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Small Group Discussions for Adventist Youth and Young Adults

Youth Ministries Department • General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®

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LEADERSHIP

Praying Leadership

The path of men who are placed as leaders is not an easy one. But they are to see in every difficulty a call to prayer. Never are they to fail of consulting the great Source of all wisdom. Strengthened and enlightened by the Master Worker, they will be enabled to stand firm against unholy influences and to discern right from wrong, good from evil. They will approve that which God approves, and will strive earnestly against the introduction of wrong principles into His cause.

-Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, p. 31



YEAR OF LEADING 2010



Prepared by the Youth Ministries Department General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

About This Manual

The year 2010 has been designated by the General Conference Youth Ministries Department as a year of Leading (Leadership). This is part of the yearly themes for the youth around the world.

This year, the Seventh-day Adventist church around the world will be focusing on the joys and benefits of Renewing through Discipleship, Leadership, Evangelism and Service. The young people will learn how to close the gap that exists between belief and action, knowledge and practice.

These small group discussions have been developed to be used during Youth Meetings when youth meet for their weekly programs. There are enough programs for the whole year.

It is the prayer of the General Conference Youth Ministries Team that these discussions will help youth to grow in leadership following the Master Leader Jesus Christ. Our goal is to open the eyes of our youth to discover the leadership roles they currently have and to lead them into improving and strengthening their influence for the cause of Christ.

We are living in a time when every true Christian must maintain a living connection with God. The world is flooded with sophistries of the enemy, and we are safe only as we learn lessons of truth from the Great Teacher. The solemn work in which we are engaged demands of us a strong, united effort under divine leadership. —Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 485



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INTRODUCTION: *Can Anyone Be a Leader?*

Discipleship Leadership Evangelism Service

He who enters Christ's army must obey His orders. He has placed himself under the Saviour's leadership, and he is to give Him willing obedience. He is to speak no word, perform no act, that would misrepresent the high and holy principles by which the kingdom of heaven is to be governed.

—Ellen G. White, ST, August 30, 1905 par. 7

2010 – LEADING (Leadership)

"Whoever speaks, [let him do it as one who utters] oracles of God; whoever renders service, [let him do it] as with the strength which God furnishes abundantly, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ (the Messiah). To Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever (through endless ages). Amen (so be it)."

- 1 Peter 4:11 (KJV – Amplified)

Everyone follows someone. Who are you following? How do you know? The answer is easy – who are you like? Actions have and will always speak louder and clearer than words. You don't have to be an elected leader to lead, but to be a good leader, you need to follow Jesus Christ. This year, our goal is to open the eyes of our youth to discover the leadership roles they currently have and to lead them into improving and strengthening their influence for the cause of Christ.

Renewing through:

- Leadership
- Discipleship
- Evangelism
- Service

Building on the previous year's foci on discipleship, worship, compassion, and witnessing, this year's curriculum culminates in a study of leadership. There are literally hundreds of working definitions of "leadership" and at least as many books on the topic. Indeed, James MacGregor Burns has noted that "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth." There is perhaps no better manual for helping us understand leadership than the Bible, and no better example of leadership in action than Jesus.

On this note, it is important to make some distinctions between the biblical presentation of leadership and that of the world. There is much discussion in secular circles as to whether leaders are made or born – that is, if leadership skills can be taught and acquired, or if they are just inherent in some people. Biblically speaking, however, all Christians are called to lead in different ways, but it's at least as important for Christian leaders to know who they follow.

With this in mind, while numerous examples of leadership could be taken from the Bible, the following pages intentionally focuses little on specific examples and more on principles. What we see again and again in the biblical narrative is that God can and does work through anyone, and He does so in unique ways, working with each on to develop them into the spiritual leaders He needs them to be. As Robert Greenleaf has noted, "[trailblazing]



leadership...is so "situational" that it rarely draws on known models."¹ Instead of relying on the example of others, then, spiritual leaders must be in touch with the leading of God in their lives to understand the particular ways in which they're being led. "Too much concern with how others did it may be inhibitive."²

The one example that can truly be applied across the board is that of Jesus, and so the question is asked, "What if, for one day, Jesus were to become you?"

What if, for twenty-four hours, Jesus wakes up in your bed, walks in your shoes, lives in your house, assumes your schedule? Your boss becomes his boss, your mother becomes his mother, your pains become his pains? With one exception, nothing about your life changes. Your health doesn't change. Your circumstances don't change. Your schedule isn't altered. Your problems aren't solved. Only one change occurs.

What if, for one day and one night, Jesus lives your life with his heart? Your heart gets the day off, and your life is led by the heart of Christ. His priorities govern your actions. His passions drive your decisions. His love directs your behavior.

What would you be like? Would people notice a change? Your family – would they see something new? Your coworkers – would they sense a difference? What about the less fortunate? Would you treat them the same? And your friends? Would they detect more joy? How about your enemies? Would they receive more mercy from Christ's heart than from yours?

And you? How would you feel? What alterations would this transplant have on your stress level? Your mood swings? Your temper? Would you sleep better? Would you see sunsets differently? Death differently? Taxes differently? Any chance you'd need fewer aspirin or sedatives? How about your reaction to traffic delays? (Ouch, that touched a nerve.) Would you still dread what you are dreading? Better yet, would you still do what you are doing?

Would you still do what you had planned to do for the next twenty-four hours? Pause and think about your schedule. Obligations. Engagements. Outings. Appointments. With Jesus taking over your heart, would anything change?

Keep working on this for a moment. Adjust the lens of your imagination until you have a clear picture of Jesus leading your life, then snap the shutter and frame the image. What you see is what God wants. He wants you to "think and act like Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

...God wants you to be just like Jesus. He wants you to have a heart like his.

I'm going to risk something here. It's dangerous to sum up grand truths in one statement, but I'm going to try. If a sentence or two could capture God's desire for each of us, it might read like this:

God loves you just the way you are, but he refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus.³

And because God refuses to leave you the way you are, His calling in your life requires constant growth, constant learning.



I like the story of the little boy who fell out of bed. When his mom asked him what happened, he answered, "I don't know. I guess I stayed too close to where I got in."

Easy to do the same with our faith. It's tempting just to stay where we got in and never move.

Pick a time in the not-too-distant past. A year or two ago. Now ask yourself a few questions. How does your prayer life today compare with then? How about your giving? Have both the amount and the joy increased? What about your church loyalty? Can you tell you've grown? And Bible study? Are you learning to learn?

We will in all things *grow up* into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. (Eph. 4:15 NIV, emphasis mine)

Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to *maturity*. (Heb. 6:1 NIV, emphasis mine)

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may *grow up* in your salvation. (1 Pet. 2:2 NIV, emphasis mine)

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 3:18 NIV, emphasis mine)

Growth is the goal of the Christian. Maturity is mandatory.⁴

Growth into Christian maturity is always on God's timeline and done in God's way. This may mean that we don't always see the end from the beginning, but spiritual leaders cannot get frustrated. Instead, they "understand the importance of a positive attitude as an effective leadership tool, but they remain optimistic not because doing so is a vital leadership practice but because they are in touch with God.... Everyone faces discouraging circumstances, but the **Scriptures** provide the vista leaders need to help them maintain or regain a positive attitude."⁵

Philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard provides us with some word pictures to help us understand this vista, first in presenting the proper understanding of one's long-term aim and the preparation entailed in achieving this end:

Imagine a violinist. If, without having learned the least bit of music, he were to take his seat in the orchestra and right away begin playing, he would not only be disturbed but would disturb others. No, for a long time he practices by himself, alone. As far as possible not a thing disturbs him there; he sits and beats time, etc., but his aim is to play with the orchestra. He must be able to tolerate the profusion of the most varied instruments, this interweaving of sounds, and yet be able to attend to his violin and play along just as calmly and confidently as if he were home alone in his room. Oh, this again makes it necessary for him to be by himself to learn to be able to do this – but the aim is always that he play in the orchestra. It is the same with faith and the task of living it out.⁶

The second word picture reminds us that if our leadership journey is to be successful – and if we are to lead others successfully – our path cannot be of our own choosing, but rather of the Master's:



Once upon a time there was a rich man. He purchased a team of entirely splendid horses, which he wanted for his own pleasure and the pleasure of driving them himself. A year or two passed by. If anyone who had known these horses earlier now saw him driving them, he would not be able to recognize them. Their eyes were now dull and drowsy, their gait lacked style and precision, they had no staying power, no endurance. Moreover, they had acquired all sorts of bad habits, and though they had plenty of feed, they grew thinner and thinner as each day passed by.

So he called in the royal coachman. The royal coachman drove them for a month. In the whole countryside there was not a team of horses that carried their heads so proudly, whose eyes were so fiery, whose gait was so beautiful. There wasn't a team that could hold out running as they did, even thirty miles in a stretch without stopping. How did this happen? It is easy to see: the owner, not being a coachman, drove the horses according to the horses' understanding of what it is to drive. The royal coachman, by contrast, drove the horses according to the coachman's understanding of what it is to drive.

So it is with us human beings. When I think of myself and the countless people I have come to know, I must confess that here are capacities and talents and qualifications enough, but the coachman is lacking. We humans have been, if I may put it this way (in order to carry on with the metaphor), driven according to the horses' (i.e., our) understanding of driving. We are governed, educated, and brought up according to the world's conception of what it means to be human. See, because of this we lack vitality and are unable to endure the sacrifice. We are impatient and impulsively use the means of the moment and, in turn, want instantly to see the reward for our work, which for that very reason is not very good.

Things were different once. There was a time when it pleased the Spirit himself to be the coachman. He drove the horses according to the coachman's understanding of what it is to drive. Oh, what a human being was capable of then! Ponder this! There sat twelve disciples, all of whom were of but a common social class. Their task, however, was to transform the world, and on the most appalling scale. And when the Spirit descended, the transformation indeed was set in motion.

They carried Christianity through. They were men just like us, but they were driven well! Yes, indeed, that they were! They were like that team of horses when the royal coachman drove them. Never has a human being lifted his head as high as did the first Christians in humility before God! And just as that team of horses could run if need be thirty miles without pausing to catch their wind, so also did they run; they rant seventy years at a stretch without getting out of the harness, without stopping anywhere. No, proud as they were in their humility before God, they exclaimed, "It is not for us to hold back and dawdle along the way. We will not stop – until eternity." They were driven well, yes, that they were!

Oh Holy Spirit, you who give new life, we pray for ourselves but also for all people. Here there is no want of capabilities, nor of education, nor of sagacity – indeed, there may rather be too much. But what is lacking is that you take away that which is corrupting us, that you take away our power and grant us new life. Certainly a person experiences a shudder like death's shudder when you, in



order to become the power in him, take power away from him. So, help us also to die, to die to ourselves. If even the horses came to realize how good it was for them that the royal coachman took the reins, although it surely made them shudder at first and they at first rebelled, but in vain, should not we who are created in your image quickly come to understand what a blessing it is that you have the power and give life! Oh Holy Spirit, take the reins of our lives and rule us. May it be you that has the power.⁷

The question is asked, then, if we are led by the same God, what is keeping us from attaining to the same success as that of the early church leaders?

Who is the enemy? Who is holding back more rapid movement to the better society that is reasonable and possible with available resources? ... Who is standing in the way of a larger consensus on the definition of the better society and paths to reaching it?

Not evil people. Not stupid people. Not apathetic people. Not the "system." Not the protesters, the disrupters, the revolutionaries, the reactionaries.

Granting that fewer evil, stupid, or apathetic people or a better "system" might make the job easier, their removal would not change matters, not for long. The better society will come, if it comes, with plenty of evil, stupid, apathetic people around and with an imperfect, ponderous, inertia-charged "system" as the vehicle for change. Liquidate the offending people, radically alter or destroy the system, and in less than a generation they will all be back....

The real enemy is fuzzy thinking on the part of good, intelligent, vital people, and their failure to lead, and to follow servants as leaders. Too many settle for being critics and experts....

In short, the enemy is strong natural servants who have the potential to lead but do not lead, or who choose to follow a nonservant. They suffer. Society suffers. And so it may be in the future.⁸

Let us, then, lead. Let us fulfill the calling God has given each one of us. Let us get down to work rather than simply continuing to talk about all that needs to be done. Let us always be following *the* Leader, and shining a light on the path for those that would follow. Let us, like Paul seek to "finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given" (Acts 20:24), that we, too, might have the satisfaction of knowing we have accomplished God's will and purpose for our lives.

God calls some people to serve him in leadership roles (Eph. 4:11). Those God calls to leadership positions, he also equips for leadership. For those people to do anything else would be to invest their lives in less than God's will. Those who resist God's will for them never experience all God had in store for them. ...

Leadership is a broad term that covers a wide spectrum. Some are called to lead in smaller capacities. Others are assigned positions of great influence. No matter how grand or how seemingly small a position, those who have been called to lead will misspend their lives and squander their potential if they do not yield to God's will.



Some people know God has called them to lead, but they are apprehensive. They may be reluctant to leave the security of their present position. They may fear the criticism that inevitably comes with leadership. They may doubt their abilities, which means they question God's sufficiency. But if they will allow God to stretch them personally, he will lead them to do things they never thought possible. They will one day look back over their lives and marvel at all God did through them. There is no life more fulfilling to live than a life lived according to God's will.⁹



¹ Greenleaf, R.K. (1977). Servant Leadership. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

 $^{^2}$ bid.

³ Lucado, M. (1998). Just Like Jesus. Nashville: Word Publishing.

⁴ Lucado, M. (1994). When God Whispers Your Name. Nashville: W. Publishing Group.

⁵ Blackaby, H. and Blackaby, R. (2001). *Spiritual Leadership*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁶ Moore, C.E. (Ed). (2002). Provocations: Spiritual Writings of Kierkegaard. Maryknoll, NYL Orbis Books.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Greenleaf.

⁹ Blackaby.

Introduction: Can Everyone Be A Leader? Leadership

Essence

In all the world there is nobody, nobody like you. Since the beginning of time there has never been another person like you. Nobody has your smile, your eyes, your hands, your hair. Nobody owns your handwriting, your voice. You're Special. Nobody can paint your brushstrokes. Nobody has your taste for food or music or dance or art. Nobody in the universe sees things as you do.

In all the time there has never been anyone who laughs in exactly your way, and what makes you laugh or cry or think may have a totally different response in another. So – You're Special. You're different from any other person who has ever lived in the history of the universe. You are the only one in the whole creation who has your particular set of abilities. There is always someone who is better at one thing or another. Every person is your superior in at least one way. Nobody in the universe can reach the quality of the combination of your talents, your feelings. Like a roomful of musical instruments some might excel in one way or another but nobody can match the symphonic sound when all are played together. Your symphony.

Through all eternity no one will ever walk, talk, think or do exactly like you. You're Special. You're rare and in all rarity there is enormous value and because of your great value the need for you to imitate anyone else is absolutely wrong. You're Special and it is no accident you are. Please realize that God made you for a special purpose. He has a job for you to do that nobody else can do as well as you can. Out of the billions of applicants only one is qualified. Only one has the unique and right combination of what it takes and that one is You. You're Special.

– Anon

Scripture

Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 12 in light of the above passage.

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Assign each group one of the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12. Have groups develop a skit about what a church with just their gift would look like. In the end, combine the groups to discover a much more effective picture of the church with complementary gifts.

Discuss: "Like snowflakes, no two leaders are alike. Your leadership DNA is unique and perfectly crafted by a creative, sovereign God." – VanEck



In light of the above passage, discuss the traditional sense of "self-esteem" and what Oswald Sanders terms "God esteem," that is, the esteem we gain as seeing ourselves through God's eyes – as His special creation and the object of His unmatched affection.

Write each person's name on a bag and give everyone index cards – one for each person in the full group. Have everyone write one thing special about each person in the group, depositing the appropriate card in the corresponding bag. After giving people a chance to read their cards, discuss the implications of the above passage as a whole, and particularly the idea that God made each person for a special purpose and has a job for each person that no one else can do as well.

List some of God's "unlikely" leaders. What "unique and right combination" of gifts did they have that made them uniquely suited to their calling? What might have happened if they didn't pursue God's purpose for their lives?

♥ Discuss the balance between the approach in the above passage and the following humbling quote from St. Francis of Assisi:

Thou wishest to know [why people follow me]? It is because the eyes of the Most High have willed it so. He continually watches the good and the wicked, and as His most holy eyes have not found among sinners any smaller man, nor any more insufficient and sinful, therefore He has chosen me to accomplish the marvelous work which God hath undertaken; He chose me because He could find none more worthless, and He wished to confound the nobility and grandeur, the strength, the beauty and the learning of this world.

● "Don't try to be like [others]! The question in seeking from [others' examples] is not "What was he like?" or "What did he say?" or "What did he do?" but, rather, "How did he learn?" What he said and did was appropriate and effective in his times. It might not be in ours. But how he learned is timeless. Learn from [exemplary leaders] how to learn what is superior wisdom for these times." – Robert K. Greenleaf, Servant Leadership



Introduction: Can Everyone Be A Leader? DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

Holding a leadership position in a Christian organization does not make one a spiritual leader. Spiritual leadership is not an occupation: it is a calling. Christian businesspeople, physicians, educators, politicians, and parents – all ought to be spiritual leaders....

Only when we understand leadership in light of God's calling on our lives will we be equipped to lead effectively. According to the Bible, God is not necessarily looking for leaders, at least not in the sense we generally think of leaders. He is looking for servants.... When God finds men and women willing to be molded into his servants, the possibilities are limitless.

Certainly leadership involves some specific skill, but ultimately leadership is more about "being" than about "doing." Leadership development is synonymous with personal development. As leaders grow personally, they increase their capacity to lead.

– Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership

This call [Matthew 20:25-28] by Jesus to servant leadership is clear and unequivocal; His words leave no room for plan B. He placed no restrictions or limitations of time, place, or situation that would allow us to exempt ourselves from His command. For followers of Jesus, servant leadership isn't an option; it's a mandate. Servant leadership is to be a living statement of who we are in Christ, how we treat one another, and how we demonstrate the love of Christ to the whole world. If this sounds like serious business with profound implications – it is!

The exciting part of leading like Jesus is that He never sends us into any situation alone or with a flawed plan or a plan to fail. (Jer. 29:11-14)

...if you understand that leading like Jesus is a transformational journey and you apply what it means to lead like Jesus to your heart, head, hands, and habits, you will be in a position to radically transform your leadership. ...

Driven people think they own everything. They own their relationships, they own their possessions, and they own their positions. In fact, they perceive their identity as the sum of their relationships, possessions, and positions. As a result, driven people spend most of their time protecting what they own. ...

