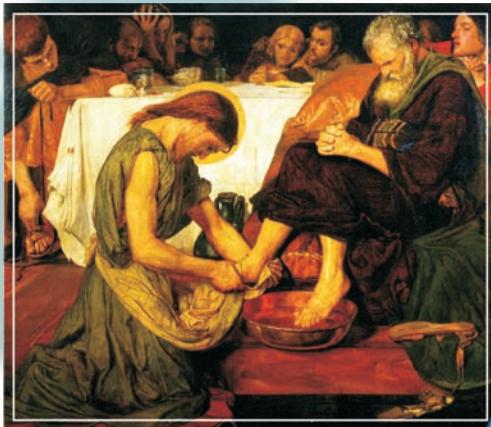


*The Nature and Character of Leaders  
Among God's People*

# Excellence in Leadership



by Richard Rogers

SUNSET BIBLE STUDY LIBRARY

# Excellence in Leadership

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Richard Rogers

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## Excellence in Leadership

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Dedicated in loving memory of  
Richard Rogers  
a long-time instructor of  
Sunset International Bible Institute.



A companion workbook on the study of The Excellence in Leadership by Richard Rogers is available for purchase through Sunset International Bible Institute External Studies: 1(800) 687-2121.



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## Preface to the Sunset Bible Study Library

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Since 1962 Sunset International Bible Institute has been a leader in teaching God's Word, training local church leaders and preparing preachers and missionaries for effective ministry. Developed in the laboratory of preacher training and proven in the crucible of practical ministry, the Sunset curriculum has grown to forty core courses used both in our resident school and distance learning applications. In 1989 the Sunset Video Studio was inaugurated to record each course of study in a professional format. Those courses, each with a companion study guide, have been used to teach thousands of individual students and develop a world-wide network of video satellite schools in local congregations and mission fields.

Now in printed form that same library of trusted Bible study material is available through Sunset Institute Press for an even wider circle of Bible students, thanks to a benevolent God, an excellent editorial staff and a number of faithful supporters who believed in the project.

This book is the result of a multi-step process which began with a videotaped course. The voice track of the videotape was first transcribed then formatted and edited from spoken to written style. The goal of the editorial process has been to produce a readable document while protecting the course content and the style and personality of the teacher. We believe the goal has been achieved and that each of the forty books planned for the Sunset Bible Study Library will likewise achieve that goal.

Special gratitude must be expressed to Cline Paden and Truman Scott who began the video course series in 1989, to Bob Martin, who directed Sunset Video Studio, to Virgil Yocham and the staff of Sunset External Studies Division who wrote the study guides, and to the staff of Sunset Translation Center who edited the manuscripts and to each faculty member of Sunset International Bible Institute who took extra time to prepare and present these courses in the studio.

In addition to the English version, this book and its companion volumes are being translated into the major languages of the world to produce a Bible study library which can be used on the mission fields of the world to mature Christians, train church leaders and grow churches that plant other churches.

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# Identifying Leadership

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Luke 22:24–27; 1 Thessalonians 2:1–12

## Introduction

Every institution is but the lengthened shadow of its leaders. When one finds a church which is dynamic and growing, he will find a church which has a leadership which is dynamic and growing. Find a congregation which has merely been “keeping house” for the Lord, little changed for the past ten years (except maybe getting smaller), and one will likely find a leadership which is stagnant and lifeless.

The church is the body of Christ. It is the only medium through which the world is to know the way of salvation from its sins. It was purchased with the blood of Christ. How important it is to our contemporary world that the lengthened shadow of the church, with its leaders, be growing ever longer and reaching toward perfection.

## What Leadership Is Not

This introductory material is centered on what leadership is not, as well as what it is. The conversation in the beginning text occurred the last week of Jesus’ life during the last supper.

*Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one*

*who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials” (Luke 22:24-28).*

### **Leadership Is Not A Political Power Play**

The conversation centered around honor and prestige: “*... a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest*” (Luke 22:24). The word “dispute” is translated from the Greek word **philoneika** which literally means “rivalry” and indicates a person who is campaigning for an office. Some people run, or campaign, for a leadership position in the church. They run for elder, preacher, or some other office in a congregation that they consider to be a great political position to possess.

