

**GRACE BIBLE TRAINING CENTRE (GBTC)**  
**SCHOOL OF MINISTRY**  
**ARUSHA - TANZANIA**

**SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES**

**LESSON 3: THE CALL TO LEADERSHIP**

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**True Leadership**

The maintenance of a balanced leadership that does not become overbearing on God's flock but brings harmony to the Church is very essential. A true leader of God is firm and strong, but nevertheless does not lord it over or domineer the people of God (1Peter 5:1-5). It is a false leader who is so insecure in his relationship with God and with others that he must compensate by unscriptural domination, control and dictatorship over God's people. The Lord Himself taught His apostles that leadership in the kingdom of God is different to that in the world (Matthew 20:20-28). The high officials and rulers of this world lord it over their subjects (vs. 25) whereas Christian leaders obtain recognition through their humility and service. Christ obtained greatness through His obedience, humility and service (Matthew 20:28; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 5:8-9; 12:2).

Loving and not lording is the standard in God's kingdom.

Another warning against domineering and false leadership is from Ezekiel 34:1-16.

The following columns show in general terms the contrast between true and false leadership. True leaders love the people of God, while false leaders lord their authority over the people.

<b>Serial no.</b>	<b>True Leadership</b>	<b>False Leadership</b>
1.	Concentrates on influence from WITHIN by encouraging, inspiring and motivating.	Depends on external controls from WITHOUT, using restrictions, rules and regulations.
2.	Enjoys a good relationship with co-workers, showing respect for the individual.	Regulates co-workers from "I am superior - you are inferior" standpoint.
3.	Works with co-workers towards long-range goals, with concern for the workers' development.	Demands immediate results, even if it damages the potential in the co-worker.
4.	Aims to make himself unnecessary.	Creates an atmosphere where the subordinate is permanently dependent on him.
5.	Values individual workers; encourages and praises rather than condemn them.	Has a low opinion of workers; very critical of others' mistakes.

6.	Always willing to discuss decisions and reasons for the decisions, unless circumstances do not allow.	Interprets questions as personal criticism or disloyalty.
7.	Liberates the individual, encourages ideas and participation, equips people to produce definite results.	Limits individual freedoms, prefers to make all decisions, and does not train anyone else to function effectively.
8.	He is a 'heart' man, portraying a genuine concern for others	He is 'head' man, showing little or no human compassion.
9.	Is considerate and concerned for others.	Is concerned only with himself.

If a leader wants primarily to make people dependent upon his presence (thus giving him a sense of power) he will never properly train those under him who desire to be used of the Lord. God sets tremendous importance on a leader's reasons and motives. The wrong motives will poison a leader's work, while the right and pure motives will overcome a host of difficulties.

There are some improper and carnal motives a person could have in aspiring to leadership. Examples of such carnal motives are:

- The desire for the glory of a fulfilled ministry more than the process of meeting people's spiritual needs;
- The desire for power, position, a title of respect, or the increased authority that goes with an office;
- The desire to be the guy in front of the room giving orders;
- The desire to get a chance to shine, to prove that you are better, to be enjoyed and praised for your own abilities and traits;
- The desire to be held up for public approval and served by others.

On the other hand, we have godly and pure motives. Examples are:

- A desire to serve others and meet their needs, to make them successful in their callings and ministries, as Jonathan did for David;
- A hunger to show the love and mercy of God to those that so desperately need it;
- A deep, stubborn commitment to be faithful to the will of God in our lives;
- An urgency to lead others to Christ;
- A need to unite family members under Christ's headship;
- A drive to help the spiritually sick, poor and oppressed

### **The Call of Leadership**

While everyone is called by God, leaders are divinely called or appointed to lead. The call of God to lead is the point of revelation, the personal foundation for ministry. God's calling establishes your place in the Body of Christ, and victory in the ministry hinges upon this initial call from God. There must be a divine encounter with the Lord before a person can be sent out by the Lord. God must call the person and equip him before he goes forth.

Unfortunately, some have entered positional or governmental ministries in presumption and without receiving a divine call from God. They have entered the

ministry in the same way as they would enter any other profession in the world. The Bible is full of such people who went forth of their own initiative without the Lord sending them and these all failed (Jeremiah 23:21, 31-32; 27:15; 29:9; Ezekiel 13:6-9). These self-appointed leaders have misled so many and make them believe a lie. God's people have therefore suffered as a result.

There are 3 ways that a man can be appointed to an office:

- i) God can appoint him;
- ii) Man may appoint him;
- iii) A person may appoint himself

In the world today, there are many leaders who appoint themselves or are appointed by man, and few appointed by God.