Called people, on the other hand, believe everything is on loan. They believe their relationships are on loan; they know that we have no guarantee we will see those we love tomorrow. Called people also believe their possessions are on loan and are to be held lightly, to be enjoyed and shared with an open hand. Finally, called people believe their positions are on loan from God and the people they are attempting to influence. Rather than protecting what they own, called leaders act as good stewards of what has been loaned to them.

- Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, Lead Like Jesus



Scripture

Read and discuss Matthew 20:25-28. In what ways does this leave "no room for a Plan B"? What other Biblical texts support this unequivocal call to servant leadership?

Read and discuss Titus 1:5-9. What aspects of leadership are delineated in these verses?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

🗣 🛛 Discuss

- "Spiritual leadership is not an occupation: it is a calling." How is the call to spiritual leadership played out in your life, no matter your current "occupation"?
- "Ultimately leadership is more about 'being' than about 'doing."
- Discuss what it means to "lead like Jesus." What would this look like in your own life? Your church? In what ways is this idea transformative?
- Discuss the difference between "ownership" and "stewardship" and their relationship to being "called" versus being "driven." Find Biblical examples of leaders that were called and leaders that were driven. What is the key difference?

The Bible gives us many examples of leaders – good and bad. Assign each group a leader and compare styles, circumstances of leadership, "natural" ability, willingness to lead, number of followers, etc. Can you identify any one thing all these leaders had in common?

- Noah
- Moses
- Joshua
- Nehemiah
- Ezra
- Paul

Consider

The servant-leader is servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He or she is sharply different form the person who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve – after leadership is established.

The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served.



The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they. While being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived?

– Robert Greenleaf, Servant as Leader



Introduction: Can Everyone Be A Leader? Evangelism

Story

Hattie May Wiatt lived near a church where the Sunday School was very crowded, one day the pastor, Russel Conwell found her crying outside the building because there was no room inside and he told her that one day when they had raised enough money they would have buildings big enough to allow everyone to attend who wanted to. Not long after that Hattie May became sick and died. Rev. Conwell was asked to do the funeral and the girl's mother told him that Hattie May had been saving money to help build a bigger church and gave him the little purse in which she had saved 57 cents. This was in 1886 when 57 cents was no small savings account for a little girl from a poor family. Rev. Conwell had the 57 cents turned into 57 pennies, told the congregation the story of little Hattie May and sold the pennies for a return of about \$250. In addition, 54 of the original 57 pennies were returned to Rev. Conwell and he later put them up on display. Some of the members of the church formed what they called the Wiatt Mite Society which was dedicated to making Hattie May's 57 cents grow as much as possible and to buy the property for the Primary Department of the Sunday school. A house nearby was purchased with the \$250 that Hattie May's 57 cents had produced. The first classes of Temple College, later Temple University, were held in that house. It was later sold to allow Temple College to move and the growth of Temple, along with the founding of the Good Samaritan Hospital (Now the Temple University Hospital) along with the 3500 seat auditorium of Temple Baptist Church serve as powerful testimonies to the leadership of a little girl named Hattie May.

It's easy when you're young to suppose that making a big impact in the world is something for those who are older. That if the Lord did happen to have big plans for your life, that those plans are on hold waiting for adulthood. But, throughout the pages of Scripture some of the Lord's greatest victories are led by the young. The young man Joseph in spite of imprisonment and slavery saved both his family and the rest of the world from starvation. Samuel heard the Lord call his name when he was still a child. Only a boy named David defeated the Philistine champion Goliath. History's Messiah was delivered to us by a girl named Mary who yielded herself to God's plan and named her baby Jesus.

And ... a boy named Josiah ... led his nation Judah in its last great revival.

...I believe it is and always has been God's plan to use young people to forcefully move forward his plan.

... The question is how can young people and older people alike make a difference for the Lord?

... Hattie May Wiatt made a difference because she caught sight of a vision and she decided to take action.

What about you? Do you have a vision of what God can do in and through you?

- Guy Caley, Josiah: Too Young to Lead Revival?



Scripture

Read 2 Chronicles 34:1-7. Discuss the following three things Josiah did that led to revival:

- 1. Sought the Lord
- 2. Started the Process
- 3. Smashed the Idols

Discuss the many obstacles Josiah had to overcome. In what ways does this story leave us without excuse?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss what younger and older individuals each have to contribute to accomplishing God's will. How can the two groups work together better in your church? Identify concrete examples, and be sure to have a full range of ages represented in the discussion. What are some of the barriers to different generations working together? How can these be overcome?

Consider

Are there things you've been waiting to do "until you're older"? What's holding you back? Is God calling you to act *now*?

Note the "milestones" of Josiah's life as recorded in 2 Chronicles 34. Take time to note the milestones, or major life events, in your own life. What did you learn and how did you change as a result of each one?

Read 1 Chronicles 28. Note the instruction and encouragement David gives his son – a young, inexperienced leader called to a huge task. How might these words apply to you? Write a prayer, being honest about your hopes, dreams, and fears as you embark on this leadership journey.



Introduction: Can Everyone Be A Leader? SERVICE

Note

Each week focusing on service will include possible service project ideas and less "study." If your group is not already engaged in ongoing service, use this introductory lesson to explore the role of service in the Christian's life and to plan future service projects. Involve the youth in the identification of appropriate projects and discuss the need for various types of service, and how essential commitment and follow-through are in starting any given service project.

් Quotable Quote

I asked God for strength that I might achieve; I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for help that I might do greater things; I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy; I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of others; I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life; I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for – but everything I'd hoped for. My unspoken prayers were answered. I am among all men most richly blessed!

- An unknown nineteenth-century soldier



Scripture

Look up the following texts and note what they reveal about the example Jesus sets for us: Matthew 4:23-25

Matthew 6:1-4	
Matthew 19:13-15	
Mark 1:35-39	
Mark 6:31-34	

Look up the following texts and note how the early church continued in service after Christ's death and resurrection:

Acts 4:32-35	
Acts 6:1-7	
Acts 9:36	
Acts 11:27-30	

Read Matthew 10:24-25. In following Jesus' example, what is one thing we can expect to encounter?

Read Mark 10:13-15. How can service / interaction with the world help us in our Christian walk?

Discuss together the role of service in the Christian church, reflecting on the introductory quotes and the texts you've just read. Make plans for how you can serve others more effectively, both individually and corporately.

Explore the ways in which service and witnessing intertwine. Discuss the possible dangers of too closely relating service with witnessing. Give Biblical examples of those who were a witness through their service. Do you find any Biblical examples that *withheld* service to those that did not accept their message?



Reflections on Following The LEADER LEADERSHIP

Essence

Clearly, Jesus didn't act unless he saw his father act. He didn't judge until he heard his father judge. No act or deed occurred without his father's guidance. His words have the ring of a translator.

There were a few occasions in Brazil when I served as a translator for an English speaker. He stood before the audience, complete with the message. I stood at his side, equipped with the language. My job was to convey his story to the listeners. I did my best to allow his words to come through me. I was not at liberty to embellish or subtract. When the speaker gestured, I gestured. As his volume increased, so did mine. When he got quiet, I did, too.

When he walked this earth, Jesus was "translating" God all the time. When God got louder, Jesus got louder. When God gestured, Jesus gestured. He was so in sync with the Father that he could declare, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 14:11 NRSV). It was as if he heard a voice others were missing.

I witnessed something similar to this on an airplane once. I kept hearing outbursts of laughter. The flight was turbulent and bumpy, hardly a reason for humor. But some fellow behind me was cracking up. No one else, just him. Finally I turned to see what was so funny. He was wearing headphones and apparently listening to a comedian. Because he could hear what I couldn't, he acted differently than I did.

The same was true with Jesus. Because he could hear what others couldn't, he acted differently than they did. ...It was as if Jesus could hear what no one else could. How could a relationship be more intimate? Jesus had unbroken communion with his father.

Do you suppose the Father desires the same for us? Absolutely. Paul says we have been "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29 NRSV). Let me remind you: God loves you just the way you are, but he refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus. God desires the same abiding intimacy with you that he had with his son.

– Max Lucado, Just Like Jesus



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

- E Discuss
 - Discuss the translation analogy from the above passage. In what ways would your life differ if you were truly only translating God rather than embellishing or subtracting?
 - Discuss the story of the boy on the plane. How can we stay tuned in to God's voice with everything else going on around us?

Using a concordance or topical Bible, have one group find Biblical references to "leader" and another group find Biblical references to "servant." Discuss the results.

Scripture

Read John 6:14-15; 9:3; and 11:4. What caused Jesus to act differently/unexpectedly in these cases? What other examples do you have of this in the life of Jesus? Are there other instances of this in the lives of others in the Bible? Have you seen this at play in your own life?

What do the following verses help us understand in terms of godly decision making? What other verses instruct us? How can we ensure that, like Jesus, we are hearing and heeding God's voice?

- Psalm 118:8
- Proverbs 14:12
- Jeremiah 33:3
- Proverbs 11:14
- Proverbs 15:22



Reflections on Following The LEADER DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

The ... six sources of vision [Because it's there; Duplicating success; Vanity; Need-based; Available Resources; Leader-driven] have one thing in common – they are all generated by worldly thinking. This is not surprising; the world functions by vision. But God does not ask his followers to operate by vision. God's people live by revelation. Proverbs 29:18, although widely used, is also widely misapplied. The popular translation is, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (KJV). A more accurate translation of the Hebrew is: "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint" (NIV). There is a significant difference between revelation and vision. Vision is something people produce; revelation is something people receive. Leaders can dream up a vision, but they cannot discover God's will. God must reveal it. The secular world ignores God's will, so nonbelievers are left with one alternative – to project their own vision. Christians are called to a totally different approach. For Christians, God alone sets the agenda. ...

Wise leaders recognize that life is far too complex to comprehend apart from God's revelation and guidance....

Yet many Christian leaders adopt the world's approach to vision and miss out on God's way. In seeking to serve God, they inadvertently try to take on the responsibility of God. The truth is God is on mission to redeem humanity. He is the only one who knows how to do it. Leaders must understand, as Christ did, that their role is to seek the Father's will and to adjust their lives to him. Too often Christian leaders operate under a false sense of assurance that they are seeking God's will. Being proactive by nature, leaders want to rush into action. As a result, they don't spend enough time seeking to hear clearly from God. Instead, they simply have a cursory moment of prayer and then begin making their plans. They seek out a few relevant Scriptures and hurry into the goal-setting phase, falsely confident that because they incorporated prayer and Scripture into their goal-setting process, their plans are "of God."

Asking God to set one's goals and to bless one's dreams does not ensure that they are from God. Only God can reveal his plans and he does so in his way, on his time schedule, and to whom he wills. How often do Christian leaders claim to have received their vision from God when in fact they have simply dreamed up the most desirable future they could imagine and then prayed for God to bless their efforts as they set out to achieve it? It is critical for leaders to walk closely with the Father, so they are keenly aware of his revelation and are ready to respond in obedience to his initiatives. The role of spiritual

leaders is not to dream up dreams for God but to be the vanguard for their people in understanding God's revelation. The Christian leader is far better described as a servant of God....



Spiritual leaders must resist the temptation to insert their own best thinking where God has promised a miracle. Attempting to hurry the process or to adjust God's plan to make it more achievable are both signs of immature spiritual leadership. Spiritual leaders must continually remind themselves that what God has promised, God will accomplish completely in his time and in his way (Phil. 1:6). The leader's job is to communicate God's promise to the people, not to create the vision and then strive to enlist people to buy in to it.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership

Scripture

Read 2 Samuel 5:1-12. Discuss the ways in which what David set forth energized the Hebrew nation.

Read Habakkuk 2:2-3 and discuss the distinction between vision and revelation. Give Biblical examples of both.

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss the following idea in light of Acts 6:3,5: "Spiritual leadership can be exercised only by Spirit-filled men. Other qualifications for spiritual leadership are desirable. To be Spirit-filled is indispensable." – J. Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Leadership

Discuss "Leaders must understand, as Christ did, that their role is to seek the Father's will and to adjust their lives to him." How can leaders adjust their lives in this way? Give concrete examples. In what ways do you need to adjust your life in the week ahead?

Consider

"The truth is God is on mission to redeem humanity. He is the only one who knows how to do it." Would any human's "vision" have put in place the plan of salvation? How, then, can we understand the role we each play in the Father's will and adjust our lives accordingly?



Reflections on Following The LEADER EVANGELISM

Essence

Christlike servant leaders must understand whom they serve. On the topic of servant leadership, there is some confusion about whom leaders actually serve. Spiritual leaders are not their people's servants; they are God's. The account of Jesus washing his disciples' feet is often cited in discussions of servant leadership, and rightly so. But Scripture only records an account of Jesus doing this once. If Jesus had been a servant to his disciples, he would have washed their feet every evening. If he had been his disciples' servant, he would have granted Peter's request to be excluded from the foot washing. But Jesus was not trying to give his followers what they wanted; he was determined to give them what his Father wanted to give them. Jesus' response to Peter, therefore, was "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me" (John 13:8). The disciples did not set the agenda for Jesus' ministry. The Father did. Jesus was the Father's servant not theirs. Even as Jesus served his disciples, there was no question in anyone's mind that he was still their Lord.

Jesus served the twelve because that was what the Father wanted him to do that evening. Jesus was always aware that he was the teacher and the 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 ethos of his kingdom.

Spiritual leaders ought to serve their people. But their acts of service should be motivated and directed by the Holy Spirit. When leaders are not afraid to roll up their sleeves and serve their people, they encourage a corporate culture in which people willingly serve one another. When people serve each other ungrudgingly, they forge a unity that enables their organization to accomplish far more than if individuals worked on their own. Servanthood breaks down barriers and eliminates turf wars. Jesus' disciples needed to understand that they were servants of the Lord and because of this, they would be called upon to serve one another. When the disciples learned this lesson, they were ready to turn their world upside down.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

🗣 Discuss

- Discuss how a proper understanding of whose servant a leader is helps in effectively carrying out one's calling.
- Some assert that servant leadership means trying to please everyone or doing what people want. Using Biblical texts, explain why you believe this to be true/ untrue.
- Discuss how structure and servant leadership work together, using Acts 6:1-7 as a starting point.



Reflections on Following The LEADER Service

Essence

It's a wonderful day indeed when we stop working for God and begin working with God. (Go ahead, read the sentence again.)

For years I viewed God as a compassionate CEO and my role as a loyal sales representative. He had his office, and I had my territory. I could contact him as much as I wanted. He was always a phone or fax away. He encouraged me, rallied behind me, and supported me, but he didn't go with me. At least I didn't think he did. Then I read 2 Corinthians 6:1: We are "God's fellow workers" (NIV).

Fellow workers? Colaborers? God and I work together? Imagine the paradigm shift this truth creates. Rather than report to God, we work with God. Rather than check in with him and then leave, we check in with him and then follow. We are always in the presence of God. We never leave church. There is never a nonsacred moment! His presence never diminishes. Our awareness of his presence may falter, but the reality of his presence never changes.

– Max Lucado, Just Like Jesus

May the mind of Christ my savior Live in me from day to day, By his love and power controlling All I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly In my heart from hour to hour, So that all may see I triumph Only through his power.

May the peace of God my father Rule my life in everything, That I may be calm to comfort Sick and sorrowing.



May the love of Jesus fill me, As the waters fill the sea; Him exalting, self abasing This is victory.

May I run the race before me, Strong and brave to face the foe, Looking only unto Jesus, As I onward go.

– Katie Barclay Wilkinson

Grant, O Lord my God, that I may never fall away in success or failure; that I may not be prideful in prosperity nor dejected in adversity. Let me rejoice only in what unites us and sorrow only in what separates us. May I strive to please no one or fear to displease anyone except yourself. May I seek always the things which are eternal and never those that are only temporal. – St. Thomas Aquinas

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

- Visit an orphanage sing; perform skits
- Identify children of prisoners to mentor





Reflections on Christ Our Example LEADERSHIP

Essence

[Jesus] refused to be guided by anything other than his high call. His heart was purposeful. Most lives aim at nothing in particular and achieve it. Jesus aimed at one goal – to save humanity from its sin. He could summarize his life with one sentence: "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10 RSV). Jesus was so focused on his task that he knew when to say, "My time has not yet come" (John 2:4) and when to say, "It is finished" (John 19:30). But he was not so focused on his goal that he was unpleasant.

Quite the contrary. How pleasant were his thoughts! Children couldn't resist Jesus. He could find beauty in lilies, joy in worship, and possibilities in problems. He would spend days with multitudes of sick people and still feel sorry for them. He spent over three decades wading through the muck and mire of our sin yet still saw enough beauty in us to die for our mistakes.

– Max Lucado, Just Like Jesus

Why did Jesus rise early to pray? He knew that maintaining an intimate relationship with his Father was the single most important thing he could do. Why did Jesus occasionally escape the crowds in order to spend time teaching his disciples? He knew it was important to invest time training his disciples. Why did Jesus associate with outcasts and sinners such as Zaccheus and the woman at the well? He knew it was for the spiritually needy that he had come. Why did Jesus spend time with friends such as Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany? He knew it was good to have close friends. Jesus enjoyed such a close relationship with his Father that he always recognized what his Father **Consider**ed to be important. Since Jesus understood what was critical, he knew how and where to invest his time.

Once leaders clearly understand God's will, deciding how to invest their time becomes much simpler.

Spiritual leaders ask questions such as: What is God's will? In light of his will, what are the important things? What are the tasks he's asking me to do? Leaders always begin by investing their time in the most important things. If anything must be neglected in leaders' lives, it should always be the less critical activities. If leaders never take time to determine their priorities, however, they will invariably spend inordinate amounts of time on projects that are extraneous to their main purpose. Knowing God's will is indispensable for spiritual leaders.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Scripture

Christ's calling was ultimately to die, yet this doesn't seem to overwhelm him or make him depressed or cynical. Discuss the following verses in light of this:

Luke 4 :18	
Matthew 4:1	
Luke 4:1	
Luke 4:14	

What do these verses *mean*? How can you apply them as you follow God's calling in your own life? **DISCUSS** "Without the Spirit's activity, people may be leaders, but they are not spiritual leaders." – Blackaby

Look up the following verses indicating some of Christ's habits, from whom he took instruction, and the results:

Luke 4:16	
Luke 4:4,8,12,2	21
Luke 5:16	
Mark 1:30-39	
Luke 6:12-13	
John 5:19	
John 5:30	

Look up the following verses – and identify others – regarding Jesus' purpose for coming to earth:

Matthew 20:28	3	
1 John 3:8b		
John 3:16-17		

How does understanding Jesus' purpose on earth help put everything else he did in context? If his purpose had been anything else – teaching, healing, alleviating hunger – his death on the cross would have cut that short...