This is not the first time that Jesus had spoken to his disciples about the problem. Jesus had been confronted by James, John, and their mother who wanted them to be on the right hand and on the left hand in His kingdom (cf. Matthew 20:20–28; Mark 10:35–45). Their view of leadership was position, power, and prestige, but Jesus said that is not what leadership is. Leadership is serving. Jesus used a word that means “to serve tables.” Leadership means to become a slave, one who is the possession of another person. A leader exists simply to benefit others.

### **Leadership Is Not An Authoritarian Attitude**

Jesus said three negative things in the text about leadership. First, He said the Gentiles have to have those who rule over them.

They have to have those who exercise authority. They even call those that do so benefactors. Benefactor comes from two Latin words. **Bene** means “good,” and **factor** means “an element which controls.” So these men were viewed as good leaders by the people. One of the Roman rulers, Octavian, was even renamed Augustus by the people. Augustus means the “August one,” the “good one.” He was well liked by the people.

Jesus told His apostles not to be like the kings of the Gentiles because they were not good rulers. Leadership is not a political power play. It is not striving for office.

### **Leadership Is Not a Political Power Play**

Jesus said that a leader needs to sacrifice his life for others as Jesus had sacrificed His life for others. It is sickening to see someone campaigning for a spiritual office as if it were a political office. If a position to preach opens up in a prestigious place, there are many applicants, but there are few volunteers to go to foreign nations where many people have not heard the gospel of Christ. I am sadly persuaded that many people believe that leadership is a political position, and they, therefore, engage in a political power play.

Second, Jesus said that excellent Christian leadership is not authoritarian. Contrast is the key thought between the Gentile ruler and the spiritual leader. The Gentile ruler exercises authority by lording it over people. He exercises dominion over another person's attitude, activity, and character even if it is for the benefit of that person. The Gentile ruler does it to the extent that people like it that way. The people begin to believe that the man is a good ruler, a benefactor.

Jesus told His apostles not to be like the Gentile kings. He said the spiritual ruler is simply a servant among other servants. He is a slave serving other slaves. When elders in the church or other leaders consider their prime directive to be to order and control the activities of other people, the functions of shepherding, helping, and even leading goes begging. What a pity that is. They should simply be the shepherds of God's flock and not try to be those in authority.

### **Leadership Is Not Cultic Control**

Read the next verse carefully: "*For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves*" (Luke 22:27). The leader is to be the "server" not the "served." A cult leader is over the sheep in complete control, using manipulation and coercion. In films about cult leaders, they are always

higher, always above everyone else. They always speak down to the people and call them their children or their disciples. That is what Jesus spoke about in this scripture. He pictures a table at which the leaders have seated themselves to eat, and the other people scurry around picking up plates, putting down cups, pouring water, pouring coffee, putting food on the table, making sure that everyone is cared for. Jesus asked which one would be consider greater? The greater one would seem to be the one sitting at the table, but Jesus said He was among them like one who serves.

What is the location of the spiritual leader? He is among the people who need serving. What is the function of the spiritual leader? It is serving them, meeting their needs. Spiritual leadership is not so much commanding and directing as it is simply meeting the needs of the people. When all the spiritual plans of a group have to be approved by a man or group of men, they are a cult whether they want to admit it or not. Leaders/Shepherds are simply men who carry out the wishes of Jesus who is the Master Shepherd.

## **Contrast Between Natural And Spiritual Leadership**

### **Natural And Spiritual Leadership Characteristics**

The qualities of natural and spiritual leadership will be contrasted in this section. Natural leadership is that which man usually desires. To be a good natural leader, one must be self-confident. Nobody follows a timid person. He has to be loud, sure, confident, and even a little bit cocky. If people know that the leader is confident, they will follow him.