### **1. Self-Appointed leadership** (Numbers 16; Jude 1:4, 8-11)

A self-appointed leader takes upon him the authority and responsibility of a spiritual office into which he has not been divinely called. Korah in the OT is a typical example of self-appointed leadership (Numbers 16). Such leaders are self-willed and presumptuous who want authority that is not given to them. They usually rise up against God-ordained leadership, as Korah did against Moses.

### **2. Man-appointed leadership**

Man-appointed leaders claim to receive a call from God, but the call is by the authority of human vessels who are not speaking by the unction / anointing of the Lord. Man-appointed leadership is very common in our society today. Many are called into position of authority in the church on the basis of their strength and ability, their academic qualifications, training and education. These things though good, cannot replace the call of God, which alone brings anointing and the true authority of God upon an individual's life.

The man-appointed leader is destined to rob and spoil the people of the Lord. He is out to get what he wants and what he needs, at the expense of the sheep. He is not concerned with the needs of the sheep but more interested in his own selfish desires. This is a picture of a hireling, who lives off the sheep as opposed to the true shepherd, who will die for the sheep.

### **3. God-appointed leadership**

The Bible gives us patterns, guidelines and examples of God-appointed leadership. These leaders were appointed by God to function in a given capacity. They are God's choice; God's appointed and placed ministries. There are two major ways God calls or appoints people into leadership:

- a) By a direct call – this could come in the form of a personal conviction, a vision or an audible call from the Lord. Examples are Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4), Moses (Exodus 3:10-12), Samuel (1Samuel 3:4, 19-20), the early church apostles (Luke 6:12-16), Paul (Acts 9:1-6), Bezaleel (Exodus 31:1-5), Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:8-10), Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-10).

- b) By an indirect call through a God-ordained leader – this could come in the form of a specific instruction or command from the Lord by prophesy, vision or conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Biblical examples are:

- i) Aaron by Moses (Numbers 3:10);
- ii) King David by Samuel (1Samuel 16:1, 12-13);
- iii) King Saul by Samuel (1Samuel 9:16-17);
- iv) Joshua by Moses (Numbers 27:18-23);
- v) Prophet Elisha & others by Elijah (1Kings 19:15-16);
- vi) Paul by Ananias (Acts 9:10-18);
- vii) Apostle Matthias by the early apostles (Acts 1: 23-26);
- viii) Elders by Titus (Titus 1:5);
- ix) Deacons by the early apostles through the believers (Acts 6:1-7); and
- x) Believers with a desire to serve (1Timothy 3:1)

The indirect call is the commonest form of divine appointment into leadership today. However, many people may help to develop a ministry though the preparation process, but the Lord must initially call people to His work. It is the Lord who calls and separates. When God calls, He sends with a specific mission or function to carry out in the Church.

It is important to recognise that God calls into both governmental and congregational ministries. A ministry of helps is just as important as a ministry of an apostle. A ministry of hospitality is just as important as the ministry of a prophet. Though there are different callings in the Body, all of the callings are important and necessary. The difference lies in function, not in importance.

The wisdom of God in calling different ones to function in different positions is past human understanding and human legislation. God can call anyone to a place of ministry. 1Corinthians 1:26-29 makes it clear about the kind of people God calls. God's calling is without discrimination or partiality to anyone. His calling does not depend on anyone's status or on how wise, noble or mighty one is. He can call the despised, the weak, and the people the world consider as foolish.

### **God's calling**

It is important for every leader to recognise his calling from the Lord, otherwise such a person would not know where he fits into God's agenda in the Church. The following chart will help to identify or discover where a leader's gifts or calling are. It is important to hear from God to affirm the gifts and callings that are already in a leader.

### **Man's response to God's calling**

Receiving God's call is the most exciting event in anyone's life. Blessing in ministry confirms the call, and helps establish a leader's confidence in his call. In the face of failure and criticism, every genuine Christian leader is taken back to his call.

*There is a difference between being a 'man of God' – as all are called to be, and being 'God's man' – one called to leadership.*

Each member of the Body has a calling and each calling is unique. In the Bible, we can see various examples and great diversities in God's method of calling. Leaders are called in different ways, for example:-

a) Sovereign call

1. Moses was singled out by God who spoke to him from a burning bush (Exodus 3:1-6)
2. Samuel was called by God through an audible voice while he was asleep (1Samuel 3:1-18)
3. Isaiah was worshipping in the temple when called by God (Isaiah 6:1-9)
4. Joseph was called by God through a dream (Genesis 37:1-10)
5. Jacob was called by God through God's hand from the time of birth (Genesis 25:22-26)
6. Paul was called by God through a visitation by the risen Lord (Acts 9:1-9)
7. Abraham was called at the age of 70 through the word of the Lord (Genesis 12:1-5)
8. The apostles were called by the Lord Jesus Christ ((Matthew 4:18-22)

b) Others are called through men

1. Samuel went to David and anointed him with oil (1Samuel 16:1-14)
2. Paul instructed Titus to appoint elders in the churches of Crete (Titus 1:5)
3. Aaron was called by God through Moses (Exodus 3:13-17)
4. Saul was called by God through prophet Samuel (1Samuel 10:1-2)
5. Timothy was called by God through his family upbringing and the hand of Paul (1Timothy 1:2, 18; 2Timothy 1:2, 5, 9; 2:1)