	Read the following Scripture and discuss the role prayer played in these leaders' lives:
Nehe	miah 1
2 Chr	onicles 30
Acts 1	
Contr	ast with 1 Samuel 12:6-23 and 1 Chronicles 10:13-14.



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Contrast: "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

"It's fine to pray and ask God what he wants to do through your church. But I prefer to be proactive rather than reactive." – anonymous pastor

Discuss how leaders – busy people of action who want results and are on tight schedules – can realize the importance of prayer instead of resenting what may feel like a waste of precious time.

♥ Discuss

"Biblical praying can be the most challenging, exhausting, laborious, and yet rewarding thing leaders ever do." – Blackaby

Consider

What is your mission, your purpose on earth? Why have you been placed here? How does understanding this put everything else in your life into proper perspective? What boundaries are necessary to establish to say 'no' to the 'good' at times in order to say 'yes' to the 'right'? (Mark 1:35-39)

Take time to determine your priorities, identifying those things central to your main purpose and those extraneous. Are there "less critical activities" you need to be neglecting to ensure you're investing your time in the most important things?



Reflections on Christ Our Example DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

Howard Gardner, in his book Leading Minds, suggests that there are both direct and indirect forms of leadership. Whereas Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin wielded direct influence over others, thinkers such as Albert Einstein exercised indirect influence over people that in many ways was more profound and long-lasting than direct leadership. Thinkers lead with their minds. They cut new paths through traditional ways of thinking and solving problems. They envision new paradigms. They break through stereotypical, limiting traditions and offer fresh insights into organizational effectiveness.

Consider Jesus, the perfect model of leadership. This is how he led. Although he had a small coterie of disciples, he exerted tremendous influence through his teaching. Jesus spent great amounts of time studying Scripture and praying. Jesus told his disciples, "All things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). As a result, Christ radically challenged the commonly accepted beliefs and customs of his day. He presented a profoundly different view of God and of salvation than was commonly held. In his Sermon on the Mount, he put forth a standard of living that was breathtakingly fresh and different than anyone had ever imagined. Jesus commanded no armies; he controlled no organizations; he had no access to large treasuries; yet his influence has endured and multiplied for over two thousand years.

It has been the thinkers who have exerted the longest-lasting influence on world history. In fact, the timeline of history can be divided according to the emergence of leaders who envisioned reality differently than people had previously understood it. Historians mark the beginning of the Protestant Reformation from the time an insignificant German monk named Martin Luther questioned the commonly accepted thinking about God and man. Likewise, his namesake, Martin Luther King Jr. dared to challenge the commonly accepted status quo of his generation.

Such significant leadership does not come primarily by doing, but by thinking. Society shaking, world-changing, history-making thought is not produced by lackadaisical, lazy minds. Warren Bennis laments that too many of today's leaders suffer from what he calls "celibacy of the intellect." These are people of action who seldom stop to **Consider** whether their actions are appropriate or effective.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Scripture

Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). In what ways does this "envision reality differently than people had previously understood it"? Discuss what Oswald Chambers terms "Kingdom sense" (as opposed to "common" sense), as demonstrated in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12).

When was the last time you truly studied the Word of God and let it *transform* you? Have group members share their favorite transformative passages and discuss. [Romans 8 and Philippians 2:1-11 are good places to start...]

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss the idea of direct and indirect leadership. What examples of each can you think of? What is the role for each? Are the two mutually exclusive? What kind of leadership do you exert?

It's been said that some people are "so heavenly minded that they're no earthly good." In light of the above, as well as other examples in the Bible and beyond, explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.

Consider

"That cool pair of shoes your mom bought for your birthday was all about YOU: they were for you to enjoy and to keep for yourself. But the presents you receive from the Holy Spirit – your spiritual gifts – are given to you for everyone else. That's right! God doesn't give these gifts for us to hoard and enjoy for our own benefit. Each one of them is designed to help the church and to help us be like Christ to other people." – VanEck



Reflections on Christ Our Example EVANGELISM

Essence

Lead-er n one in charge or command of others

Ser-vant n one who expresses submission, recognizance, or debt to another person **Par-a-dox** n a seemingly contradictory statement that may nonetheless be true

The idea of servant leadership is really the ultimate paradox. It didn't make sense to the disciples when Jesus explained it to them, and it doesn't make sense to us now. The leader is supposed to be the one in charge – the master, so to speak. And the servant is the one who serves the master – right?

Not according to Jesus. The disciples have pegged Jesus as the next king: and he is – only he is a different kind of king than they've imagined. When they begin to argue about who is the most powerful among them, Jesus turns their suppositions upside down: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave to all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43-45).

Imagine how blown away those disciples must have been. Imagine what they must have been thinking, *This guy is gonna be the next king, and I'm right in line to be his number one guy! Sweet!* Instead Jesus tells them they have to be like servants.

Truthfully, we're not any different from the disciples. ... "Servant leadership is so radical, so heavenly, we have missed it." In fact, servant leadership is so radical that it really defies everything our culture teaches us about leadership. It was true in Jesus' day, and it's true today.

Servant leadership is a choice. It doesn't matter what your spiritual gifts are, whether or not you are popular, or even whether or not you like to serve others. Every leader in the kingdom of God is expected to lead by serving.

– Denise VanEck, Leadership 101



Scripture

Read the book of Ruth and note the types of service Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz perform. Be sure to note ways in which they give of their authority wisdom, experience, time, energy, youth, strength, wealth, position, and other resources.

Read the following passages and compare the fleeting praise of men and the esteem of God:

1att. 3:17	
uke 9:35	
bhn 1:46	
ſt 21:8-11; 27:21-25	

Lk 4:14-30

Throughout Jesus' life, at his death, and finally through the resurrection, God the Father exalted his Son – Jesus never promoted himself even when Satan tried to entice him to do so. This is the pattern of true spiritual leadership. When spiritual leaders pursue the praise and respect of others, they may achieve their goal, but they also have their reward in full. Some people solicit awards, positions, and honors from others. If they succeed, they will be esteemed but their honor will come from people, not God. Those who seek God's affirmation receive a true and lasting honor.

– Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

♥ Discuss

- "[Jesus] asks us to be servants who lead, not just leaders who serve." VanEck
- What is the difference between servant leadership and acts of service? Give examples.
- "Being a servant leader is about attitude first and then action." VanEck
- What is the distinction between being a servant and being a slave?



Reflections on Christ Our Example Service

Think about this for a minute: God gave you the spiritual gift to lead, a temperament he specifically created for you, and specific work he intended you to do – so why step out and lead without him? That's like an athlete playing an entire game without talking to the coach. How would the player know what strategy the coach had in mind? Or it would be like a server in a restaurant trying to tell the cook what to prepare without first consulting the customer. Is it possible to do? Of course. Is it a good idea? Not at all.

– Denise VanEck, Leadership 101

Run,

Man of the world! Run to the volume knobs Of raucous radio, Silver screen, And constant chatter. You dare not stop! Somehow you've found that silence Is for hearing Echoes of emptiness.

Run,

Man of God! Run to the quiet control Of bended knees, Open Bible And constant communion. You dare not stop! Somehow you've found that silence Is for hearing God's still voice.



- Susan Lenzkes

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS:

- Reading to individuals who are blind or have low vision
- Helping to refurbish a group home for individuals with developmental or other disabilities; spend time with the residents





Reflections on Compassion for One's Followers Leadership

Essence

To Lead Like Jesus, You Must Love Like Jesus

Everything that you attempt in trying to lead like Jesus hangs in the balance of your response to the question that Jesus asked Peter: "Do you love Me?" Your answer should not be given lightly because Jesus will take it seriously. Your answer will reveal your true motivations for all you have done. Like Peter, all of us have given Jesus good reason to doubt our sincerity. We all fall short – sometimes in soul-shaming ways that we can hardly admit to ourselves, let alone to the One we have failed.

Do you love God enough to love His lost sheep?

- Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, Lead Like Jesus

Before Jesus commissioned Peter to be a shepherd, he asked him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others do?" He asked him again, "Do you love me?" And a third time he asked: "Do you love me?" (John 21:15-17). We have to hear that question as being central to all of our Christian ministry because it is the question that can allow us to be, at the same time, irrelevant and truly self-confident.

Look at Jesus. The world did not pay any attention to him. He was crucified and put away. His message of love was rejected by a world in search of power, efficiency, and control. But there he was, appearing with wounds in his glorified body to a few friends who had eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand. This rejected, unknown, wounded Jesus simply asked, "Do you love me, do you really love me?" He whose only concern had been to announce the unconditional love of God had only one question to ask, "Do you love me?"

The question is not: How many people take you seriously? How much are you going to accomplish? Can you show some results? But: Are you in love with Jesus? Perhaps another way of putting the question would be: Do you know the incarnate God? In our world of loneliness and despair, there is an enormous need for men and women who know the heart of God, a heart that forgives, cares, reaches out and wants to heal. In that heart there is no suspicion, no vindictiveness, no resentment, and not a tinge of hatred. It is a heart that wants only to give love and receive love in response. It is a heart that suffers immensely because it sees the magnitude of human pain and the great resistance to trusting the heart of God who wants to offer consolation and hope.

The Christian leader of the future is the one who truly knows the heart of God as it has become flesh, "a heart of flesh," in Jesus. Knowing God's heart means consistently, radically, and very concretely to announce and reveal that God is love and only love, and that every time



fear, isolation, or despair begins to invade the human soul, this is not something that comes from God. This sounds very simple and maybe even trite, but very few people know that they are loved without any conditions or limits.

– Henri J.M. Nouwen, In the Name of Jesus

Scripture

Read the following texts. Can you believe that these promises are meant for you personally and not simply general in nature? Share some other Biblical promises of significance to you.

Romans 8:38-39	Mathew 11:28-30	John 3:16
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Read Matthew 14:15-21 and note the difference between how Jesus and the disciples view the people. Read for the beginning of chapter 14 to understand the incredible circumstances under which this event occurs.

What do the following texts reveal regarding those that would be followers of Christ and servant-leaders?

Romans 14	
1 Peter 5:5	
Luke 14:11	
Php. 2:1-11	
Acts 2:44-47	
Romans 12:2	

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

In light of Matthew 14, discuss how your reactions / daily life might look different if you truly recognized the value of people in the way that Jesus did. What can you do to see people more like God does?

♥ DISCUSS "In the past, and as recently as a year ago, my ideas of true leadership were skewed. I thought being a leader meant being the receiver of glory and the holder of control. ... Eventually I realized it felt [fake] because I was doing it for all the wrong reasons. I wasn't leading because I was passionate about the cause but rather because I was passionate about the control. If I've learned anything since then, it's that leadership isn't about you. It's about those you are leading and where you're leading them. Leadership is a behind-the-scenes sacrifice that results in a great sense of accomplishment when you view the successes of others. I've learned that rather than leadership being equal to dictatorship it should be synonymous with servanthood." – Beth Groner, age 19



Consider

A teenager once said to former missionary Avery Willis, "I am afraid that if I really surrender to God that He will send me to Africa as a missionary." Avery replied, "If someone says they will do anything you ask, would you punish them by making them do what they did not want to do? God loves you and He will only ask you to do what is for His glory and your good. Now He might have to change your heart so you are willing. Ask any missionary in Africa and he or she will tell you they are happier in the middle of God's love in Africa than they would be anywhere else in the world."

- Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, Lead Like Jesus



Reflections on Compassion for One's Followers DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

The primary purpose of spiritual leaders is not to achieve their goals but to accomplish God's will. [Max] Depree says, "Reaching goals is fine for an annual plan. Only reaching one's potential is fine for a life." Leaders can achieve their goals and yet be out of God's will. Reaching goals is not necessarily a sign of God's blessing. Spiritual leaders do not use their people to accomplish their goals; their people are the goal. Spiritual leaders have a God-given responsibility to do all they can to lead their people on to God's agenda.

...Leaders who strive for and even achieve their goals, but whose people suffer and fall by the wayside in the process, have failed as leaders. Using people to achieve organizational goals is the antithesis of spiritual leadership. ...In God's eyes, how something is done is as important as what is done. The end does not justify the means in God's kingdom. Getting results can make leaders look good. God's way magnifies God's name.

...The apostle Paul did not claim that his purpose was to do everything perfectly. Instead, he declared his aim was to "proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me" (Col. 1:28-29).

...The ultimate goal of spiritual leadership is not to achieve numerical results alone, or to do things with perfection, or even to grow for the sake of growth. It is to take their people from where they are to where God wants them to be. God's primary concern for all people is not results, but relationship. People's call to be in a right relationship with God takes precedence over their occupation. Calling comes before vocation.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Scripture

Find examples of how Paul (and others) developed people, taking them from spiritual immaturity to maturity, from disobedience to obedience, from faithlessness to fruitfulness. Be sure to explore the incident with Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark. How did Paul learn from this failure of his to develop John Mark? What do Barnabas' actions teach us? (Note the meaning of his name...)

According to Exodus 19:4, why did God deliver the Israelites from Egypt? Read through Hebrews 11 and distinguish between the tangible promises and the relationship building in which God was engaged with each of these "heroes of faith."

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

🗣 Discuss

- "Reaching goals is fine for an annual plan. Only reaching one's potential is fine for a life."
- "Leaders can achieve their goals and yet be out of God's will."
- "Spiritual leaders do not use their people to accomplish their goals; their people are the goal."
- "The true leader regards the welfare of others rather than his own comfort and prestige as of primary concern. He manifests sympathy and concern for those under him in their problems, difficulties, and cares, but it is a sympathy that fortifies and stimulates, not that softens and weakens. He will always direct their confidence to the Lord. He sees in each emergency a new opportunity for helpfulness. It is noteworthy that when God chose a leader to follow the great Moses, He chose Joshua, the man who had proved himself a faithful servant (Exod. 33:11)." Sanders

Consider

If God is looking to build relationships, can a spiritual leader take people to places they have never been? In what ways does your relationship with God need to be strengthened in order to further your leadership? Why is it so essential, then, that leaders are constantly growing and learning themselves?

What do you need to do to lead people onto God's agenda?



Reflections on Compassion for One's Followers EVANGELISM

Essence

Jesus had it backward.* He was always turning things upside down. ... He told His eager, ambitious followers that servanthood, not leadership ability, was the measure of greatness in God's order of things. "The greatest among you will be your servant," He declared (Matt. 23:10-12, NIV).

And so it would be. Those who followed Him would become known as Christ-ones, the people who had it backward. Their highest vision of the Christian purpose would be to reverse the order and fulfill a mission of service. ...

Over time, however, a problem developed with their dedication to Christian service. The Crusaders, in their zeal to convert, thought they were servants of Christ. And likewise the Conquistadors. But they really didn't have the backward thing down. Like many others who are zealous for right causes, they used the idea of servanthood to conquer, rule and dominate others in Christ's name. They had Christ backward. It is not enough, therefore, to ask whether someone says he or she is serving Christ. There are bad servants as well as good servants....

As Christians we could celebrate the institutionalization of the good servant. Ours is finally a society of caring, helping, curing servanthood. We laud the value of professional servanthood and pay for it generously. It would be interesting to know, however, what Christ might see in our society of servants, given His tendency toward getting things backward. Would He still have it backward? Would He even reject a society of good servants?

The answer is, probably not, unless He saw good servants becoming lords. ...On the other hand, if He found servants caught up in commercialized systems of control, He would certainly insist that we still didn't get it – that our servanthood had become lordship. The question, then, is whether we are a [society] of good servants or lords of commercialized systems of service that attempt to exert control.

I wonder if the reality of humanness will always make servanthood into lordship. It may be that there is no way to define service in order to keep from making it a system of control. With all our Christian devotion to the idea of service, could it be that service is an inadequate ideal, a value so easily corrupted that we should question its usefulness?

At the Last Supper, Christ was telling the disciples those things of greatest importance. It was His final opportunity to communicate the central values of the faith. "No longer do I call you servants," He said, "for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father, I have made known to you" (John 15:15).

Finally, Christ said you are not servants. You know the Father's heart. You know the inside story. You are friends.



Perhaps beyond the revolutionary Christian mandate of service is the final revolution, the possibility of being friends. Friends are people who know each other, who care, respect, struggle and are committed through time. Christ's mandate to be friends is a revolutionary idea in our serving society.

Why friends rather than servants? Perhaps it is because He knew that servants could always become lords but that friends could not. Professional servants may operate on the assumption that "you will be better because I know better," but friends believe that "we will be better because we share in each others' lives." Servants are people who know the mysteries that can control those to whom they give "help." Friends, on the other hand, are free to give and receive help from each other.

Here we are... professional servers, following Christ's mandate to serve. And here He is, at the final moment, getting it backward once again. The final message is not to serve. Rather, He directs us to be friends.

*adapted from the essay "On the Backwardness of Prophets" in John McKnight's penetrating book The Careless Society-Community and Its Counterfeits (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

- Robert D. Lupton, Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life

Scripture

Read John 13:1-17. What servant leadership principles are evident in this passage?

Read the Sermon on the Mount. List all the ways in which Jesus "got it backward." Can you think of other examples? Are you getting it backward, or do you need to reorient your life to His priorities?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)



Discuss

- "Leaders who are unable to love their people and who are unwilling to consider their needs are insecure in their own identity." (Blackaby) In light of this quote, compare and contrast Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet with the corporate scandals of recent years
- Discuss the continuum of lordship-servanthood-friendship. How is it that servanthood can sometimes devolve into another form of lordship, exerting control? How can we keep this from happening?



Reflections on Compassion for One's Followers SERVICE

Outable Quotes

Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's Theory of Relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theorem of thermo-dynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

- Martin Luther King

What Is Success?

Success is being friendly when another needs a friend; It's in the cheery words you speak, and in the coins you lend; Success is not alone in skill and deeds of daring great; It's in the roses that you plant beside your garden gate.

Success is in the way you walk the paths of life each day; It's in the little things you do and in the things you say; Success is in the glad hello you give your fellow man; It's in the laughter of your home and all the joys you plan.

Success is not in getting rich or rising high to fame; It's not alone in winning goals which all men hope to claim; It's in the man you are each day, through happiness or care; It's in the cheery words you speak and in the smile you wear.

Success is being big of heart and clean and broad of mind; It's being faithful to your friends, and to the stranger, kind; It's in the children whom you love, and all they learn from you-Success depends on character and everything you do.