The spiritual leader's total confidence is in God. He admits readily that he does not know the way. The leader is definitely not the way. The strength to get the people to the desired destination is not found in him, but he is confident in God's direction. The spiritual leader, says with Paul: "*I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*"

The natural leader has to know men. He has to be a student of the way that men think and know the needs of men. More importantly, for natural leadership, he must understand the greed of men. What do men lust for? If the natural leader can discover that and show the people a way to get there, they will follow him. The spiritual leader understands men, but he knows God also. He can speak of knowing God, Christ, and the Spirit. This leader is intimate with the One that knows the way to the eternal abode.

The natural leader has to be an ambitious man. Natural leadership is built around the desire to achieve one's chosen goals. This leader talks about himself, his goals, and how to mutually achieve those goals. The spiritual leader, the shepherd is self-effacing. He does not talk negatively about himself because he does not talk about himself at all. He talks about Christ, and he points people to Jesus so they can find the true Guide for their life. The natural leader has to have the ability to make and to enforce his own decisions about what he plans. He incorporates a "judge" role in leadership, where the behavior and disputes of others are evaluated and decisions are made. The spiritual leader seeks to know God's will and get people to seek the will of God.

The natural leader originates his own methods to reach the desired end. He focuses attention on deviant behavior and problem solving. The spiritual leader seeks to find and follow the way of God.

The natural leader loves to command and direct people, and does so well. People follow him because his commands seem to make sense to them. The spiritual leader delights to obey God and to get people to submit to and obey God.

The natural leader is motivated by his own self-felt needs. His needs to have his needs met to the detriment of the needs of those he leads. The spiritual leader is motivated by a love for God and a love for others. His intent is to lead people toward the achievement of God's goal for their lives.

The natural leader runs an institution, and organizes relationships by their places in the structure. Leaders tend to relate to the supervisors above them, to their peers, or their

subordinates. This tends to focus communication on task accomplishment rather than on personal experience and needs. The spiritual leader helps and serves in the body of Christ.

This beginning contrast of leadership will be observed throughout the study.

## **What Leadership Is – The Nature Of Spiritual Leadership**

### **A Nurturing Mother**

A Biblical definition as well as an example of leadership is found in 1 Thessalonians 2:1–12. In the first six verses Paul wrote that he was not like human leaders. 1 Thessalonians 2:1–6:

*You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition. For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else . . .*

Paul had no impure motives. He was trying to please God. Paul was not greedy nor was he looking for praise from men.

Paul considered leaders to be like a mother, brother or father of those they lead. Leadership is like a family. Notice the ingredients of a mother's nurture, a brother's example, and a father's love.

Paul wrote that leadership is like a mother who nurtures her young one: “*As apostles of Christ we could have been a*

*burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children”* (1 Thessalonians 2:6–7). Paul wrote that he could have been a burden, but he was gentle among them. He could have demanded his way because he was an apostle and had a right to do that, but he was gentle.

Paul loved the Christians in Thessalonica: “*We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us*” (1 Thessalonians 2:8). Paul was anxious to share not merely the gospel, but his life, as well. Is that not like a mother? He was gentle, he cared, and he shared.

If there is any word that comes to my mind when I think of a true mother, it is that word gentle. As she takes a small baby, who is not able to sustain himself, into her bosom, she manifests her love for the baby. At the end of World War II, there were many orphans dying in hospitals in Europe. The U.N. sent a team of pediatricians to examine the situation. The leader of the group wrote a prescription before they left. The prescription was very simple. It instructed the medical personnel to pick up the babies three times a day and hold them close. This was not to be done during the feedings but at other times. They were to hold the babies close for five minutes. The babies stopped dying because they were receiving what mother’s give, the gentleness of their bosom.

When I was a youngster not even a year old, I got scarlet fever. I was told that my mother stayed awake all night and all day for three days and nights and kept me from moving in order that the scarlet fever would not develop into rheumatic fever and I forever would have a weak heart. Did she do it because she was paid to do it? She was paid absolutely nothing to do it. Did she do it because that was her duty? Ah, it was her duty to do it, but that is not why she did it. She did it because she was a mother, and she cared for me. That is the way leaders are to care for those people who follow them.

