

The Heart of a Leader

(Developing the Qualities that Set Leaders Apart from Others)

*“So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart,
and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.” (Psalm 78:72)*

In every age there comes a time when a leader must come forward to meet the needs of the hour. Therefore, there is no potential leader who does not have an opportunity to make a positive difference in society. Tragically, there are times when a leader does not rise to that hour.

Why is it that when circumstances call for it, a leader does not rise to that hour? Many times, it is because people have not prepared their hearts to serve. So, what kind of heart do we need?

Preparing Our Hearts

It is important that leaders develop the “skills” in order to lead effectively. First, however, there are several important qualities of the heart that every great leader should build into his or her life.

In *Acts 9:3-6* Paul is traveling to Damascus when he meets Jesus face to face. His two questions are the right questions asked in the right order. First he asks, “*Who are you, Lord?*” Then he asks, “*What would you have me to do?*” These are questions that should guide a leader’s life.

The Leader God Uses...

1. Has a great _____ in life.

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” (Phil. 3:7-14)

Do you know your God-given purpose? You must answer these questions:

- a. What are your burdens?
- b. What are your spiritual gifts?
- c. What are your natural talents?
- d. What are your desires and passions?
- e. What do others affirm about you?
- f. What are your dreams and visions?
- g. What opportunities are in front of you?

2. Has by God’s grace, removed any _____ from his life.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Character and integrity are indispensable. Character can be defined as self-leadership. Once you lead yourself well, others may want to follow. It is the foundation on which the leader's life is built. It all begins with character because leadership operates on the basis of trust. If people don't trust you, they won't follow you. Here is what character does for a leader:

- a. Character communicates **CREDIBILITY**.
- b. Character harnesses **RESPECT**.
- c. Character creates **CONSISTENCY**.
- d. Character earns **TRUST**.

In order to build strong character, leaders must choose to:

- a. Develop personal **DISCIPLINE**.
- b. Develop a personal **SECURITY** and **IDENTITY**.
- c. Develop **PERSONAL CONVICTIONS, VALUES,** and **ETHICS**.

3. Has placed himself absolutely at God's _____.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

To lead others, we must develop three attitudes of total surrender to God:

- a. We must have nothing to **PROVE**. (We don't try to project our self worth.)
- b. We must have nothing to **LOSE**. (We don't strive for image or popularity.)
- c. We must have nothing to **HIDE**. (We don't play games but are transparent.)

4. Has learned how to prevail in _____.

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray... Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him... And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up... Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:13-17)

Jesus listed three kinds of prayer (Matthew 7:7) in which leaders must learn to prevail:

- a. **ASK** – This is the prayer of faith. With it we lay hold of God's promises by faith.
- b. **SEEK** – This is the prayer of dedication. With it we seek to know God's will.
- c. **KNOCK** – This is the prayer of intercession. With it we pray for someone who cannot or will not pray for themselves.

5. Is a student of _____.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

Students of God's Word examine Scripture to understand its meaning . . .

- a. **One Time:** What did it mean at one time, to the original audience?
- b. **All Time:** What is the universal and timeless principle we can learn?
- c. **Now Time:** What should we do in response to it?

6. Has a vital, life-changing _____ for a lost world.

“Holding forth the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.” (Philippians 2:16)

In Romans 1:14-16, the Apostle Paul expressed three attitudes concerning the Gospel:

- I am **OBLIGATED** (v. 14) – Sharing the message is a debt I owe to the world.
- I am **EAGER** (v. 15) – I am on fire to share this message with the world.
- I am **NOT ASHAMED** (v. 16) – I will share it because it alone can save us.

7. Has a _____ that expects results.

“And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead...and the deadness of Sarah’s womb... He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was able to perform.” (Romans 4:19-21)

Hebrews 11:13 describes men and women of faith and what they each had in common:

- Vision** – Each of them “saw” the promises from far off.
- Confidence** – Each of them were assured of the promises of God.
- Hunger** – Each of them embraced and owned the promises as their own.
- Resolve** – They confessed that they were pilgrims on the earth.
- Dreams** – Their God-given dreams, not their memories, consumed them.

8. Chooses to _____ in attitude and action.

In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul writes about how we should embrace the same “mind” that drove Jesus to lead by serving in attitude and action:

“Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking on the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:5-8)

Although He was God, He did not cling to His position, but rather to His purpose. He was not position conscious, but purpose conscious. He knew the best way to accomplish His purpose was to serve people. Leaders naturally arise when someone determines to serve.

It always starts with a need:

- That need sparks passion within a person.
- That person acts in response to the need.
- This action moves others to cooperate.

9. Stirs up the _____ in themselves and others.

“Until I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” (1 Timothy 4:13-16)

Leaders naturally arise, when they find their gift and use it to serve. It usually follows this order:

- First, a leader identifies a primary gift.
- Second, they develop that gift.

- c. Third, they match that gift with a place of service.
- d. Fourth, that gift provides a platform for influence.
- e. Finally, the leader eventually flourishes because of their gift.

10. Is _____ enough to empower others.

“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper, laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. Then, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet...” (John 13:3-5)

In John 13 Jesus modeled a servant’s heart when He washed the disciples’ feet. Note what enabled Him to do this. It was a strong sense of security in His identity. Leaders who are not secure in their identity in Christ will eventually sabotage their leadership. Insecure leaders become their own worst enemy. They cannot share victories or sorrows. The Law of Empowerment reminds us: Only secure leaders give their power to others. Here is the difference between secure leaders and insecure leaders:

SECURE LEADERS

- a. The secure focus on towels.
- b. The secure draw strength from identity.
- c. The secure pursue service to others.
- d. The secure want to add value to others.

INSECURE LEADERS

- a. The insecure focus on titles.
- b. The insecure draw strength from image.
- c. The insecure pursue status with others.
- d. The insecure want to gain value from others.

11. Lives under the _____ of the Holy Spirit.

“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 5:18-20)

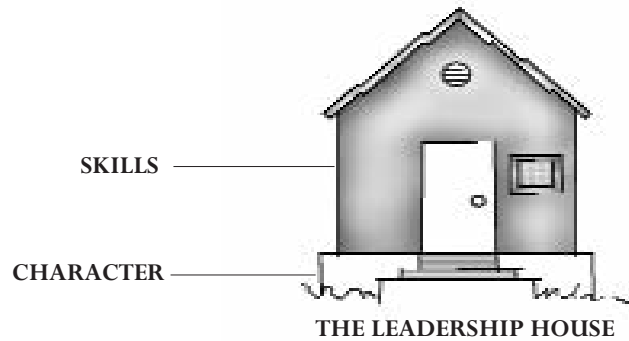
- a. Anointed leaders possess spiritual authority with others.
- b. Anointed leaders consistently see God move in their ministries.
- c. Anointed leaders’ lives demand a supernatural explanation.

12. Has chosen to be an _____ before he leads others.

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore, I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

DIAGRAM

TRUTH IN A
PICTURE



Reasons Why a Heart of Integrity Is so Important to Leaders:

Leadership functions on the basis of TRUST.

Integrity has high influence VALUE.

Our tendency is to work harder on our IMAGE than on our integrity.

Integrity means LIVING the truth myself, before leading others.

A charismatic personality may draw people, but only INTEGRITY will keep them.

Integrity is a VICTORY, not a gift.

You will only BECOME what you are becoming – right now.

Leaders are to live by a higher STANDARD than followers.

ASSESSMENT: *If you were to evaluate yourself, how do you feel you would rank in the area of character? How is your leader's heart?*

ACTION PLAN

APPLICATION: *What are some activities and/or disciplines you could apply in your life in order to develop a stronger character?*