– Edgar A. Guest



Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

- Adopt a nearby park to clean up
- Help an elderly community member clean their house and make minor repairs





Reflections on Leadership Principles – Abraham Leadership

Essence

Abraham Was an Ordinary Person

Abraham was born in Ur among the moon-worshipping Chaldeans. Abraham's agenda for his life was probably not complicated. He likely planned to live out his days raising his herds and flocks. His wife Sarah was unable to bear children, so parenthood would not factor into Abraham and Sarah's plans. God's agenda was radically different from Abraham's. God's plan for Abraham was not that he live a settled life without children, but that he become a nomadic patriarch. Abraham would become father to a holy nation. His life would be a spiritual example to God's people for thousands of years. The Messiah would be Abraham's descendant. Abraham's life would prove to be a pivotal point in history. Generations of believers would find inspiration and eternal salvation because of Abraham's life. To say that God's plans dwarfed Abraham's plans would be an understatement! The key was not for God to bless Abraham's plans but for Abraham to discard his agenda in favor of God's will.

It is not surprising that, since God had so much in store for Abraham, he took time to prepare him thoroughly. Spiritual leadership does not happen by accident. It develops as God matures people in their character as well as in their relationship with him. Character includes wisdom, integrity, honesty, and moral purity. Relationship involves trust in God, obedience to him, and love for him. Although God often used people who appeared to be the least likely candidates for true leadership, the common denominator was that these people were all upright in character and they walked closely with him (1 Sam. 16:7). The greater God's assignment, the greater the character and the closer the relationship with God that is required (Matt. 25:23).

The Bible gives numerous examples showing how God chose and developed people to serve him. These men and women were as diverse as people can be from one another, and God's call on each person's life was unique. Abraham's life is just one example of how God develops leaders, but its extensive biblical coverage clearly identifies the key aspects to God's leadershipdevelopment process.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Scripture

Read Acts 7:2-4 and Genesis 11:31-32. What foundation did God lay for Abraham?

What other Biblical examples can you identify of God working through successive generations to bring His promises to fruition?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

DISCUSS "It is not surprising that, since God had so much in store for Abraham, he took time to prepare him thoroughly." Identify different stages in Abraham's life in which God was preparing him. Did Abraham get it right every time?

Consider

Looking back on your life, to date, identify some ways in which God has prepared you.



Reflections on Leadership Principles – Abraham DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

Abraham Built Spiritual Landmarks

Abraham's spiritual pilgrimage can be traced by examining the altars he built. Every time Abraham came to a milestone in his life, or whenever he learned something new about God, he built an altar. ...

Each altar provided a testimonial to Abraham's growth in understanding God's ways and to his trust in God. For today's leaders, spiritual markers provide a backdrop by which they can see where God has helped them mature in their relationship with him. God's current instructions are always best understood in light of the knowledge of all he has done in a leader's life so far....

Abraham Learned by Experience

Abraham's understanding of God was not theoretical. He didn't learn it from books. He learned it through encounters with God. Each time God revealed a new facet of his character to Abraham, it was through experience. ...

Abraham Was Not Allowed to Take Shortcuts

Abraham's life shows that attaining spiritual maturity is a lifelong process. Spiritual leaders don't take shortcuts. Genesis 16 details a low point in Abraham's life. Despite the incredible covenant God made with him to make him the father of countless descendants, the fact was that he remained childless. At this crucial time of testing, Abraham listened to the counsel of people instead of listening to God. His wife, Sarah, advised him to produce a child through her servant Hagar, this was a commonly accepted practice in Abraham's day it was worldly reasoning at its best, but it was not God's way. ...

Spiritual leaders court disaster when they panic and assume they must take matters in their own hands. When spiritual leaders wait patiently on the Lord, regardless of how long it takes, God always proves himself absolutely true to his word.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Scripture

Look up the fol	llowing texts and note what Abraham learned of God:
Gen 12:7	
Gen 12:8	
Gen 13:14-18	
Gen 15:1	

Read Joshua 4. Note that monuments are not erected simply for our own remembrance, but to

Read Joshua 4. Note that monuments are not erected simply for our own remembrance, but to share with others. What have you learned of God through your experience that you need to share with others?



Reflections on Leadership Principles – Abraham Evangelism

Essence

Abraham Demonstrated His Faith

By the time Abraham was a senior citizen, God had developed him into a godly husband and father. Still, God had even greater plans for him. God intended for Abraham to be more than a father to Isaac; he wanted him to be the father of the faithful, a model of faithfulness for the rest of time. For this, Abraham had to advance farther in his relationship with God than anyone had gone before. In order to develop a great faith in God, Abraham was asked to make the most difficult decision of his life. "Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, of which I will tell you,' So Abraham arose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him" (Gen. 22:1-3).

There was no mistaking what God was asking. The question was: would Abraham obey? Most of the time, the problem with Christian leaders is not that they don't know what God wants them to do. The problem is that they know only too well, but they are unwilling to do it.

...Through obedience, people experience God working through their lives and they come to know more about God's character. ... Abraham received the single most difficult assignment God had ever given to any man, and he obeyed without hesitation. In passing this test, Abraham not only went deeper in his relationship with God; he also demonstrated his readiness to be a great leader of God's people. ...

Far more hinged on Abraham's obedience than he first realized. Abraham came to understand that his actions did not affect him alone, but his obedience to God would impact generations to follow.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Compare Abraham's response when God called him with the response of Adam after the original sin. What does our response to God's calling say about the state of our heart?

Have those that are willing share examples from their lives – of either obedience or disobedience – when there was no mistaking what God was asking. Explain why you agree/ disagree with the author's statement that "the problem with Christian leaders is not that they don't know what God wants them to do," but that they are unwilling to do it.

Share some things you have learned through first-hand experience about God's character? How does learning from experience differ from learning simply by hearing about?

Discuss the idea that our obedience to God can impact generations to follow, and is not simply about us or even the here-and-now.



Reflections on Leadership Principles – Abraham Service

Essence

Abraham Became a Friend of God

What was the result of God's work in Abraham's life over the years? He became a godly man; he became the patriarch of a nation; he became father of the faithful. But God's activity in Abraham's life helped him to become something even more important than all of these things Abraham became a friend of God (2 Chron. 29:7; Isa. 41:8). It is one thing to call God your friend. It is quite another for God to call you his friend. Abraham is the only person to whom **Scripture** gives this distinction. "And the **Scripture** was fulfilled which says, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,' and he was called the friend of God" (James 2:23).

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

- Start a scholarship fund to send young people in your community to camp for the summer who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity
- Leave gift baskets of non-perishable food anonymously for those in your community that might need it Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets are traditionally done, but imagine the unmet need in the middle of the year!





Reflections on Obedience LEADERSHIP

Essence

In Jesus Christ, God is revealed to us as a God of compassion. This divine compassion is God's being with us as a suffering servant...

But this is not the whole story of God's compassion. There is an element which we need to explore in depth in order to gain yet another glimpse of the mystery of God's infinite love for us. In Jesus Christ, God's compassion is not made manifest simply by becoming a suffering servant, but by becoming a suffering servant in obedience. Obedience gives servanthood its deepest dimension.

Often we experience a strong desire to offer our services to our fellow human beings in need. At times we even dream about giving up our lives to the poor and living in solidarity with those who suffer. Sometimes these dreams lead to generous actions, to good and worthwhile projects, and to weeks, months, and even years of dedicated work. But the initiative still remains ours. We decide when we go and when we return; we decide what to do and how to do it; we control the level and intensity of our servanthood. Although much good work gets done in these situations, there is always the creeping danger that even our servanthood is a subtle form of manipulation. Are we really servants when we can become masters again once we think we have done our part or made our contribution? Are we really servants when we can say when, where, and how long we will give of our time and energy? Is service in a far country really an expression of servanthood when we keep enough money in the bank to fly home at any moment?

Jesus came to the "far country" because he was sent. Being sent remained uppermost in his consciousness. He never claimed anything for himself. Jesus was the obedient servant who said and did nothing, absolutely nothing, unless it was said and done in complete obedience to the one who sent him.

We are trying to express here what can barely be put into words: In Jesus, God not only reveals compassion as servanthood but also as obedience. The one through whom all things came to be, became the obedient one. Karl Barth writes, "It belongs to the inner life of God that there should take place within it obedience...in himself he is both One who is obeyed and Another who obeys." In Jesus Christ, this inner side of the nature of God becomes visible. In Jesus Christ, we see that God's compassion can never be separated from obedience. Because through Jesus' complete obedience God compassionately entered into our broken, wounded, and painful human condition.

- Henri J.M. Nouwen, Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison, Compassion



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

♥ DISCUSS "Some spiritual leaders try to be more committed. What they need to be is more submitted." – Blackaby

Have group members call out the first things that come to mind when they hear the word "obedience" or "obey." Discuss the results. What negative and positive groupings arise? What makes the difference?

The word obedience is derived from the Latin word *audire*, which means "to listen." How does this help us understand the obedience embodied in Jesus Christ, as well as the obedience to which we are called?

Scripture

Read 1 Samuel 3. Discuss the implications for "listening" and "obedience." Cross reference John 10:4, 27. Note the reciprocal nature of knowing and being known.

Consider

"In order for a leader to be led by God, first she needs to obey him. We sometimes wonder about God's will for our lives. I've found that I often discover the answer to this question when I obey the things he wants me to do - things that are clearly shown in his Word." - VanEck

Write the nine commands within 1 Chronicles 16:8-12 on separate lines, along with your response to each command.



Reflections on Obedience DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

"Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered" - Hebrews 5:8

The scene is set somewhere in Palestine. Jesus is traveling towards Jerusalem with his disciples. James and John sidle up alongside him and say, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask" (v. 35). Jesus replies, "What do you want me to do for you?" (v 36). They respond, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory" (v 37).

Before we condemn them for the arrogance of their request, we need to recognize what spiritual insight it actually revealed. It took awhile, but they have at last recognized that Jesus is no ordinary man. He is God's Messiah – the savior promised in the Old Testament who would come to earth to establish God's kingdom and put everything right. The prophets had said that the new messianic age would be introduced at Jerusalem, so there is understandable excitement as the disciples approach the city with Jesus. There is great faith behind what James and John ask....but they were also motivated by self-interest. There is something of that attitude in all of us. Sadly, we do not lose the selfish instinct as soon as we become believers. We might not put it as bluntly, but so often our concern is also that Jesus should "do for us whatever we ask." We expect the divine genie to come running whenever we rub our prayer lamps....We see our faith as a means of meeting our needs for, or even our "rights" to, happiness and contentment. The rebuke of Jesus in Mark 10 speaks as much to us as to the first disciples. He stresses a message which we desperately need to hear. Authentic Christianity is not marked by self-fulfillment and self-promotion, but rather by suffering and service.

...The religion of James and John is a religion of the world. They wanted a discipleship that would bypass suffering and go straight to glory. But that is not possible. Just as Jesus had to suffer on the cross before he was raised to the right hand of his Father in heaven, so his disciples must endure much hardship before they are raised with him. That is why Jesus responds to them as he does: "You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" (v 38) ...

What happens when there is an apparent conflict between my comfort and Christ's demands? The modern cult of 'selfism' deifies the self – nothing must be allowed to challenge my right to health and happiness. But we Christians should recognize such talk as nothing short of idolatry. There is only one God and I must obey him wherever he leads and whatever it costs. That will not always be easy – living for Christ can be painful.

The pain for us might come in the area of personal morality. Jesus says, "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off" (Mark 10:43). The world tells us that it does not really matter how we behave as long as we do not cause any serious harm to others. But Jesus comes to us with a



very difference message. We are to be willing to go through agony to get rid of sin...his words leave us in no doubt that we should go to any effort to get rid of wrongdoing in our lives. Are we prepared for the suffering that might be involved in that? For some that has meant ending a precious relationship or friendship.... Others have endured the shame of confessing some secret sin because they acknowledged that they needed help to break its power. Bring to mind the areas of your life in which you know you are disobeying Christ. What do you have to do to get rid of that sin? Are you prepared to do that, however difficult it might be?

Living for Christ might affect our relationship with others. Perhaps you are conscious that if you lived a consistent Christian life at home or work [or school] or among your social group, you may lose some friends. They will not understand why you do not join in with all they do. Most people are quite happy for us to be Christians as long as we do not take it all too seriously. How tempting it is to compromise. We become domesticated – very comfortable to live with, but spineless. Christ challenges us to put him first in all situations, whatever the cost.

- Vaughan Roberts, Distinctives: Daring to be Different in an Indifferent World

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

- Discuss
 - Discuss the implications of suffering (1 Peter 2:21) and service (John 13:15) being the only explicit examples Jesus left us. How are the two related?
 - Discuss the idea of God as a "divine genie." Elsewhere, the analogy of an ATM has also been used, where we simply go to God to get something. What other analogies come to mind regarding the proper/improper way in which we interact with God?
 - "What happens when there is an apparent conflict between my comfort and Christ's demands?"
 - "Most people are quite happy for us to be Christians as long as we do not take it all too seriously."
 - "The world tells us that it does not really matter how we behave as long as we do not cause any serious harm to others. But Jesus comes to us with a very difference message. We are to be willing to go through agony to get rid of sin....his words leave us in no doubt that we should go to any effort to get rid of wrongdoing in our lives. Are we prepared for the suffering that might be involved in that?"
 - "Humanly viewed, suffering is dangerous. But even more terrible is failing to learn obedience!" Søren Kierkegaard
 - "Without suffering you cannot really learn obedience. Suffering is the very guarantee that obedience is not self-willfulness." Søren Kierkegaard
 - "Knowing and experiencing God is a progressive endeavor that depends on obedience. Blackaby
 - "Followers are much more motivated to support leaders who demonstrate faithful service to God." Blackaby



Consider

Frustrated that God is not blessing your zeal to do great things for him? Examine your recent track record. Have you been faithful in the smaller assignments? Are you measuring success the way God does? Remember, God's Son received the highest assignment and it culminated in a cross. [adapted from Blackaby]

Considering the following, explore any link between suffering, service, obedience, and Sabbath:

This is the key to finding rest in your suffering. There is only one way in which rest is to be found: to let God rule in everything. ... as soon as unrest begins, the cause for it is due to your unwillingness to obey, your unwillingness to surrender yourself to God. – Søren Kierkegaard



Reflections on Obedience Evangelism

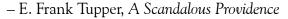
Essence

The cool of the mountain air was refreshing, and the view simply magnificent. He surveyed all the kingdoms of the world in their power and glory. Wherever the horizon touched kingdoms without number, Imperium Rome already ruled and plundered. A subservient king or appointed governor exercised authority under the banner of the empire. The legions of Rome had not only conquered these lands but had enforced the power of Caesar over them.

...Of course, he understood the truth of military occupation and political subjugation. Caesar had "pharaohed" the Israel of God into another Egypt. What could he do? Whatever he failed to do in Israel, he certainly could not accomplish among the kingdoms of the world. The unguarded Whisper promised: "You can have them all." But how? The Kingdom of God must displace the rule of Rome: kingdom against kingdom, army against army, sword against sword. The Zealots would hear his charismatic call, and they would follow him. He could liberate Judah and every other nation from the tyranny of Roman rule to the justice of the rule of God.

The nagging problem remained: Would the violence of conquest contradict the worship and service of God? The truth frustrated his sense of compassion. If he mobilized an army and established peace with the sword, the means to the Kingdom of God – OVERWHELMING FORCE – would contradict the goal of the rule of God – JOYFUL RECONCILIATION. Since the rule of God must conform to the way of God, he made his decision. He would not bow down and worship the god of this world, the power of "might makes right." He shouted angrily, "Get behind me, Satan." He would live in the worship and service of God a servant to the way of love. Although he would never resort to the power of violence, he would risk becoming its victim. And his eyes brimmed with tears.

What does it mean to trust in God? Since temptation is in itself a beguiling lure that distorts faith in God, the temptation narratives clarify the variations in the temptations that Jesus encountered in his life and enable us to discern the distinctive response of trust with which he overcame each of them. Jesus recognized temptation, regardless of its appeal and disguise, and he tenaciously remained faithful to God. Trust in God is the distinctive and appropriate response to temptation. While obedience is sometimes elevated as the essential characterization of Jesus' relationship to God on the basis of selected New Testament texts, the deeper reality that transcends the ambiguity of life is ongoing trust in God, which includes obedience insofar as obedience expresses the more complex action of continual reliance on God. Indeed, Jesus' response to temptation through specific scriptural texts can be construed as acts of obedience, but the capability of Jesus to use **Scripture** to articulate his trust in God is an act of creativity that the category of obedience cannot contain but trust can. Therefore, Jesus confronted temptation with unshakable trust in God that included nonetheless the discipline of obedience.





Scripture

Read the temptation narratives in Matthew 4 and Luke 4:1-13. What were the temptations with which Satan approached Jesus? How do these same temptations manifest themselves in our lives?

We often talk as if this time in the wilderness was the only time Jesus was tempted and, having passed the test, was free from further temptation. Note the temptations in the following texts:

John 6:15					
Matt. 12:38					
Matt. 27:40					
	 	 _	_	 -	

Identify other trials Christ faced. How does this understanding help as you face your own trials and temptations?

Read John 5:19-20, 30. Was Jesus free to "negotiate" the plan of salvation? Are we free to negotiate how God's will is to be accomplished in our lives?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)



Discuss Discuss Satan's overt temptations – there's an easier way, with a lower personal cost and God's way is not necessarily the only option in achieving the desired goals – as well as his more subtle temptation – that saving the world was Jesus' job, so he should develop his own plan to get the job done. What are the potentially devastating consequences of taking the shortcuts Satan offers?

- Discuss the following categorizations of Jesus' wilderness temptations, as put forth by Henri Nouwen: "There he was tempted with the three compulsions of the world: to be relevant ("turn stones into loaves"), to be spectacular ("throw yourself down"), and to be powerful ("I will give you all these kingdoms")."
- Discuss the distinction made in the above passage between "obedience" and "trust." How might the same apply to "honoring" one's parents, as distinguished from the "obedience" preached in many a children's sermon? Explain.



Consider

A sailor on the south coast of England told his chaplain, "Chaplain, you don't understand. You're telling us to walk the straight and narrow path. But you don't realize the temptations we face, the way we're blown and tossed about. We can't really be blamed for what happens to us."

The chaplain drew the sailor's attention to the water, where two sailboats were moving along with their sails flapping in the wind. One was heading west, the other east. The chaplain said, "One boat goes east, one boat goes west by the self-same winds that blow. It's the set of the sails and not the gales that determine which way they go."

Do we have our sails set in the direction of obedience to God? If so, we can go the right way, even if the whole world is blown off course.