I have never seen a mother with a child beside her eat all the food on her plate. She shares her food even if the baby also has a plate of food. Again, is she sharing because it is her duty? No, that is not why she is sharing. She is doing it because of her

love for the baby. She is sharing because she is responsible for the growth of her child. When a church has leaders who are gentle, loving, and sharing, they will begin to have spiritual leaders.

### A Brother's Example

Paul changed his family example to a brother:

*“Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you”* (1 Thessalonians 2:9). Paul toiled, endured hardship, and labored constantly for his brothers. There are pictures of the lad who has his brother on his shoulders as they move toward a place of mutual security. The question is not asked, but it is inferred in the answer. The question had to have been, “Is the boy not heavy?” The lad replies, “No, he is not heavy. He is my brother.” That is literally the way it should be in the body of Christ. Brother's will endure all kinds of hardship and will carry burdens for each other. If my brother, who is 8 ½ years younger than I am, were to call me today and say “Richard, I need you here as quickly as possible.” If there was a plane that would get me to Hurst quicker than a car, I would take the plane. If not, I would quickly be in the car. The quickest, the surest, the best way to his side is where I would be when my brother is in need.

A spiritual leader should react the same way. He should look upon his brother's needs as if they were his own. The leader should look upon the brother's troubles as if they were his own. Who will toil for him? Who will work hard for him? Who will stay up all night, all day, and all night again to try to meet a brother's anxious and terrible need? A spiritual leader will. It is not the demand that a brother serve him, but the demand that a brother be served.

### A Father's Love

Paul changed from the example of a mother's nurture and a brother's care to the example of a father's love. 1 Thessalonians 2:11–12:

*For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*

Paul did not deal with all of the people in a collective, communal way. He cared for each of them one-on-one, one father to one son. How does a father deal with a son? He encourages, comforts, and urges his son to live a worthy life.

Spiritual leaders should labor with a father's love for those they lead. First, they should encourage them. Encourage means "to call to one's side." "En" or "in" means "inside of." Courage is the strength to endure a challenge or a dare. Spiritual leaders inspire those they lead to have courage and the strength of character to endure.

Paul not only encouraged, he comforted as a father does. The word "com" means "with or together" and the word "fort" comes from the Latin word **fortress** which means "to strengthen or to arm."

Second, the spiritual leader is to comfort, to give strength. He is to give armor and protection. The leader is not to merely send a letter of encouragement. He is to stand by the weaker brother's side. The stronger brother is to come beside to strengthen and comfort as a father does to his child. He provides with his presence what multitudes of letters could not perform.

Paul dealt with each one of them as a father by urging them to live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ. The word "urge" literally means "to provoke." It is similar to using a prod to push an animal a certain direction.

Third, the spiritual leader is to urge, provoke, or prod a person to live a worthy life. Sometimes, Christians need to be told that they can do better. They need to be reminded that they have the ability and the strength from God to stand firm.

### **God's Power Is At Work**

Paul wrote that God's power is at work within Christians. Ephesians 3:20-21:

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

The power that created the world, the power that raised Jesus from the dead is working in every believer. Therefore, he can do whatever God gives him to do: "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength*" (Philippians 4:13). If Jesus goes with a Christian, he can go anywhere. How does Jesus go with him? He goes with him, not only by the word and by the Spirit that dwells in him, but He goes with him when one of His shepherds stands by his side. The shepherd, the spiritual leader, guides him besides still waters, restores his soul, fills his cup, and makes all of life meaningful.

## Conclusion

It would be wonderful if all of God's leaders nurtured sick and hurting babies in Christ like mothers do. When younger brothers falter and need help, older brothers need to work with them and constantly be godly examples. Older brothers in Christ should deal with younger Christians as a father would deal with his child. Spiritual leaders need to give fatherly comfort, strength, and encouragement. They should challenge, urge, and provoke struggling children of God to live worthy lives.

