere she has been before, getting people excited but never following through with any type of project. One church told us, "I'm surprised that you got as far as you did with your carnival. You must have had people who were so excited and openly volunteered to help, this must have covered up this lady's incompetence." While the kids still had fun, the goals and expectations of the leaders and almost everyone else fell very short of what they had intended to accomplish.

There are people with good ideas in any church or organization but the church needs people to persevere to the very end. Sheer persistence has enabled people to claim great accomplishments. Michael Jordan, probably the best basketball player of all time, was turned down by his high school coach. Jordan wisely asked, "What do I need to do to get on the team?" The coach simply told him to master the basics. So Jordan went home and practiced shooting, dribbling, and passing hour after hour, and the rest is history. Persistence!

The Bible uses an example of us being in a race. Unfortunately, not everyone who starts out in the race will finish. As a church, our ultimate goal is to finish and take as many people across that finish line. *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"*. Hebrews 12:1. Leaders need to encourage others

to finish in everything they do. What does it profit to start something but never finish?

Sometimes the leader has to “stand” on what he/she knows is right. That decision, of course, must be based upon the Word of God. A good leader has enough discernment to understand that the disagreements or road blocks we may face are not with people. They may come in a form of a person but in reality, they are spiritual. The key is to “stand firm”, not going backwards to lower the standards of the church but to slowly move forward or persevere through these difficulties. The Bible says in Ephesians 6:13, “*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand*”. The importance at the end of the day, the end of the project, or the end of life, is that we are all standing and making a difference.

The goal of every Christian is to not only serve God but faithfully follow him to the very end, which means seeing Him in Heaven. I am reminded of a story of two men who were lost in the desert. They wandered around for days without water. One was trying to encourage the other one to continue but became so weary and tired he finally gave up. The one who persisted, continued to climb hill after hill, but soon was becoming weary himself. Out of sheer strength and perseverance, he climbed just one more hill. To his surprise, there was a village. His endurance and persistence were the determining factor which saved his life. The other one perished. He was so close but yet so far away.

As a leader, we must have the fortitude, discernment, and persistent spirit to persevere to the very end and encourage others to keep on moving forward. Nothing is ever completed unless it is continually moving forward. The best laid efforts and ideas never bring glory to God when those ideas and efforts fall short of completion. People who loose interest, lack the energy to persevere, or lack a consistent plan will disappoint others. They are not leaders and they are not good followers. Our word should be our bond. If a leader commits to something, he/she should do everything in his/her power to finish it. A mark of a true leader is one who finishes.

SUMMARY

Teamwork and Unity

A good spiritual leader looks at the overall picture and asks, “How can my leadership skills or department be used to promote the overall effectiveness and outreach to our community. Sometimes conveying this picture may be difficult. I heard a minister say one time, “it’s hard to share your 8x10 vision with a 5x7 mind. The challenge with so many leaders is to be creative enough to communicate in an effective way so that your members will embrace change.

As a leader, we must understand that some people really struggle with change. They just do not like it! We need to be creative enough to change their negative attitudes, but at the same time not be negatively influenced to discourage us to get side tracked from our original vision or from doing God’s will. I had a lady in our church one time that constantly complained about everything. She complained about this and that and was constantly a thorn in the flesh. The church was contemplating moving to a better location. She was one of the main ones against the move, even after the church agreed to move. One day she came up to me and started complaining about the move and I said to her, “We are going to miss you.” And I walked off. You could have heard a pin drop but that lady moved with us and never complained again. In fact she was one of our best supporters. I won her by being creative and not giving in to her wishes for the sake of *moving forward*. At first, she was more interested in getting her way instead of allowing God getting His Way. It is about “Us”, not “Me”.

Teamwork

We are all a part of a team. Our success depends upon each one of us to deliver “our part”. Our efforts should be done collectively, not trying to achieve individual statistics or honor but making sure the whole team wins. We are in a race towards heaven and we want to take as many people along with us. We can only do that if we work as a team.

Many pastors find in comparing their church with others, they notice that some churches seem to have more unity, purpose, and direction, along with effective leaders to be persistent enough to see things through. Everyone should be going in the same direction, all for the glory of God. While individual honors are appreciated, the whole purpose should be focused upon Him.

Teamwork also shows unity. It is imperative for the church to be united in all they do. Their success depends upon this. The Bible shares that we are all members in one body, all having a distinct purpose and function, not jealous of one another, but working in unity.

1Corinthians 12:12-27 says, *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular”*.

Matthew 5:29 & 30 talks about removing a particular part of our body (member) if it offends them for the sake of not having the whole body be cast into Hell. I am not implying that a leader tries to “kick” people out of church but we need to have people on the team that will work as a team member, in unity, for the sake of having the whole body (church) win. Sports teams will not play those who “sabotage” the chance of winning. They are placed on the bench as spectators until they have a renewed mind to do what is expected.

A good leader will have discernment enough to observe and screen people who will collectively work together for the same purpose. All others are merely spectators until they “catch the vision” of what God really wants the church to do. They are loved just like everyone else, not treated any differently, but may not be spiritually mature enough to participate in leadership or decision making positions.

In closing, the leader is one who is able to coordinate, love, motivate, lead by example, and encourage others to work as a team. One of our statements made at Pastoral Care, Inc. when dealing with pastors, churches, and denominations is that “Individually, we can do little or nothing but together we can make a difference”. Leaders are merely individuals but when they are joined by others who are willing, teachable, and available to be used for the glory of God for His purpose, it then becomes a team.

May God bless you and our prayer is that this outline will be a blessing to you and your church. If you need assistance, please feel free to contact Pastoral Care, Inc. at www.pastoralcarenc.com.

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