-Alastair Begg, The Hand of God



Reflections on Obedience Service

් Quotable Quotes

I have noticed that wherever there has been a faithful following of the Lord in a consecrated soul, several things have inevitably followed, sooner or later. Meekness and quietness of spirit become in time the character of the daily life. A submissive acceptance of the will of God as it comes in the hourly events of each day; pliability in the hands of God to do or to suffer all the good pleasure of his will; sweetness under provocation; calmness in the midst of turmoil and bustle; yieldingness to the wishes of others; and an insensibility to slights and affronts; absence of worry or anxiety; deliverance from care and fear – all these, and many similar graces, are invariably found to be the natural outward development of that inward life which is hid with Christ in God.

– Hannah Whitall Smith

We mustn't be in a hurry to fix and choose our own lot; we must wait to be guided. We are led on, like little children, by a way we know not. It is a vain thought to flee from the work that God appoints us, for the sake of finding a greater blessing to our own souls; as if we could choose for ourselves where we shall find the fullness of the Divine Presence, instead of seeking it where alone it is to be found, in loving obedience.

– George Eliot

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS:

- Build a "Habitat for Humanity" house
- Go out of your way to seek out a non-Christian and witness to them *only* through service





Reflections on Learning Through Failure LEADERSHIP

Essence

Abraham Grew Through Failure [and Experiencing God's Redemption]

Every event in Abraham's life contributed to his character development. Abraham did not begin his life as a paragon of faith, but gradually, over many years, he developed a mature and deep relationship with God. God used Abraham's failures to prepare him for leadership. ...

Why is it so important to follow God's will exactly as it is and not try to add to it so it makes more sense? God's ways are not man's ways. It seems ridiculous for God to call a seventy-fiveyear-old man to have a child and then to spend twenty-five years preparing him for the childrearing task. Yet God had plans for Isaac far beyond what Abraham could ever have imagined. God intended for Isaac to be a patriarch for the people of God. For such an assignment, Isaac required a godly, faithful father....

It is significant to note from biblical examples that God seldom intervened when people were about to make mistakes. Rather, he allowed them to fail, but stood ready to redeem them. Many individuals, through the process of failure and redemption, saw God's character revealed in a deeper dimension than if God had simply stepped in to help them avoid failure. If there is anything leaders must carefully evaluate and process it is their mistakes. By systematically reviewing mistakes and making the necessary adjustments to ensure that the same errors are not repeated, leaders can derive great benefit....

Abraham was far from perfect. He made many mistakes. Yet his heart was open before God, and God chose to develop him into a man of faith. God didn't choose Abraham because of his leadership ability. He chose Abraham because of his heart. The key was not that Abraham attended all the best leadership seminars. The key was that he came to know God and he allowed God to transform him into a leader through his obedience. When people strive to have their hearts right before God, then God promises to "show himself strong" (2 Chron. 16:9).

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Scripture

Explore the following "not-so-stellar" moments – and their implications – in Abraham's journey:

Gen 12:1,4	
Gen 13	
Gen 14	
Gen 18:16-33	
Gen 36-38	
Gen. 12:1-13	
Gen 12:17-19	
Gen 20	
Gen 16	
Gen 21:8-18	

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss

- "Adding to God's will is as devastating as rejecting God's will."
- The Bible is a particularly unique historical record in that it records the mistakes of leaders for all to see, whereas most histories tend to deify leaders and ignore or gloss over anything unflattering. In light of this, discuss the following:
- How can we learn from those that have gone before and avoid the same mistakes?
- What mistakes are you willing to share in your own experience to help others? What would you never want recorded for posterity?
- What seems to have made the difference in how God reacted to people's mistakes? (Consider Abraham; Sarah; Jacob; Moses; Miriam; Aaron; Achan; Eli; Saul; David; Uzzah; Solomon; Josiah; Uzziah; Hezekiah; Balaam; Jonah; Annanias and Sapphira; Thomas; Peter; Paul; etc.)
- "A study of Bible characters reveals that most of those who made history were men who failed at some point, and some of them drastically, but who refused to continue lying in the dust. Their very failure and repentance secured for them a more ample conception of the grace of God....The successful leader is a man who has learned that no failure need be final, and acts on that belief, whether the failure is his own or that of another." – J. Oswald Sanders
- "The worth of a man must be measured by his life, not by his failure under a singular and peculiar trial. Peter the apostle, though forewarned, thrice denied his Master on the first alarm of danger; yet that Master, who knew his nature in its strength and in its infirmity, chose him." Froude



Consider

What are the mistakes God has allowed you to make in your life? What have you learned from these? How can you keep from repeating the same mistake(s)?



Reflections on Learning Through Failure DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

We need the peace of Christ especially in times of failure. In every human failure there are three elements: what happened, and how we react to what happened, and what we allow Christ to give us to change our reaction to what happened. Usually we brood over the failure in our own strength. That almost always leads to remorse and to justifying ourselves by explaining it away or by blaming someone else or some other circumstances. On the other hand, the peace Christ offers is radically different. It is the peace that floods our hearts when we honestly acknowledge whatever part we've had in the failure. When we experience Christ's forgiveness, we can forgive ourselves. Out of that comes the freedom to forgive the people who may have caused the failure. Being a Christian doesn't mean we always have to take the blame, but it does mean that we must forgive. The sooner the better.

Failures bring us back to the death and the resurrection experience of profound peace. When we fail or must forgive someone whose failure has caused us pain, eventually we have to admit we can't handle it ourselves. That shatters our false pride. In a mysterious way that willful person inside us has to die so that the new person Christ wants to make us can live. I think that's a vital part of what it means to take up our cross. Our pride is crucified, we die to our own pride, and out of the ashes of whatever the failure was, we are raised up to a new beginning to live with the calm confidence of Christ's peace and the fear-dispelling strength of his courage. Then we can say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

- J. Lloyd Ogilvie, Turn your Struggles into Stepping Stones

Scripture

Read Genesis 25:19-34; 27; 32-33. Discuss the different elements at play between Jacob and Esau. Discuss how such things can linger over time and cause for unrest when matters have not been settled in a godly way.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 as a reminder of where you strengths really come from. Examine your heart for any ways you've wrongly relied upon your own strength and confess these before the Lord.



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss

- Discuss "how even in times of failure you can take hold of the peace that Christ offers.
- Genesis 3:11-13 as a typical human response to sin. If this is how the first humans responded in the midst of the very first sin, how many more bad reactions have we developed over time? Discuss different ways group members have handled failure in different instances. What seems to be the best response? Why don't we always react this way? Explain.
- Discuss the difficulty of forgiving oneself. Forgiving others? Can you forgive and not forget? Does God? How is forgiveness of others and our own forgiveness related (Mt 6:12)? What are the ramifications of this? Does the other party have to seek forgiveness? Explain, being sure to use Scriptural references.
- Discuss the author's connection of failure, forgiveness, and false pride. Apply this to the story of Jacob and Esau. To your own personal experience?



Reflections On Learning Through Failure EVANGELISM

Essence

Everyone experiences both failure and success in life. The key to leadership development lies not in the experiences, whether good or bad, but in peoples' responses to those experiences. When some people face hardship, they become bitter or fearful and they quit trying. Others suffer similar setbacks, but choose instead to learn from their crises and to become stronger for the experience. The distinguishing characteristic of leaders is that they use their experiences as learning tools and they gain renewed motivation from their failures. Regarding Abraham Lincoln, Donald Phillips concluded: "Everything – failures as well as successes – became stepping stones to the presidency. In this sense, Lincoln's entire life prepared him for his future executive leadership role." Leaders are not people who escape failure, but people who overcome adversity their lives confirm the axiom: "A mistake is an event, the full benefit of which has not yet been turned to your advantage." Failure and personal crises do not disqualify people from becoming leaders. Rather, God can use adversity to build certain qualities deep within one's character that could not be fully developed in any other way.

... The people Moses led failed miserably. Even Aaron, the high priest, shirked his responsibilities. Consequently, the Israelites were sentenced to spend the rest of their days meandering across the desert, shut out of the Promised Land. Moses was not the one who had disobeyed in that instance. He had been faithful, yet God did not release Moses from his people. He was their leader. If ever God's people needed a leader, it was during this period of affliction. Moses spent the remaining forty years of his life wandering in the wilderness, not because of his own failure, but because of the failure of his followers. Too many leaders abandon their people once they fail. Many leaders have justified their abandonment, claiming, "I had to leave that church because no one there wanted to be on mission with God." Or, "My company was hostile to Christianity so I found a more tolerant place to work." The only valid reason for leaving one's leadership position is nothing short of abandoning the people God gave to a leader.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Breakout time (divide into small groups)

Look back on experiences that have gotten you to where you are today. What, at the time, seemed like an utter failure, but now can be seen as an invaluable part of your journey?



- "If ever God's people needed a leader, it was during this period of affliction....Too many leaders abandon their people once they fail."
- "You can deny your own mistakes and shortcomings all day long, but that won't make them go away. And believe me, if you do get away with it, they will pop up again anyway. It's best to do the hard work of searching for the truth in the accusation, deal with it, and grow from it." –VanEck



Reflections On Learning Through Failure Service

් Quotable Quote

Let us all become a true and fruitful branch on the vine of Jesus, By accepting Him in our lives as it pleases Him to come: as the Truth – to be told; as the Life – to be lived; as the Light – to be lighted; as the Love – to be loved; as the Way – to be walked; as the Way – to be given; as the Joy – to be given; as the Peace – to be spread; as the Sacrifice – to be offered, in our families and within our neighborhood. – Mother Teresa

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

- Conduct a recycling drive
- Organize a "clean-up day" for a neighborhood park



2010 is the Year of Leading

Reflections On Leadership Principles – Joseph LEADERSHIP

Essence

How the World Rewards Service

When Potiphar heard his wife's story....he became very angry. So Joseph's master arrested him and put him in the same prison where the king's prisoners were kept. – Genesis 39:19-20

Losing his good reputation and being thrown in prison was certainly Joseph's worst hardship. What disgraceful wages he received for his years of faithful service! All of his impeccable character and hard work were rewarded with punishment and a ruined reputation. We serve, teach, counsel, and comfort, and do what God tells us to do. For the most part, we do this for undeserving people from whom we get nothing in return except hatred, envy, and suffering. It seems that our lives are wasted on being kind to people who don't appreciate it.

Don't ever expect the world to acknowledge or reward your faithfulness and hard work. The opposite often happens, as Joseph's life shows. Therefore, make sure that you direct your service and life elsewhere. Don't look for favor and kindness from the world. Its favor can quickly turn into furious anger.

If you are called as a pastor or teacher, or if you are in some other position, set this goal for yourself: I will do my job faithfully without expecting any reward form the people I serve. I won't assume that they will be grateful to me. Rather, I will bless others the same way my heavenly Father hands out his blessings. He gives money, talents, peace, and health to even the most ungrateful and evil people. I will remember Christ's command, "You must be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). This means that we must serve people who are wicked, undeserving, and ungrateful. A few will acknowledge our service and thank us. But the others might even threaten our lives. Joseph's example shows us what reward we can expect from the world for even the greatest of kindness – being tied up and thrown in prison.

– Martin Luther, By Faith Alone



Scripture

Read Nehemiah 1:1-11 and Ezra 8:15-10:17. Compare and contrast these leaders' responses. How do you respond to bad news?

Identify the principles of servant leadership outlined in the following verses:

Matthew 20:20-28	
Luke 14:7-11	
Mark 10: 32-40	
Mark 10: 41-45	
John 13:3	
John13: 4 – 11	
Acts 6: 1 – 6	
Exodus 18: 17 – 23	

Breakout time (divide into small groups)

Put yourself in Joseph's shoes. How could you keep from being bitter? Assuming you got over your brothers selling you into slavery and prospered for awhile, given your circumstance, how could you keep being thrown in prison from breaking your spirit?



Discuss

- What are your assumptions regarding people in prison. How might Joseph's story alter those conceptions? Consider the thieves at Calvary what does this say about the potential within the hearts of even those on death row? What are the implications for our service?
- Look at the context of Christ command of perfection (Mt 5:48). Of what is he referring? How are we to understand this command?
- "Don't ever expect the world to acknowledge or reward your faithfulness.... Don't look for favor and kindness from the world." How many examples can you find of Christ gaining favor from the world versus examples in which he did not gain favor? Did his approach to ministry change either way? Explain the significance.
- "Tough leaders maximize their God and minimize their position." Rodney Fry



Consider

May I gently but firmly remind you of something you know but may have forgotten? Life is not fair.

That's not pessimism; it's fact. That's not a complaint; it's just the way things are. I don't like it. Neither do you. We want life to be fair. ...But at some point someone needs to say to us, "Who ever told you life was going to be fair?"

God didn't. He didn't say, "If you have many kinds of troubles"...he said, "When you have many kinds of troubles..." Troubles are part of the package. Betrayals are part of our troubles. Don't be surprised when betrayals come. Don't look for fairness here – look instead where Jesus looked.

– Max Lucado



Reflections On Leadership Principles – Joseph DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

God Works in Secret

As the Midianite merchants were passing by, the brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern. They sold him to the Ishmaelites for eight ounces of silver. The Ishmaelites took him to Egypt. – Genesis 37:28

God humbles his people before he elevates them. He kills them in order to bring them back to life. He devastates them before honoring them. He knocks them down in order to pick them up. God's methods show the highest artistry and wisdom. We cannot understand how events like these are a part of God's plan until we see his plan completed. When these events are happening, they can't be understood, except through faith alone.

...But God does everything in secret. We have to be patient while God hides his intentions from us. Jacob and Joseph couldn't see the future prize. But with the sale of Joseph to the Ishmaelites, the future was being prepared. God sees everything as if it has all taken place already. Everything he wants to happen will certainly happen!

Hardships Before Honor

Joseph named his firstborn son Manasseh...because God helped him forget all his troubles.... He named the second son Ephraim...because God gave him children. – Genesis 41:51-52

Joseph became an important ruler in Egypt, and Jacob eventually saw his descendants become a large nation. But both men had to go through hardships first. Joseph learned this lesson firsthand. When naming his sons, he thought, "I was the firstborn son and an heir of a noble mother. But I lost everything, and I had no hope of inheriting anything. One must totally forget any material gain he might find in this world." So Joseph named his son Manasseh in God's honor because God brought him to his knees and to the point where he forgot all about his father's family. Joseph named his other son Ephraim because God had lifted him up again and had given him children. Later, Ephraim received a wonderful blessing from his grandfather, Jacob. Ephraim's descendants would become the powerful tribe we read about in Joshua, Judges, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings.

We learn from this passage that we are brought down before we are raised up. We must become like Joseph. We must be reduced to nothing. Our human natures find this idea very painful and hard to take. All of creation hates destruction and decay. You can't cut down a tree or a bush without hearing a loud crash. Even Christ himself was brought low. He cried out from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matthew 27:46). That's why we should have the same modest attitude as Joseph. Even after receiving honor, he didn't become proud, but remained humble.

– Martin Luther, By Faith Alone



Scripture

Read Zech 3. What is the role of God? Of Joshua? Compare/contrast with Joseph and other biblical characters – how does God's linking his promises to obedience guard against individuals becoming proud as a result of receiving visions, promises, etc.? Discuss the importance of leaders constantly remaining humble and living in the fear of the Lord.

Read Romans 12 and list the admonitions found there:

Breakout time (divide into small groups)

Find biblical examples that support the assertion that "God humbles his people before he elevates them."



Discuss

"We cannot understand how events like these are a part of God's plan until we see his plan completed." What would have happened if someone had rescued Joseph from the pit? How can we show compassion while being careful not to react too early, before seeing God's plan?

Consider

...in the final analysis, forgiveness is an act of faith. By forgiving another, I am trusting that God is a better justice-maker than I am. By forgiving, I release my own right to get even and leave all issues of fairness for God to work out. I leave in God's hands the scales that must balance justice and mercy.

When Joseph finally came to the place of forgiving his brothers, the hurt did not disappear, but the burden of being their judge fell away. Though wrong does not disappear when I forgive, it loses its grip in me and is taken over by God, who knows what to do.

- Philip Yancey, What's So Amazing About Grace?



Reflections On Leadership Principles – Joseph EVANGELISM

Essence

Spiritual leaders can influence all people, not just God's people. An important reality that must not be overlooked is that spiritual leaders can influence all people, not just God's people. God is on mission at the local factory as well as at the local church. His agenda applies in the marketplace as well as the meeting place. Although spiritual leaders will generally move God's people to achieve God's purposes, God can also use them to exert significant godly influence upon unbelievers. The biblical account of Joseph is a case in point. God's plan was to spare the Egyptians from a devastating seven-year famine and, through the Egyptians, to provide food for other Middle Eastern people as well. Pharaoh was an unspiritual leader. He did not understand the message God was giving, so God sent Joseph to advise him. It was Joseph, a man of God who was able to interpret God's warning and to mobilize the pagan nation to respond to God's activity. There may not be anything overtly spiritual about building grain storage bins or developing a food distribution system, but these activities were on God's agenda. God did not choose to use the religious experts of the day. Instead, he chose to make himself known to an unbelieving society through a God-fearing government official.

History is replete with examples of Christian men and women exerting spiritual leadership upon secular society. Christians in business ought not to assume that spiritual leadership is purely the local minister's domain. Spiritual leadership occurs down the middle of everyday life. Henry Blackaby maintains regularly scheduled conference calls with a group of more than sixty CEOs, many from Fortune 500 companies. These are all Christians who want their faith to make a difference in the way they lead their companies. These are influential people: they play golf with world leaders; they serve on prestigious boards; they supervise billions of dollars and thousands of employees. They make time to dialogue regularly with one another about how Christ helps them lead their companies. They are spiritual leaders as well as business leaders. Is this possible? Absolutely!

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership

Scripture

Identify other biblical examples of God's using his people to influence unbelievers. Was it ever God's intention to speak only to Israel? Explain.



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

♥ Discuss

"Spiritual leadership occurs down the middle of everyday life." How are you exerting spiritual leadership in your everyday life? Generate ideas for ways to do this in the week ahead.

Consider

What do you feel called to do with your life vocationally? What might spiritual leadership look like within this context?



Reflections On Leadership Principles – Joseph Service

Story

We don't need leaders who are paralyzed by fear or negative thinking. We need leaders who can see the hand of God in any and every circumstance.

A Georgia farmer, ragged and bare-footed, was standing on the steps of his tumbledown shack. A stranger stopped for a drink of water. "How is your cotton coming along?" he asked. "Ain't got none," replied the farmer. "Did you plant any?" asked the stranger. "Nope," was the reply, "afraid of bollweevils." "Well," continued the stranger, "how is your corn?" "Didn't plant none," came the answer, "'fraid there weren't going to be no rain." The visitor persevered: "Well, how are your potatoes?" "Ain't got none. Scairt of potato bugs." "Really, what did you plant?" pressed the stranger. "Nothin'," was the calm reply, "I jest played it safe."