The above examples show us how God calls His leaders in different ways. Therefore, people should not judge the means of another's call just because it may be different from their own.

Throughout history, men and women have responded to God's calling in various ways:

**1. The response of unworthiness**

An example here is that of Moses who did not consider himself worthy to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 3:11). Moses' feeling of unworthiness was a feeling of being undeserving, useless, valueless and inadequate. Although many people who are called of God feel unworthy of the calling, God's divine enablement and protection causes them to respond fully to His call, like Moses eventually did.

**2. The response of timidity and the fear of rejection (Jeremiah 1:8-9)**

Everyone called by God should not go forth in their own name or strength except with divine accompaniment. The courage to go forth is hinged upon the assurance of God's call. The presence of divine commission makes all the difference in the spiritual productivity of a ministry. The confidence of the call and name of God, however, are keys to helping a leader overcome the fear of rejection.

### **3. The response of lack of eloquence**

Some may feel that they lack the ability to speak (Exodus 4:10; Jeremiah 1:6). God wants a man that will obey His word and depend upon His Spirit. He wants a vessel through which He can show His glory, not man's glory. The Lord will give all His leaders the words to speak and the ability to speak them, when they will speak out of their weakness, to His glory (Jeremiah 1:7, 9).

### **4. The response of inferiority (Judges 6:15-17)**

Some will rather want someone else to take the call of leadership instead of them. This is a form of inferiority. Example was Moses ((Exodus 4:13) and God had to send his brother Aaron to assist him. This feeling of inferiority is a constant reminder to leaders of their own inadequacy and the need for them to always depend on God's help and strength in their ministry.

### **5. The response of youth**

Jeremiah is an example of someone who used his youth as an excuse to refuse God's calling (Jeremiah 1:6); so also did Gideon (Judges 6:15). Some are afraid of people who have attained more age, experience and education than they have. It is important to set aside this excuse of youth and simply obey God's word. God will always provide the strength and wisdom to match His call.

**A leader must have a right response to God's call if he is to be effective in ministry.**

There are biblical principles we need to know and apply them if we are to be effective as leaders. We shall look at certain case studies in the Bible for guidance.

#### **Case 1 – Isaiah's call (Isaiah 6:8-9) – A sense of calling**

'Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying; "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." And He said, "Go, and tell this people ....."'

One of the tasks of the Holy Spirit is to call godly leaders in the Church. Jesus said to his disciples in John 15:16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

#### **Case 2 – Total commitment exemplified by Paul (Acts 26:19) – A sense of mission**

After giving the testimony of his conversion and call to King Agrippa, Paul said in Acts 26:19, "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Paul was totally committed to his call to spread the gospel and establish churches throughout the known world. His life demonstrated three basic concepts of leadership:

1. He was committed to the goals and spirit of his call (Philippians 3:7-8)
2. He translated his objectives into the lives of his followers (2 Timothy 2:1-2). He also bore with all necessary hardship in pursuing that end (2 Corinthians 4:8-11; 11:23-33)

3. He was alert to change. He adapted to cultural, social, and political changes and thus never lost his relevancy (1Corinthians 9:19-22)

**Case 3** – Joshua & Caleb resisted a popular opinion that was contrary to the will of God (Numbers 13)

The statements of Joshua and Caleb in Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9 was a testimony of their absolute confidence and faith in God to enable them to possess the Promised Land, unfavorable circumstances notwithstanding.

As a leader, Joshua was constantly faced with choices which were, in many cases, contrary to popular opinion. In each of those cases, he called on the people to place their faith in God rather than look at the impossible circumstances. A leader must not condition his appeal to the sentiment or mood of the times but on a conviction of the word of God. Spiritual advance requires faith, and unbelief will never see beyond the difficulties. Unbelief looks at obstacles, ‘walled cities and giants’, while faith looks at God.