I am not mature, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I should be, I am not even what I want to be, but by God's grace, I am not what I used to be. The reason I have matured spiritually is because I have had mothers to nurture me, brothers to give me an example, and fathers to urge me and say, "I am going this way, come go with me." With a firm hand on my hand or a firm arm on my shoulder, they lead me through the valley of the shadow of death into the glory of the kingdom of God. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever (cf.

Psalm 23). When spiritual leaders walk with immature, struggling Christians, more souls will be led into realms eternal. May the study of Excellence in Christian Leadership help spiritual leaders to become better leaders of God's people.

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# The Church Is The Body Of Christ (1)

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**Ephesians 1:15–23; Colossians 1:18, 2:10, 19;  
1 Corinthians 12:12–31; Ephesians 4:7–16**

## Introduction

It is impossible to truly follow Christ without being a leader. Only a dynamic leader such as Jesus could preach for only three years in a corner of the world, and without writing a book, change the course of history. Jesus was no effeminate, impotent, sickly man. He called the stream of history to a halt and bade its rushing waters reverse themselves. He was one who could say to the winds and the waves: “. . . ‘*Quiet! Be still!*’ . . .” (Mark 4:39), and they obeyed His voice. Life’s storm is as docile when He speaks today. Jesus walked boldly into the temple where most men from His humble background usually felt insecure and out of place. There He overturned the money changer’s tables and drove them out with His whip (cf. John 2:15–16).

If this man from Galilee had such authority and was truly all that He claimed to be, then He has the right to step before mankind and demand: “*any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple*” (Luke 14:33). This One has the power to make ultimate demands on a Christian’s life and on his allegiance.

Leadership can only be understood, if we understand the nature of those being led, if we understand the nature of the body of Christ. The next two chapters will be entitled “The Church is the Body of Christ.” That is the basic reality of all life. If leaders do not understand the nature of their followers, they will fail as leaders.

## The Basic Reality – Christ Is The Head

### **Jesus' Power Manifested In His Resurrection**

Christ is the head of a living body, an organism, not merely an organization. His power is demonstrated by His resurrection. After the Sabbath Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb to anoint the body of Christ. An angel, seated on the stone that had been rolled back, announced the new era. Perhaps nodding toward the empty tomb, the angel proclaimed: "*He is not here; he has risen, just as he said . . .*" (Matthew 28:6). This Jesus whom man put to death could not be held by the grave. He was raised from the dead, alive forever more.

### **The Extent Of His Power**

Paul affirmed the extent of Jesus' power in Ephesians 1:15–23:

*For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

Paul has three main points in the text. First, Jesus lives. He is not simply one who has come back to life. He is not merely in existence but in action at this very time. Life is not simply existing, being sustained by a support system. Life is being able to move, speak, act, work, and dream. It is to fulfill a purpose.

Second, Jesus possess ultimate power. He is over everything. He is over all of creation. He is over all of the nations of the world. He is over all the rulers of the world. He is over every home in the world. He is over every parent in the world. This means that Jesus possess ultimate, total authority. He is the Lord, not simply a lord. Paul wants readers to know that before leadership is discussed, they need to understand that the only ultimate, the only total power in all the world resides in Christ Jesus.

Third, Jesus is God's gift for mankind and has been appointed the head over everything. The ultimate power that Jesus possesses, the total power that He is, is exercised on behalf of the body of Christ.

Pause here for a moment and reflect upon what Paul meant. Notice that this is not a two-way street. Whatever role human leadership a person is to play in the church, it must not intrude into the realm of Jesus' headship. It must not claim the prerogative of Jesus to decide for the body of Christ and be the head of the body of Christ. Jesus alone is the head of the body of Christ. Jesus alone is the only head of Christ's church.

Paul shows that there is new life power found in Jesus: "*... and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength*" (Ephesians 1:19).