We need leaders who refuse to "play it safe." We need leaders willing to take great "risks" because they are men of great faith who believe in an even greater God.

- Roger Thomas, Proven Leaders

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

- Provide food and clothing to individuals who are homeless
- Pay someone's rent (anonymously) who is in need
- Have a clothing drive ask each participant from the church to not only use the opportunity to get rid of old things, but to either donate new items or one of their favorite outfits...take the opportunity to talk about *sacrificial* giving





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Reflections on Character/Principles Leadership

Essence

God appoints leaders. People may apply for various leadership positions, but God is the one who ultimately determines which leadership roles they will have. Leadership development comes through character development, because leadership is a character issue. Therefore, the first truth in leadership development is this: God's assignments are always based on character – the greater the character, the greater the assignment (Luke 16:10). ... No role is more important than that of a spiritual leader; therefore, God will first build a character that is capable of handling such a meaningful assignment. Character building can be a slow, sometimes painful process. But the person willing to allow God to complete the process will know the joy of being used by God. Even better, those who submit their lives to God's refining process will experience the profound joy that comes with knowing God in a deeply personal way.

...God builds character through the ordinary experiences and crises of life. ...God uses everyday events, both good and bad, to shape leaders. Often these events are situations that are beyond people's control – events that require people to place their trust in God.

Significant character development occurs as God redeems leaders from their mistakes. God does not always intervene when people are determined to go in a harmful direction, but he is always available to redeem people. Through the redemption process, they learn more about themselves and more about God. The best leaders know themselves well. God uses life's experiences to teach leaders what they are really like. ...Those willing to submit themselves to the leadership development track of the Lord have the potential of growing into the leaders God wants them to become.

Leaders Stand by Their Decisions

If leaders are meticulous in making their decisions, they will not waver once they have made them. This confident ability to stand firmly behind a decision does not make a leader an unyielding tyrant. It is a characteristic of good leadership. Leaders who change their minds every time they encounter someone who holds a different view are agonizing to follow because people never know for sure whether their leaders are still going in the same direction they were yesterday or if they have changed their minds again. ...

The best insurance against inconsistency is, of course, to be careful in making the right decision in the first place. Christian leaders [need to] learn how to know when God is speaking to them. ...

Indecisiveness on the part of leaders may reflect that they are overly concerned with pleasing people. People-pleasing is not the driving force of spiritual leadership. Spiritual leaders



move people with them in their decision but ultimately leaders are concerned with pleasing God, not people. ...

It takes courage to stand behind a decision in the face of resistance or opposition. Some leaders simply lack the fortitude to take a stand or to make unpopular decisions. Such leaders often delay, hoping a difficult issue will go away. Unfortunately, it is usually the opportunities and rarely the difficulties that vanish over time. Spiritual leaders need not lack courage because God has promised to give it to them if they will ask for it (Isa. 41:10)....

Once again, we find ourselves back to the core principle of spiritual leadership: trusting God. Leaders who know what God has said and who have a clear sense of God's purpose ... can have the resolve to be steadfast in their leadership, regardless of whether everyone agrees with them. As long as God agrees, they should proceed.

There comes a time when leaders must decide to decide. After they have sought God's guidance and confirmed what God is saying through the **Scriptures**, through prayer, through the affirmation of other believers, and through an evaluation of their circumstances, after they have gathered all the pertinent information and after they have consulted with trusted advisors, the time comes for leaders to make an informed, Spirit-led decision. To delay further would be an abdication of leadership. Essential leadership skills include the ability to make a decision, to stick to it, to admit mistakes along the way, and finally to accept the consequences for the decision.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership

Scripture

Read the account of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 17-20. Discus the character of this king, and how he made decisions – sticking with them, though difficult, and correcting mistakes made along the way.

- When faced with a decision affecting thousands of his subjects, to whom did he turn for guidance? (2 Chron 20:12-13)
- What was the response? (2 Chron 20:15)
- How did the king respond? (2 Chron 20:18-21)
- What was the result? (2 Chron 20:22-25)
- What was the response? (2 Chron 20:27-30)



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

E Discuss

- "Leadership is a character issue."
- While there are no shortcuts in the time-consuming task of character-building, what factors do you think help determine the length of time required to build a given leader's character? Is the process ever finished?
- Identify and discuss biblical examples where God used "everyday events, both good and bad, to shape leaders."
- Discuss the different ways of confirming God's direction presented above: through the Scriptures; through prayer; through the affirmation of other believers; and through circumstances. How do these different means intersect? Can you find biblical examples for each of these? Is it just enough if one of these ways confirms God's leading? Explain.
- "The best leaders know themselves well."

Consider

Your Heart's EGO – Edging God Out or Exalting God Only!

As you **Consider** the heart issues of leadership, a primary question you have to ask yourself is, "Am I a servant leader of a self-serving leader?" The fact is that we all fall short of perfection and give in to the temptation to behave as self-serving leaders in certain situations. This question, when answered with brutal honesty, reveals your motivation as a leader. It also reflects your heart's EGO: do you seek to Edge God Out or Exalt God Only in the way you exert influence on those around you? The answer to that question reveals whether you are driven to protect and promote yourself or called to a higher purpose of service. –Blanchard and Hodges



Reflections on Character/Principles DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

The Choice

It's quiet. It's early....The sky is still black. The world is still asleep. The day is coming.

In a few moments the day will arrive. It will roar down the track with the rising of the sun, the stillness of the dawn will be exchanged for the noise of the day. The calm of solitude will be replaced by the pounding pace of the human race. The refuge of the early morning will be invaded by decisions to be made and deadlines to be met.

For the next twelve hours I will be exposed to the day's demands. It is now that I must make a choice. Because of Calvary, I'm free to choose. And so I choose.

I choose love...

No occasion justifies hatred; no injustice warrants bitterness. I choose love. Today I will love God and what God loves.

I choose joy...

I will invite my God to be the God of circumstance. I will refuse the temptation to be cynical...the tool of the lazy thinker. I will refuse to see people as anything less than human beings, created by God. I will refuse to see any problem as anything less than an opportunity to see God.

I choose peace...

I will live forgiven. I will forgive so that I may live.

I choose patience...

I will overlook the inconveniences of the world. Instead of cursing the one who takes my place, I'll invite him to do so. Rather than complain that the wait is too long, I will thank God for a moment to pray. Instead of clinching my fist at new assignments, I will face them with joy and courage.

I choose kindness...

I will be kind to the poor, for they are alone. Kind to the rich, for they are afraid. And kind to the unkind, for such is how God has treated me.

I choose goodness...

I will go without a dollar before I take a dishonest one. I will be overlooked before I will boast. I will confess before I will accuse. I choose goodness.

I choose faithfulness...

Today I will keep my promises. My debtors will not regret their trust. My associates will not



question my word. My wife will not question my love. And my children will never fear that their father will not come home.

I choose gentleness...

Nothing is won by force. I choose to be gentle. If I raise my voice, may it be only in praise. If a clench my fist, may it be only in prayer. If I make a demand, may it be only of myself.

I choose self-control...

I am a spiritual being. After this body is dead, my spirit will soar. I refuse to let what will rot, rule the eternal. I choose self-control. I will be drunk only by joy. I will be impassioned only by my faith. I will be influenced only by God. I will be taught only by Christ. I choose self-control.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To these I commit my day. If I succeed, I will give thanks. If I fail, I will seek his grace. And then, when this day is done, I will place my head on my pillow and rest.

- Max Lucado, When God Whispers Your Name

Scripture

Read Galatians 5:16-26. What choices does this passage present? Note that the singular is used with "fruit of the Spirit" – what are the implications of this? How does the fruit of the spirit differ from the gifts of the Spirit? Explain.

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

🗣 🛛 Discuss

- Discuss the above passage. What parts stand out to you? What other choices can you add? Why is it so important that leaders choose rightly?
- As you face your days, what are your biggest challenges? How can you choose to meet these before they arise?



Reflections on Character/Principles EVANGELISM

Essence

People and organizations led by servant leaders are more likely to function well in valuesbased environments where success and significance are available at all levels. Led to serve one another as well as a common vision, people in these environments tend to work honestly and ethically.

The problem with self-serving leaders is that they never get out of their own way. If they were focused on significance – generosity, service, and loving relationships – they'd be amazed at how much success would come their way. For example, Mother Teresa couldn't have cared less about accumulation of wealth, status, and recognition. Her life was focused on serving others. Yet what happened? Success came her way. When leaders focus on significance first, their emphasis is on their people. Through that emphasis, success and results will follow.

...servant leaders, who model their values in the way they treat their people, create environments where everyone can find significance in what they do and the vision they serve. Leaders who are passionate about creating a motivational experience for everyone who comes in contact with their organization – employees, customers, suppliers, or members of the same community – not only improve the quality of their life but also will produce "significant success."

- Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, Lead Like Jesus

Scripture

What do the following verses reveal about integrity?

1 Kings 9:4		
1 Chr. 29:17		
Job 2:3		
Psalm 7:8		
Psalm 25:21		
Psalm 41:12		



Psalm 78:72	
Proverbs 10:9	
Isaiah 45:23	
Matt 22:16	
Titus 2:7	

Breakout time (divide in small groups)



Discuss

"Integrity is not automatic. It is a character trait that leaders consciously cultivate in their lives." –Blackaby

Identify biblical leaders who focused on "significance first," with an emphasis on their people. What success and results followed? What biblical examples do we have of self-serving leaders? What were their results?



Discuss

"One of the outstanding ironies of history is the utter disregard of ranks and titles in the final judgments men pass on each other. The final estimate of men shows that history cares not an iota for the rank or title a man has borne, or the office he has held, but only the quality of his deeds and the character of his mind and heart." – Samuel Brengle

Consider

Take the following quiz (adapted from Max Lucado's And the Angels Were Silent):

Name the ten wealthiest men in the world. Name the last ten Heisman trophy winners. Name the last ten winners of the Miss [Universe] contest. Name eight people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer prize. How about the last ten Academy Award winners for best picture?



How did you do? I didn't do well either. With the exception of you trivia hounds, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday too well. Surprising how quickly we forget, isn't it? And what I've mentioned above are no second-rate achievements. These are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one.

Think of three people you enjoy spending time with. Name ten people who have taught you something worthwhile. Name five friends who have helped you in a difficult time. List a few teachers who have aided your journey through school. Name half a dozen heroes whose stories have inspired you.

Easier? It was for me, too. The lesson? The people who make a difference are not the ones with the credentials, but the ones with the concern.



Reflections on Character/Principles Service

් Quotable Quotes

What does it mean to be great? What lifestyle, cultivated when one is young, augurs for greatness over a life span? When I was young I was stirred by Daniel Burnham's dictum, "Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized." Then I had the good fortune to [know a man I saw as] one of the truly great because, as a young adult, he chose a lifestyle that was congruent with his own unique personality, a lifestyle that brought the best of his strong character to bear upon the situations he faced; and he stayed with it consistently over a long and impressively constructive life.

- Robert K. Greenleaf, Servant Leadership

Happy the youth who believes that his duty is to remake the world and bring it more in accord with virtue and justice, more in accord with his own heart. Woe to whoever commences his life without lunacy.

– Nikos Kazantzakis, Report to Greco

Life is a grindstone. Whether it grinds you down or polishes you up depends on what you are made of.

– Anon

Watch your thoughts; they become your words.

Watch your words; they become your actions.

Watch your actions; they become your habits.

Watch your habits; they become your character.

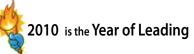
Watch your character; for it will become your destiny.

– Hillel

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

- Sponsor a joint service project with a church with a different racial composition than your own; plan a social activity after the service project to enable people maximum time to interact with those from different backgrounds
- Make and distribute welcome packets to area schools/colleges





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Reflections on Forgiveness Leadership

Essence

As long as you hate your enemy, a jail door is closed and a prisoner is taken. But when you try to understand and release your foe from your hatred, then the prisoner is released and that prisoner is you.

Perhaps you don't like that idea. Perhaps the thought of forgiveness is unrealistic. Perhaps the idea of trying to understand the Judases in our world is simply too gracious.

My response to you then is a question. What do you suggest? Will harboring the anger solve the problem? Will getting even remove the hurt? Does hatred do any good? Again, I'm not minimizing your hurt or justifying their actions. But I am saying that justice won't come this side of eternity. And demanding that your enemy get his or her share of pain will, in the process, be most painful to you.

...Jesus looked to the future. Read his words: "In the future you will see the Son of Man coming." While going through hell, Jesus kept his eyes on heaven. While surrounded by enemies he kept his mind on his father. While abandoned on earth, he kept his heart on home. "In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God, the Powerful One, and coming on clouds in the sky."

I took a snow skiing lesson some time back. My instructor said I had potential but poor perspective. He said I looked at my skis too much. I told him I had to. They kept going where I didn't want them to go. "Does it help?" he asked.

"I guess not," I confessed, "I still fall a lot."

He gestured toward the splendid mountains on the horizon. "Try looking out there as you ski. Keep your eyes on the mountains and you'll keep your balance." He was right. It worked.

The best way to keep your balance is to keep your focus on another horizon. That's what Jesus did.

"My kingdom does not belong to this world," Jesus told Pilate. "My kingdom is from another place."

...When all of earth turns against you, all of heaven turns toward you. To keep your balance in a crooked world, look at the mountains. Think of home.

- Max Lucado, And the Angels Were Silent



Scripture

What do the following passages reveal about Miriam?

Exodus 2:1-8		
Micah 6:4		
Exodus 15:1-21	1	

Read Numbers 12. Discuss what happened and why. What was Moses' response? (cf. 1 Peter 2:23-24; Job 42:10) How did the consequences affect more than just Miriam? What are the lessons for us in our parallel roles as leaders and followers?



Discuss

"We get in serious trouble when we try to do God's work...our own way. Miriam tried to...take on a role that God had not given her." – Peter Amerman

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss

- Discuss the effects of unforgiveness, hatred, anger, and hurt. In what ways are these things likely to do you at least as much harm as the person at whom they're directed. Discuss the physical, emotional, and spiritual implications.
- "When we succumb to bitterness and rebellion, it stops all forward progress not only for ourselves, but also for others that we love and care about." Amerman.
- Discuss 1 Peter 2:23-24 and what this would look like in your day-to-day life.
- Discuss the skiing analogy. How can keeping our focus "on another horizon" help keep you keep your balance in your leadership journey? What are the things that threaten to divert your focus?

Is there value in "trying to understand the Judases in our world"? Why or why not?

Consider

Each year, there is a day when members of Congress can bring their children onto the floor of the House and Senate. A member once related how seeing members with whom he fundamentally disagreed on issues relate to their children helped to remind him that they, too, were good people. Who in your life do you need to better understand? What might help remind you of their fundamental humanity?



Reflections on Forgiveness DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

I came across these words from Helmut Thielicke, a German who lived through the horrors of Nazism:

This business of forgiving is by no means a simple thing – we say, "Very well, if the other fellow is sorry and begs my pardon, I will forgive him, then I'll give in." We make of forgiveness a law of reciprocity. And this never works. For then both of us say to ourselves, "The other fellow has to make the first move." And then I watch like a hawk to see whether the other person will flash a signal to me with his eyes or whether the other I can detect some small hint between the lines of his letter which shows that he is sorry. I am always on the point of forgiving – but I never forgive. I am far too just.

The only remedy, Thielicke concluded, was his realization that God had forgiven his sins and given him another chance – the lesson of the parable of the unforgiving servant. Breaking the cycle of ungrace means taking the initiative. Instead of waiting for his neighbor to make the first move, Thielicke must do so, defying the natural law of retribution and fairness. He did this only when he realized that God's initiative lay at the heart of the gospel he had been preaching but not practicing.

...God shattered the inexorable law of sin and retribution by invading earth, absorbing the worst we had to offer, crucifixion, and then fashioning from that cruel deed the remedy for the human condition, too. Calvary broke the logjam between justice and forgiveness. By accepting onto his innocent self all the severe demands of justice. Jesus broke forever the chain of ungrace.

- Philip Yancey, What's So Amazing About Grace?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Review the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35 and discuss the quote from Thielicke.



DISCUSS "Forgiveness is a supernatural act, not a natural response to being hurt or let down. It is an act of the will of one who has surrendered control to a higher court of judgment." –Blanchard and Hodges

DISCUSS "As leaders, the journey of forgiveness must start with us. ...Sometimes we make mistakes that could have been avoided. Sometimes we say or do things in the heat of the moment that we regret. If our [ego] is wrapped up in our performance and the opinion of others, we will be unable to forgive our own shortcomings, let alone anyone else's." –Blanchard and Hodges



Reflections on Forgiveness Evangelism

Essence

It is no accident that, when Jesus was seeking twelve disciples, he bypassed the professional religious establishment and sought businessmen [strategically chosen to turn the world upside down]....He found people who understood how the world operated and who were not afraid of working right in the middle of it. ...God does nothing by accident. When God places someone in a leadership position, he has a purpose. A Christian's first calling is to bring honor to the heavenly Father.

Bringing glory to God is not complicated. People bring God glory when they reveal God's nature to a watching world. When Christian leaders forgive others, people come to understand that God is a God who forgives. When Christian leaders are patient with those who fail, people come to understand that God is, by nature, long-suffering. When Christian leaders live with holy integrity, people gain a glimpse of God's holiness. The first glimpse of the true God that many people see will be reflected in the Christians who work alongside them week by week. To accurately reflect God's nature to others is to bring him glory.

God has a specific agenda for every person and every organization. Leaders can only discover God's will as he reveals it to them through their personal relationship with him. There are, however, spiritual goals that should guide every leader. Bringing people to spiritual maturity, developing leaders and, most importantly, bringing glory to God ought to be basic objectives of every leader.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss

- Discuss other ways in which you can bring glory to God in your everyday life, "accurately reflecting God's nature to others."
- Discuss the following goals laid out in the above passage and identify specific strategies to work toward achieving these goals in the week ahead:
 - 1. Bringing people to spiritual maturity:
 - 2. Developing leaders:
- The ramifications of Jesus bypassing "the professional religious establishment."
- "Forgiveness is not just an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude". Martin Luther King, Jr.

Consider

During a British conference on comparative religions, experts from around the world debated what, if any, belief was unique to the Christian faith. ... The debate went on for some time until C.S. Lewis wandered into the room. "What's the rumpus about?" he asked, and heard in reply that his colleagues were discussing Christianity's unique contribution among world religions. Lewis responded, "Oh, that's easy. It's grace."

After some discussion, the conferees had to agree. The notion of God's love coming to us free of charge, no strings attached, seems to go against every instinct of humanity. [Other religions offer ways] to earn approval. Only Christianity dares to make God's love unconditional.