**Case 4** – The faith of Abraham (Genesis 12)

Another example of faith in God is that demonstrated by Abraham. His ability to lead was tested in three areas of faith:

1. Faith to risk everything and follow God’s faithfulness by venturing into the unknown (Genesis 12:1-5)
2. Absolute reliance on God that moves beyond facts to faith. Abraham and Sarah were, humanly speaking, beyond the ability to have a child, yet they believed God’s promises concerning an offspring (Genesis 17:1-27).
3. Faith to sacrifice all things precious in order to please God. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac in obedience to God (Genesis 22:1-19).

**Case 5** – Humility exemplified by Gideon (Judges 6 -8; Matthew 18:1-4)

A humble person is one who is devoid of all arrogance and self-exaltation, a person who is willingly submitted to God and His will. Gideon demonstrates traits of godly and humble leadership, for example,

1. He was unwilling to lead unless God calls (Genesis 6:36-40)
2. He depended on God at every situation (Genesis 7:1-8)
3. He was willing to use the gifts God had given him to lead others and set examples (Genesis 7:17)
4. He gave God the glory before and after his victory (Genesis 7:15; 8:3,23)
5. He humbly gave others credit that belonged to him (Genesis 8:1-3)
6. He refused to establish a dynasty after he had fulfilled God’s charge (Genesis 8:22-23). Godly leaders do things God’s way. The leader who seeks to benefit himself at the expense of others is on a path to self-destruction. **God judges leaders not on how much they accomplish, but on whether they do things His way.**

## Case 6 – Hearing from God like Peter (Matthew 16:13-20).

Other examples are Noah & the ark, Moses & the tabernacle. God gave clear instructions to Noah on how to build the ark (Genesis 6:13-22). In Genesis 6:22, it is recorded that Noah did according to all that God commanded him and thus, he was saved from the destruction by the flood. Moses was commanded by God to ensure that he built the tabernacle and its furniture exactly the way he was shown on the mountain (Exodus 25:40; Hebrews 8:5). Anything short of that would have been unacceptable to God, because it has to be an exact replica or mirror image of that in heaven.

No one can build the Lord's house except under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that reveals the mind of God to us because He alone knows the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-16 **READ**). This is the reason why people need to be filled with the Spirit before commencing any service for God. This has been the case from the OT times until present.

The godly leader 'hears' from God, that is, his or her spirit is tuned to the prompting and lessons of the Holy Spirit. Peter's answer to Jesus' question prompted a response from Jesus to the fact Peter heard from God.

**It is to be emphasised here that church leadership would always lead and be based not on man's ability to reason things out as much as on his readiness and receptivity to hear God through "revelation knowledge", the things that God unfolds by the work of the Holy Spirit.**

## Case 7 – A teachable spirit exemplified by King David (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22)

In Acts 13:22, it is recorded that God testified of the boy David, "I have found David the son of Jesse, **a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.**" Only one man in the Bible enjoys the designation of being a man after God's heart, that is, David. To outward appearance, David is more readily remembered as a gross sinner. He committed adultery, murdered, lied, made severe mistakes in judgement, was a poor manager, and finally was unable to manage his home. Yet God said "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all my will".

Almost every time we read about David, he was doing something wrong, yet God commended the heart of his leadership. How do we explain this? The answer is in the fact that with every mistake, David repented; and of more equal importance, he learned from his mistakes. Not only was he humble and teachable, he listened to his critics and his enemies as well; and, foremost of all, he heeded the prophets of God.

This teachable spirit is the trait that caused God to classify him as Israel's finest leader.



## Case 8 – Leaders must have character qualifications (1Timothy 3:1-13; James 3:1-2)

In the early church, individuals were selected on the basis of proven maturity and character to lead so that the whole church could function effectively in worship, service, outreach, and the fulfilment of individual spiritual gifts.

The qualifications outlined in the passage focuses on the leader's certified and sustained ethical character. There are over a dozen significant qualities expected, which include spiritual preparedness, self-control, social graciousness, domestic order, and holy living.

The basis for continual ministry is continual commitment to character. If a leader falls from these ethical standards, he or she should accept removal from leadership until an appropriate season of re-verifying of character can be fulfilled.

Leaders in the world are seldom judged on their personal lives. Leaders in the church, however, are judged not so much by what they accomplish as by the character they reveal – who they are before what they do. This high standard applies not so much to the leader's achievements as to the condition of his or her heart and spirit.

It is possible to have grand accomplishments but still manifest a loveless, ungodly spirit. But if first the leader's heart is right, godly behaviour will always follow and good leadership will be manifested.

A leader must watch out for the following dangers, which stems from wrong motives. These dangers may disable a leader from his course of service, for example

- (a) Ego or personal pride
- (b) Over-confidence
- (c) Popularity and praise
- (d) Jealousy
- (e) Power
- (f) Discouragement, anxiety and depression – these do not necessarily come as a result of wrong motives.