- Philip Yancey, What's So Amazing About Grace?



Reflections on Forgiveness Service

් Quotable Quotes

Followers don't expect their leaders to be perfect, but they do expect them to be honest.

...People who cannot handle criticism need not apply for leadership positions. Being criticized, second-guessed, and having one's motives questioned are unpleasant but inevitable aspects of leadership. Great leaders are not immune to criticism; in fact, the criticism they receive is sometimes the most venomous. It is impossible for leaders to avoid being censured. If leaders take decisive action, they are open to critique for being too reactionary. If they cautiously refrain from taking action, they are chastised for their indecisiveness. Faced with the inevitability of criticism regardless of what they do, leaders must make a choice. Either they stop leading, or they do what they know is right and trust that God will vindicate them.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership

Often the crowd does not recognize a leader until he has gone, and then they build a monument for him with the stones they threw at him in life.

- J. Oswald Sanders

Serving:

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

- Hold celebration to honor unsung community leaders
- Conduct a voter registration drive
- Write letters to elected officials and newspaper editor about social problems and possible solutions





Reflections on Leadership Principles – Moses LEADERSHIP

Essence

Arguably the greatest leader in Old Testament history was Moses. However, he could not attribute his success to his own leadership abilities, for he was not naturally gifted as a leader. By his own admission, he was a poor public speaker (Exod. 4:10); he was inept at delegating (Exod. 18:13-27); he had a temper problem (Exod. 32:19; Num. 20:9-13). Worst of all, he was a murderer. Nevertheless, Moses' accomplishments as a spiritual leader came from the depth of his relationship with God, not from the strength of his personality. **Scriptures** indicate that the Lord used to speak to Moses "face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend" (Exod. 33:11). The Israelites recognized Moses' close walk with God. Whenever Moses would descend from the mountain after meeting with God, his face would glow with the glory of God (Exod. 34:29-35). God's presence in Moses' life was unmistakable!

Significantly, despite his close relationship with the Lord, Moses was not a proud or arrogant leader. In fact, **Scripture** indicates: "Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). Moses was so demure that when Aaron and Miriam criticized him, it was the Lord who came to his defense; rebuking his companions for their insolence: "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household; With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, Moses?" (Num. 12:6-8).

Moses was not defensive. He didn't need to be. He did not demand respect or act with a heavy hand. This could be why God chose to honor him before the people. Moses could have appealed to his position of authority to gain peoples' respect. He could have lost his temper or attacked his detractors. Moses did neither. God's methods of authenticating his leaders are far more convincing. Leaders who become preoccupied with defending themselves and their reputations display an acute lack of faith, for they do not trust God to authenticate them as spiritual leaders. Some people are constantly seeking to have their friends and associates promote them before others. True leaders don't need to do this. They know that God's approval surpasses any honor that people could bestow on them. Likewise, true leaders do not despair when people conspire against them. Those who are secure in their relationship with God know that the antagonism of their fiercest foe cannot prevent them from achieving God's purposes for their lives (Rom. 8:31).

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Scripture

Reread the parts of Moses' life highlighted above – Exodus 3-4; 18; 32-45. What leadership principles can you derive from these passages?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss

- Leaders who become preoccupied with defending themselves and their reputations display an acute lack of faith." Give Biblical examples.
- "True leaders do not despair when people conspire against them. Those who are secure in their relationship with God know that the antagonism of their fiercest foe cannot prevent them from achieving God's purposes for their lives."

Consider

Can the same be said of you that was said of Moses – that God's presence in his life was unmistakable? If not, what needs to happen in order for this to be the case?



Reflections on Leadership Principles – Moses DISCIPLESHIP

Story

I proudly share with you heretofore undiscovered conversations [that] answer the question: What does God do when we are in a bind?

The first interview is between the Holy Land Press (HLP) and Moses.

- HLP: Tell us about your conflict with the Egyptians.
- Moses: Oh, the Egyptians big people. Strong fighters. Mean as snakes.
- HLP: But you got away.
- Moses: Not before they got washed away.
- HLP: You're talking about the Red Sea conflict.
- Moses: You're right. That was scary.
- HLP: Tell us what happened.
- Moses: Well, the Red Sea was on one side, and the Egyptians were on the other.
- HLP: So you attacked?
- Moses: Are you kidding? With a half-million rock stackers? No, my people were too afraid. They wanted to go back to Egypt.
- HLP: So you told everyone to retreat?
- Moses: Where? Into the water? We didn't have a boat. We didn't have anywhere to go.
- HLP: What did your leaders recommend?
- Moses: I didn't ask them. There wasn't time.
- HLP: Then what did you do?
- Moses: I told the people to stand still.
- HLP: You mean, with the enemy coming, you told them not to move?
- Moses: Yep. I told the people, "Stand still and you will see the Lord save you."
- HLP: Why would you want the people to stand still?
- Moses: To get out of God's way. If you don't know what to do, it's best just to sit tight till he does his thing.
- HLP: That's odd strategy, don't you think?



- Moses: It is if you are big enough for the battle. But when the battle is bigger than you are and you want God to take over, it's all you can do....
- HLP: Soon after your escape...
- Moses: Our deliverance.
- HLP: What's the difference?
- Moses: There is a big difference. When you escape, you do it. When you are delivered, someone else does it and you just follow.
- HLP: Okay, soon after your deliverance, you battled with the ... Amalekites.
- Moses: Big people. Strong fighters. Mean as snakes.
- HLP: But you won.
- Moses: God won.
- HLP: Okay God won but you did the work. You fought the battle, you were on the field.
- Moses: Wrong.
- HLP: What? You weren't in the battle?
- Moses: Not that one. While the army was fighting, I took my friends Aaron and Hur to the top of a hill and we did our fighting up there.
- HLP: With each other?
- Moses: With the darkness.
- HLP: With swords?
- Moses: No, in prayer. I just lifted my hands to God, like I did at the Red Sea, only this time I forgot my rod. When I lifted my hands, we would win, but when I lowered my arms we would lose. So I got my friends to hold up my arms until the Amalekites were history and we won.
- HLP: Hold on a second. You think that standing on a hill with your hands in the air made a difference?
- Moses: You don't see any Amalekites around, do you?
- HLP: Don't you think it strange that the general of the army stays on the mountain while the soldiers fight in the valley?
- Moses: If the battle had been in the valley I would have gone, but that's not where the battle was being fought.
- HLP: Odd, this strategy of yours.
- Moses: You mean if your father was bigger than the fellow beating you up, you wouldn't call his name?
- HLP: What?
- Moses: If some guy has you on the ground pounding on you and your father is within earshot and tells you to call him anytime you need help, what would you do?
- HLP: I'd call my father.
- Moses: That's all I do. When the battle is too great, I ask God to take over. I get the Father to fight for me.
- HLP: And he comes?



Moses: Seen any Jews building pyramids lately?

HLP: Let me see if I've got this straight. Once you defeat the enemy by standing still, and another time you win the battle by holding up your hands. Where did you pick all this up?

Moses: Well, if I told you, you wouldn't believe me.

HLP: Try me.

Moses: Well, you see, there was this bush on fire, and it spoke to me...

HLP: Maybe you're right. We'll save that one for another day.

- Max Lucado, When God Whispers Your Name

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

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Discuss

Discuss the above "interview." What leadership principles stand out to you? How do God's leaders differ from the world's?

Have groups choose other biblical characters/stories and conduct similar interviews. After the interviews, debrief the process – did people find new things in familiar stories by having to personalize them? How can such an approach to study make the Bible seem a more current "leadership manual"?



Reflections on Leadership Principles – Moses EVANGELISM

Story

The Sacrificial General

The decision had been made. The troops had been deployed and the battleships were on their way. Nearly three million soldiers were preparing to slam against Hitler's Atlantic wall in France. D-Day was set in motion. Responsibility for the invasion fell squarely on the four-starred shoulders of General Dwight ("Ike") D. Eisenhower.

The general spent the night before the attack with the men of the 101st Airborne. They called themselves The Screaming Eagles. As his men prepared their planes and checked their equipment, Ike went from soldier to soldier offering words of encouragement. Many of the flyers were young enough to be his sons. He treated them as if they were. A correspondent wrote that as Eisenhower watched the C-47s take off and disappear into the darkness, his hands were sunk deeply into his pockets and his eyes were full of tears.

The general then went to his quarters and sat at his desk. He took a pen and paper and wrote a message – a message that would be delivered to the White House in the event of a defeat.

It was as brief as it was courageous. "Our landings...have failed...the troops, the Air, and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches itself to the attempt it was mine alone."

It could be argued that the greatest act of courage that day was not in a cockpit or foxhole, but at a desk when the one at the top took responsibility for the ones below. When the one in charge took the blame – even before the blame needed to be taken.

Rare leader, this general. Unusual, this display of courage. He modeled a quality seldom seen in our society of lawsuits, dismissals, and divorces. Most of us are willing to take credit for the good we do. Some are willing to take the rap for the bad we do. But few will assume responsibilities for the mistakes of others. Still fewer will shoulder the blame for mistakes yet uncommitted.

Eisenhower did. As a result, he became a hero.

Jesus did. As a result, he's our Savior.

Before the war began, he forgave. Before a mistake could be made, forgiveness was offered. Before blame could be given, grace was provided.

The one at the top took responsibility for the ones at the bottom. Read how Jesus describes what he came to do.

"The Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many people."

- Max Lucado, And the Angels Were Silent



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Scripture

Read the account in Exodus 32. Discuss Moses' request on behalf of the people he lead in light of the above passage. Was his request for atonement for the people contradictory to his prior anger and actions in response to the sins of the people? Explain.

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss

Discuss the above passage. Were the general's actions hypocritical? Did they evidence a lack of faith? Explain. Did the fact that a contingency plan for salvation was in place before there was sin make it a foregone conclusion – a self-fulfilling prophecy? Explain.

Most of us aren't generals in time of war, and certainly none of us are saviors...how then can we model this type of selfless leadership in the areas in which we're called to serve each day?



Reflections on Leadership Principles – Moses Service

Outable Quotes

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Do not ask "what can I do?" but "what can He not do?"

- Corrie ten Boom

Courage is fear that has said its prayers.

-Anon

Youth is not a time of life, it is a state of mind, a project of imagination, a vigor of the emotion, a predominate of courage over timidity, an appetite for adventure.

Nobody grows old by living a number of years. People grow old when they desert their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, self-doubt, fear and anxiety, these are the culprits that bow the head and break the heart.

Whether sixteen or seventy, there exists in the heart of every person who loves life, the thrill of a new challenge, the insatiable appetite for what is coming next. You are as young as your faith, and as old as your doubts.

So long as your heart receives from your head messages that reflect beauty, courage, joy and excitement, you are young. When your thinking becomes clouded with pessimism and prevents you from taking risks, then you are old...and may God have mercy on your soul

– Anon

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

Hold blood drive / community health education fair



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2010 is the Year of Leadi
March 2010 is the Year of Lead

Reflections on Delegation LEADERSHIP

Essence

Leaders Delegate

... Moses' mistake was assuming that because he *could* do something, he *should* do something.

Leaders need to ask themselves continually, "Is this something someone else could do?" Leaders take delight not only in how much they are accomplishing, but also in how much those around them are getting done. There are certain things that leaders cannot delegate. Leaders have the responsibility to hear from God and to guide their organizations into his will. The onus is on the leader to see that people are equipped to accomplish their tasks. Therefore, they must delegate everything they can so they have the time to focus on these crucial responsibilities.

The reasons leaders fail to delegate are legion. Some leaders are perfectionists who assume no one can do the task as well as they can. Others are task-oriented and would rather complete the job themselves than take time to equip others to do it. Still others are uncomfortable asking people to do things; they find doing the job themselves less onerous than delegating it. Then there are the leaders who are so disorganized that by the time they realize an assignment needs to be completed, it is too late to enlist someone to do it. Whatever the reason for their reluctance to delegate, leaders must understand that mastering the art of delegation is preeminent among leadership skills. It is one of the wisest uses of a leader's time.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership

Scripture

If anyone could always do a given task better than others, it was Jesus, and yet he delegated:

Matt 10	
Mark 9:14-29	
Matt 3:13-15	
Matt 14:15-20	

In light of the above passages (and others you can find), were those delegated to always successful in their assigned task? Did they always understand? Did this have any bearing on Jesus' choosing to work through them? Explain.



Breakout time (divide in small groups)

E Discuss

- "Leaders must understand that mastering the art of delegation is preeminent among leadership skills."
- How is delegation "one of the wisest uses of a leader's time"?
- What keeps you from delegating? How can you better practice delegation in the week ahead? Give concrete examples.

Consider

Are you accomplishing all you could be in the areas that *cannot* be delegated? Prayerfully list those areas you can and cannot delegate and commit to delegating in all areas possible. Identify anything keeping you from delegating and concrete steps to remedy this.

The man in a place of leadership who fails to delegate is constantly enmeshed in a morass of secondary detail that not only overburdens him but deflects him from his primary responsibilities. He also fails to release the leadership potential of those under him. – Sanders



Reflections on Delegation DISCIPLESHIP

Story

Two things about Thomas Jefferson are of special interest here. First, as a young man he had the good fortune to find a mentor, George Wythe, a Williamsburg lawyer whose original house still stands in the restored village. George Wythe was a substantial man of his times, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a member of the Constitutional Convention. But his chief claim to fame is as Thomas Jefferson's mentor. It was probably the influence of mentor on understudy, as Jefferson studied law in Wythe's office, that moved Jefferson toward his place in history and somewhat away from his natural disposition to settle down at Monticello as an eccentric Virginia scholar (which he remained, partly, despite Wythe's influence). The point of mentioning George Wythe is that old people may have a part to play in helping potential servant-leaders to emerge as their optimal best.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Jefferson, more important in history than the Declaration of Independence or his later term as president, was what he did during the war. With the publication of the Declaration of Independence, the war was on and Jefferson was importuned to take important roles in the war. But he turned them all down. He knew who he was, and he resolved to be his own man. He chose his own role. He went back to Virginia and didn't leave the state for the duration of the war.

Jefferson believed that the war would be won by the Colonies, that there would be a new nation, and that that nation would need a new system of law to set it on the course that he had dreamed for in the Declaration of Independence. So he went back to Monticello got himself elected to the Virginia legislature, and proceeded to write new statutes embodying the new principles of law for the new nation. He set out, against the determined opposition of his conservative colleagues, to get these enacted into Virginia law. It was an uphill fight. He would go to Williamsburg and wrestle with his colleagues until he was slowed to a halt. Then he would get on his horse and ride back to Monticello to rekindle his spirit and write some more statutes. Armed with those he would return to Williamsburg and take another run at it. He wrote one hundred and fifty statutes in that period and got fifty of them enacted into law, the most notable being separation of church and state. For many years Virginia legislators were digging into the remaining one hundred as new urgent problems made their **Consider**ation advisable.

When the Constitution was drafted some years later, Jefferson wasn't even around; he was in France as [the U.S.] ambassador. He didn't have to be around. He had done his work and made his contribution in the statutes already operating in Virginia. Such are the wondrous ways in which leaders do their work – when they know who they are and resolve to be their own persons and will accept making their way to their goal by one action at a time, with a lot of frustration along the way.



– Robert K. Greenleaf, Servant Leadership

Scripture

Identify biblical mentors and mentees. What characteristics can you glean from these examples? [Be sure to include Moses and Jethro, discussing the principles of delegation laid out in Exodus 18.]

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

In light of the above passage, discuss how the "good" – taking an important role in the war – can be the greatest enemy of the "best" – establishing new principles of law. Discuss times in your own life when these two have been at odds. What path did you choose? How can you differentiate between the "good" and the "best," and be sure to choose the latter? What do you do when those around you do not understand your choice?



Discuss

- Discuss the roles mentors have played in your life. How can you play that role in the life of another?
- "One definition of leadership is the ability to recognize the special abilities and limitations of others, combined with the capacity to fit each one into the job where he will do his best. He who is successful in getting things done through others is exercising the highest type of leadership." Sanders
- According to the above passage, a great part of Jefferson's success lay in his ability to think ahead and put in place a foundation upon which others could build. Discuss this leadership skill , how you might be able to better employ it, and how it assists in the task of delegation.

Consider

Are you thinking, *Hey*, *I'm still in school! I can't mentor anyone yet!* Probably the biggest roadblock to this part of your leadership journey is that it's hard to know when you're ready. Here's the deal: You're ready when there is at least one person traveling behind you on the journey. – VanEck



Reflections on Delegation EVANGELISM

Essence

The Leadership Journey from Call to Commission

When Jesus first called the disciples from their ordinary occupations to become "fishers of men," each brought life experiences and skills to this new task but no practical knowledge of how to fulfill this new role. After spending three years under the leadership of Jesus, the disciples were transformed from untrained novices to fully equipped, inspired, and spiritually grounded leaders able to fulfill the Great Commission....

How did Jesus accomplish the transition from call to commission? Although miracles were involved, the process was not miraculous. It entailed a perfect execution of familiar process by a leader personally committed to accomplishing a goal through the growth and development of those who follow. We believe the experience Jesus had as a learner, under instruction as a carpenter, provided Him with a practical model for growing and developing people that He was able to use to guide the learning experience of His disciples from call to commission. Having presumably been guided through four normal stages of learning a new task – from novice (someone just starting out) to apprentice (someone in training) to journeyman (someone capable of working independently) and finally master/teacher (someone highly skilled and able to teach others) of the carpenter craft – Jesus brought to His season of leadership a clear understanding of the journey from dependence to independence.

Jesus and the Apprentice Disciples

Jesus had to respond to a number of situations with His disciples as they were apprenticing with Him. For example, the disciples were discouraged when they were unable to cast a demon out of a boy whom a father brought to them....

When the disciples were new to the task of being "fishers of men," they experienced a setback to their confidence when they discovered they were not competent to handle every situation. Think how the disciples must have felt when they were not able to succeed at casting out the demon from the boy. They must have been frustrated, uncertain, and embarrassed.

Your people or family members or volunteers may experience those same feelings when confronted with a task or a goal they cannot do or in which they experienced a failure or problem. Sometimes the people you lead become discouraged about a specific task while you as a leader are completely unaware of their disillusionment. If people become disillusioned and no one reaches out to them, they can become so discouraged that they quit and leave [or quit and stay, just going through the motions]....

Observe how Jesus responded to His disciples' disillusionment over not being able to cast out the demon. (Matthew 17:18-20) Notice that Jesus gave the disciples truthful information as to why they were unable to cast out the demon: "Because you have so little faith."



Jesus tells the disciples that the casting out of these demons comes only out of prayer and fasting. We know that Jesus loved His disciples and wanted them to succeed (John 17:6-19). We also know Jesus was "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15), which means He never lost control of His temper in a sinful manner. Even when the disciples had failed and He came behind them to "clean up their mess," He still loved them and expressed that love by telling them the truth in a loving way.

- Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, Lead Like Jesus

Scripture

Read the following accounts of the calling of the disciples. What picture does this give you? What were the disciples' "qualifications? What was the result after Jesus' "leadership training"?

 Matthew 4:18-22

 Matthew 9:9-13

 Mark 1:14-20

 Luke 5:1-11

 Luke 5:27-32

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

E Discuss

- Discuss the four stages of learning outlined above: novice; apprentice; journeyman; master/teacher in light of the disciples' experience and your own. Did all the disciples start at the same stage? Explain.
- What example does Jesus provide in the way he developed his disciples? How can you provide clear direction and information in a loving manner to those with whom you're working? In the midst of apparent failure, how can you keep from demeaning people or making them feel inferior?
- One of the reasons given in a previous week for failure to delegate was a leader's being overly task-oriented. Discuss how you can follow Jesus' example of being *people*-oriented, always ensuring that relationships trump "tasks."



Reflections on Delegation SERVICE

< Quotable Quotes

When we are committed to do God's will and not our own we soon discover that much of what we do doesn't need to be done by us. What we are called to do are actions that bring us true joy and peace. Just as leaving friends for the sake of the Gospel will bring us friends, so too will letting go of actions not in accord with our call.

Actions that lead to overwork, exhaustion, and burnout can't praise and glorify God. What God calls us to do we can do and do well. When we listen in silence to God's voice and speak with our friends in trust we will know what we are called to do and we will do it with a grateful heart.

– Henri J.M. Nouwen, Can You Drink the Cup?

To be busy, to be divided and scattered, to occupy yourself is far from love. Christian love is whole and collected in its every expression, and yet it is sheer action. Consequently it is just as far from inaction as it is from busyness. It never becomes engrossed in anything beforehand and never gives a promise in place of action. It never draws satisfaction from imagining that it has finished, nor does it ever loiter delighting in itself.

- Søren Kierkegaard, Provocations

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

- Plan and implement own community service project
- Visit area prison or write letters to inmates
- Plan and start Christmas service project (i.e. gifts for children of inmates; nursing home residents; etc.)



2	2010 is the Year of Le	ading

Reflections on Developing the Next Generation of Leaders LEADERSHIP

Essence

Stepping into the shoes of a popular and successful leader can be a disconcerting experience. Most people would feel somewhat inadequate when asked to assume a position vacated by a celebrated and revered leader. Joshua had plenty of reasons to feel insecure when God called him to lead the Israelites into Canaan. He faced powerful, hostile armies. His enemies were well equipped with iron chariots and fortified cities. And his predecessor had been Moses, the most famous and respected figure in Israelite history. No wonder God gave Joshua...assurances....

God did not flatter Joshua, nor did he encourage Joshua to draw confidence from his own strength and abilities. Rather, God made it abundantly clear to Joshua that he need not fear his own inadequacies because God would be in control. Joshua could lead the Hebrew nation with absolute confidence, not in his own leadership skills, but in the assurance of the Lord's presence.

Even the Israelites understand who their true leader was. They did not ask Joshua to lead like Moses. They did not compare the two leaders according to their strengths and weaknesses. Instead they pledged: "Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the Lord Your God be with you as he was with Moses" (Josh. 1:17). By this time the people had seen enough miracles to know whom they were following – not a man but God himself. More than anything else, people are looking for spiritual leaders who are clearly experiencing God's presence. There is no greater source of influence for spiritual leaders than the manifest presence of God in their lives.

True to his word, God did work mightily through Joshua. As the Israelites prepared to cross the Jordan River, God reaffirmed his promise to Joshua.... Leaders do not have to prove God is guiding them. God's presence will be unmistakable. Joshua had no need to prove himself continually to the people. God did that. ...As Joshua came to the end of his life, he recounted God's faithfulness....

Joshua had not embarked on a quest for military glory and fame. God gave it to him. Joshua owed every achievement and victory to God. Joshua's success as a leader clearly came from God. God was the one with the ability. Joshua's part was to live in obedience to God. The lesson for leaders is obvious: spiritual success is not defined in terms of ability – it is a matter of obedience.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Scripture

Joshua 1:5 - 9		
Joshua 3:7		
Joshua 2:11		
Joshua 23:01		
Joshua 6:20		
Joshua 10:13	 	

Read the following passages and note the assurances and validation God gave Joshua.

Consider

What assurances has God given you in your own leadership journey? Do you recount God's faithfulness, as Joshua did? (Joshua 23:14)

Do you know who you're following – a man or God himself?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

K Discuss

- Discuss a time when you experienced a leadership transition a death of a leader, a move of a pastor, etc. Was there a tendency to despair? How was the matter resolved? What did you learn from the experience?
- Discuss the possible problems had Joshua tried to "lead like Moses." What are the implications for being able to lead with absolute confidence in the assurance of God's presence?
- "God was the one with the ability. Joshua's part was to live in obedience to God. The lesson for leaders is obvious: spiritual success is not defined in terms of ability – it is a matter of obedience."
- "To undertake responsibility and do it willingly is a necessary mark of a leader.... Joshua demonstrated his leadership quality in accepting without hesitation the awesome responsibility of following in the steps of the great leader Moses. Joshua had far greater reason to plead his inadequacy than did Moses, but he did not repeat the sin of his leader. Instead, he promptly accepted the responsibility and gave himself to the task." – Sanders

What if your "undertaking responsibility" is seen by others as selfish ambition? Discuss God's calling and how to follow it within your various spheres of influence – school, home, church, work, etc.



Reflections on Developing the Next Generation of Leaders DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

Many say that they want to be greatly used or at least used in some way in the Kingdom of God, and yet, the lack of action in their lives betrays their words. However, the truth is that if we do not want to be **Consider**ed by God to be an "unprofitable servant" we had better make a decision to be used by God no matter what the call.

Furthermore, if we are to be called into service in the Kingdom we must actively seek to be a recipient of God's call. Simply put, we must want to be used.

- We must pray to be useful.
- We must ask God for opportunities.
- We must step out in every area of service possible.
- We must pray until we pray ourselves into the work.
- We must pray and work until we are profitable servants—and then keep working and praying.

Using the story of Elisha's literal call to ministry as an allegory, we can draw several truths from this passage concerning whom God chooses to call into a work for Him.

... Primarily, God calls those who are active....

Elisha led by example, not merely by command, even when leading servants of his own household.

...[Elisha] was attentive to the call of God [and receptive to a new work.]

...No one can make our decision for us when it comes to service in the Kingdom. Leaders may offer a position or task, but we must offer ourselves up for service.

...Elisha meant business for God. Taking his leave of Elijah, Elisha returned home to enjoy a farewell meal with his family and friends. The meat was cooked over Elisha's own plowing equipment. Thus he had burned his past behind him. Henceforth he would serve God. However this first meant learning more of him through Elijah....

In 2 Kings 2:9 Elisha would later ask for a double portion of Elijah. Note that his whole life had prepared him to receive it. In the story, Elisha had to see Elijah when he was taken from this earth.

Elijah tried to separate himself from Elisha. He appealed to Elisha's natural needs and his mental reasoning in order to find a way to leave him behind. Yet, Elisha would not let Elijah out of his sight.



My point is that one does not receive that kind of a blessing on a whim. One cannot live a life of that kind of determination without having made devotion a part of his life many days prior to the challenge.

Do you want to be used? Do you want to receive God's blessings? If so, the journey begins now with the decision to serve God in whatever capacity that He may call us into.

- Mark Beaird, Who Is Called To Service In the Kingdom

Scripture

Read 1 Kings 19:19-21 and 2 Kings 2. What do you learn from Elisha's call and the transition of leadership from Elijah to Elisha?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

🖌 🛛 Discuss

• Discus the idea that a "lack of action" betrays the words of those who say they want to be greatly used? What do your actions reveal?

Go through the bullet points listed above, under the subtitle "Essence", (and add any your group deems appropriate). Where are you in relation to each of these points?

🛛 Discuss

- Discus the idea that God primarily call those who are "active." What does this "activity" look like? Does this mean should just set about doing anything for the sake of activity? Explain.
- "Many successful leaders **Consider** mentoring the most important of all their responsibilities. Jesus sure seemed to. He invested a lot of his time in those 12 guys. Jesus didn't say a lot about leadership directly. Instead he preferred to model it."
- Discuss how Jesus was intentional in modeling prayer, servanthood, communication, and cultivating his inner life. How well are you doing in each of these areas? How can you be intentional in modeling Christian leadership for others?

Consider

Have you determined "to be used by God no matter what the call"? How can your life evidence this in the week ahead?



Reflections on Developing the Next Generation of Leaders EVANGELISM

Essence

Contributions to a Successor

One of the most important, yet often overlooked, responsibilities of leaders is that of leaving a successor. The Bible reveals God's pattern of working through successive generations.... God's people always stand just one generation away from being in the center of God's will, or completely out of it. For God's purposes to continue, each generation must be prepared to embrace a fresh relationship of love for him and obedience to his word. That is why true spiritual leaders are always investing in the next generation of leaders. It's no coincidence that great spiritual leaders follow in the footsteps of great spiritual leaders. Joshua succeeded the revered Moses and even surpassed his accomplishments by conquering the land Moses had been unable to overcome. Elisha not only followed the mighty Elijah as prophet; he was given a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2 Kings 2:9-10). Jesus made this incredible statement to his disciples: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the woks that I do, he shall do also; and greater works than these he shall do; because I go to the Father" (John 14:12).

Any times God will bless one faithful generation with the privilege of seeing their children carry on the ministry begun through their parents. Often leaders do not carefully **Consider** their successor and they come to the end of their time as leader. Many leaders give little thought to the conclusion of their leadership and so they do little to prepare for it. However, when suddenly faced with leaving their office, they realize that much of their work will have been in vain unless there is a capable successor....

It is a grievous experience to labor to build up an organization or a ministry only to watch it disintegrate under an ineffective successor. Former leaders have been forced to watch in horror as subsequent leaders dismantled everything they worked so hard to build. Much of leaders' joy and satisfaction in a job well done can be diminished when they are forced to witness an incompetent successor at work.

True joy comes in knowing that one's work has been preserved and is continuing due to the leader's careful preparation of a successor.

- Henry and Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership



Scripture

What are God's specific instructions for training and preparing the emerging generation of leaders? (Deut 6:6-9, 20-25; 2 Tim 2:2)

Read Hebrews 11. How many of these "heroes of faith" realized the tangible promise given to them during their lifetimes? What are the implications for your own faith journey?

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss

- Discuss the way God works through successive generations. How does this shape your leadership "plan"?
- Discuss Jesus' statement to his disciples that "greater works" should be done. Do you see evidence of this? Assuming Jesus meant what he said, what are we to make of this?
- "Much of leaders' joy and satisfaction in a job well done can be diminished when they are forced to witness an incompetent successor at work." How can you keep your "joy and satisfaction" as a leader from being diminished in this way? Give concrete solutions.
- "It is difficult to use [the conception of leadership] without being misled by its non-Christian counterpart. The need is not so much for leaders as for saints and servants, and unless that fact is held steadily in the foreground, the whole idea of leadership training becomes dangerous. The pattern of training in Christian leadership must still be that given by our Lord in His training of the twelve.... Our Lord devoted the greater part of His three years of ministry to molding the characters and disciplining the spirits of His disciples." Sanders



Reflections on Developing the Next Generation of Leaders Service

Story

Charles Plumb was a Navy pilot in Vietnam. After 75 missions his plane was destroyed and he parachuted into enemy territory. He survived six years in a communist prison. Now he lectures on his experiences. One day, a man came up to him and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!" Plumb replied, "How in the world do you know that?" Smiling, the man said, "I packed your parachute. I guess it worked!"

That night Plumb couldn't sleep. He said, "I kept wondering what that man might have looked like in uniform. How many times I'd walked past him without speaking because I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor. I thought of the hours he'd spent in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each parachute, holding in his hands the fate of someone he didn't even know."

So who packed your parachute? Who helped you get to where you are? Put their all on the line for you? Paul looks back and recalls people most of us have never heard of – like Priscilla and Aquilla, "...who for my sake risked their neck" (Romans 16:4 NAS). There are no "self-made" people. The higher you go, the more dependent you become on others. George Matthew Adams says, "Everyone who has ever done a kind deed or spoken a word of encouragement... has entered into the make-up of our character...our thoughts...our success." So, who packed your parachute? Be sure to show your appreciation!

Bob Gass

Serving

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

Host New Years' party for elderly at nursing home; adopt a "grandfriend"



า	2010 is the Year of Leading

POSTSCRIPT

In an interview shortly before his death, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel was asked what message he had for young people, and he replied:

I would say: Let them remember that there is meaning beyond absurdity. Let them be sure that every little deed counts, that every word has power, and that we can – every one – do our share to redeem the world in spite of all absurdities and all frustrations and all disappointments. And above all, remember that the meaning of life is to build a life as if it were a work of art.

G Consider the following modern-day examples of Christian leadership, as recorded in Philip Yancey's book, *What's So Amazing About Grace?*, and *go change the world!*:

In 1987 an IRA bomb went off in a small town west of Belfast, amid a group of Protestants who had gathered to honor the war dead on Veteran's Day. Eleven people died and 63 others were wounded. What made this act of terrorism stand out from so many others was the response of one of the wounded, Gordon Wilson, a devout Methodist.... The bomb buried Wilson and his 20-year-old daughter under five feet of concrete and brick. "Daddy, I love you very much," were the last words Marie spoke, grasping her father's hand as they waited for the rescuers. She suffered severe spinal and brain injuries and died a few hours later in the hospital.

....Speaking from his hospital bed, Wilson said, "I have lost my daughter, but I bear no grudge. Bitter talk is not going to bring Marie Wilson back to life. I shall pray, tonight and every night, that God will forgive them."

....After his release from the hospital, Gordon Wilson led a crusade for Protestant-Catholic reconciliation. Protestant extremists who had planned to avenge the bombing decided, because of the publicity surrounding Wilson, that such behavior would be politically foolish. Wilson wrote a book about his daughter, spoke out against violence, and constantly repeated the refrain, "love is the bottom line." He met with the IRA, personally forgave them for what they had done, and asked them to lay down their arms. "I know that you've lost loved ones, just like me," he told them. "Surely, enough is enough. Enough blood has been spilled."

The Irish Republic ultimately made Wilson a member of its Senate. When he died in 1995, the Irish Republic, Northern Ireland, and all of Great Britain honored this ordinary Christian citizen who had gained fame for his uncommon spirit of grace and forgiveness. His spirit exposed by contrast the violent deeds of



retaliation, and his life of peacemaking came to symbolize the craving for peace within many others who would never make the headlines.

The Cold War, says former Senator Sam Nunn, ended "not in a nuclear inferno, but in a blaze of candles in the churches of Eastern Europe." Candlelight processions in East Germany did not show up well on the evening news, but they helped change the face of the globe. First a few hundred, then a thousand, then thirty thousand, fifty thousand, and finally five hundred thousand – nearly the entire population of the city – turned out in Leipzig for candlelight vigils. After a prayer meeting at St. Nikolai Church, the peaceful protestors would march through the dark streets, singing hymns. Police and soldiers with all their weapons seemed powerless against such a force. Ultimately, on the night a similar march in East Berlin attracted one million protestors, the hated Berlin Wall came tumbling down without a shot being fired. A huge banner appeared across a Leipzig street: Wir danken Dir, Kische (We thank you, church).

For all its flaws the church at times has, fitfully and imperfectly to be sure, dispensed Jesus' message of grace to the world. It was Christianity, and only Christianity, that brought an end to slavery, and Christianity that inspired the first hospitals and hospices to treat the sick. The same energy drove the early labor movement, women's suffrage, prohibition, human rights campaigns, and civil rights.

As for America, Robert Bellah says that "there has not been a major issue in the history of the United States on which religious bodies did not speak out, publicly and vociferously." In recent history, the main leaders of the civil rights movement...were clergy, and their stirring speeches showed it. Churches black and white provided the buildings, the networks, the ideology, the volunteers, and the theology to sustain the movement.

Martin Luther King Jr. later broadened his crusade to encompass the issues of poverty and opposition to the war in Vietnam. ...

[I]n 1994 came the most surprising revolution of all, surprising because nearly everyone expected bloodshed. South Africa, though, was also the mother lode of peaceful protest, for it was there that Mohandas Gandhi, studying Tolstoy and the Sermon on the Mount, developed his strategy of nonviolence [which Martin Luther King, Jr. later adopted]. With much opportunity to practice, South Africans had perfected the use of the weapons of grace....

News reports barely mention the key role that Christian faith played in South Africa's peaceful revolution. After a mediation team led by Henry Kissinger had abandoned all hope of convincing the Inkatha Freedom Party to participate in



elections, a Christian diplomat from Kenya met privately with all the principals, prayed with them, and helped change their minds....

Nelson Mandela broke the chain of ungrace when he emerged from twentysix years of imprisonment with a message of forgiveness and reconciliation, not revenge. F.W. DeKlerk himself, elected from the smallest and most strictly Calvinistic of the South African churches, felt what he later described as "a strong sense of calling." He told his congregation that God was calling him to save all the people of South Africa, even though he knew that would mean rejection by his own people.

Black leaders insisted that DeKlerk apologize for racial apartheid. He balked, because the people who had started the policy included his own father. But Bishop Desmond Tutu believed it essential that the process of reconciliation in South Africa begin with forgiveness, and he would not relent. According to Tutu, "One lesson we should be able to teach the world, and that we should be able to teach the people of Bosnia, Rwanda, and Burundi, is that we are ready to forgive." Eventually, DeKlerk did apologize.

Forgiveness is neither easy nor clear-cut....yet nations that pursue forgiveness, in all its complexity, may at least avoid the awful consequences of the alternative – unforgiveness. Instead of scenes of massacre and civil war, the world was treated to the sight of black South Africans in long, snaking lines that stretched in some cases for more than a mile, dancing in jubilation over their first-ever opportunity to vote.

"Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." (Isaiah 26:3, AV)

The peace of God is not the peace of stoicism or passivity. It is the most intense activity. Some people say they are tired of life; they mean to say that they are tired of dying. They are tired of the spiritual death that stops activity. They are tired of life getting so sluggish.

What does Jesus say? "I have come that ye might have life and that ye may have it more abundantly...."

- Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest



1	2010 is the Year of Leadin