The extent of the power as it expands to heaven and earth is found in this text. Christians are the beneficiaries of that power, but always remember that Jesus is the power. The power is not found in human leadership. It is found in the Savior. The power is not found in numbers. It is found in our Lord. The power is not found in knowledge. It is found in the One who is known. Ephesians 1:20-22:

*... which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet . . .*

Remember that total power resides in Christ Jesus. Nothing else about leadership means anything without this belief. Jesus, and Jesus alone, is head of the body: “*And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy*” (Colossians 1:18). He is not only the Head of the body, He is Head over everything for the benefit of His body. “*. . . and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way*” (Ephesians 1:22–23).

### Three Models Of Leadership

There are only three kinds of leadership possible in the world. Think about that statement for a moment. Are all three of them found in the church? The first kind of leadership is **command leadership**. This leadership is an over/under relationship. The leader is over and those who are led are under. This kind of leadership is found in the Old Testament. It is found in armed services and in contemporary business relationships. Those areas cannot run properly without that kind of authority. There has to be a general who gives a command to march or to attack or to retreat. There has to be a CEO who directs large companies of the world so they will have a profit at the end of the year. The stress of command leadership is on authority and most of the time is spent in decision making. Command authority is legitimate, but it is not the kind of leadership that Jesus wants in the body of Christ.

The second kind of leadership is called **sharing leadership**. This is a side-by-side concept. The emphasis is on sharing and sustenance. Relationship is the emphasis rather than the role. It is the kind of leadership that one needs to find

in the home as husband and wife are made one flesh. They are mutually responsible for each other and mutually responsible for their children. The sharing leadership model is legitimate for Jesus' relationship to the church because the church is His bride. Jesus Christ is the husband and Christians are His bride. Still it is not the kind of leadership that is to exist in the body of Christ, the Church.

A kind of leadership that is more effective and powerful than command leadership or sharing leadership is **servant leadership**. In this model the leader is under the one being led in order to lift, to support, to give life, and to lead. The stress is on “*... Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*” (Ephesians 5:25). Paul’s message to the church is similar to what Jesus told His apostles: “*... the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:28). Jesus showed the true leadership that is to be in the kingdom of God. His leadership was not above, commanding, nor even beside, helping; Jesus’ leadership was under, lifting and giving life to people.

### **The Nature And Character Of Jesus’ Headship**

At this point it would be good for each student to again read the book of Ephesians. Pay particular attention to the following verses. Jesus Christ is not only the head of the church, He is head of everything **for** the church. “*And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church*” (Ephesians 1:22). Also notice Paul’s statement that Christians are to grow and mature into Him: “*... we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ*” (Ephesians 4:15). Christ is to sustain the church as a husband sustains a wife (cf. Ephesians 5:21–23). Paul also wrote the church in Colosse and told them that Christ is the head of the church: “*And he is the head of the body, the church ... so that in everything he might have the supremacy*” (Colossians 1:18). Christ is the head over every power and authority: “*... who is the head over every power and authority*” (Colossians 2:10). Paul wrote many times that Jesus is the head of the body (cf. Colossians 2:19).

Jesus' headship is both relational and positional. His functions as head are powerful. First, Jesus is the source and the origin of life. He created all things. There is not a single thing in the world that came into existence except by the Word who became flesh as the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything that is presently on earth is good and wholesome and had its origin in Christ.

Second, Jesus not only is the source and origin of life, but He sustains life. He supplies all that the body needs, and thereby He sustains their struggles, their growth, and their potential. Jesus is not just their source; He is their supply.

Third, Jesus is committed to serving believers. He is a servant. Imagine that! The Creator of the world, the Lord of mankind, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords is my servant. He lives to fulfill my need. Jesus brings saving transformation, but He also provides for physical and mental needs. No Christian has a single need that the Lord Christ does not sustain.

Fourth, Jesus lifts His followers up without blemish before His Father. That is the emphasis of Ephesians 5. Jesus has accepted the church to be His bride. He sustains, glorifies, and lifts believers up, making them spotless and blemish free that He might lay them down on the altar of His Father as a sacrifice and a meaningful service to God. What a thrill that concept is! Jesus is the head of the body, the origin, the source, the sustainer, the supplier, and the presenter of His church to God. So what does that make Christians? They are the living body of Christ.

When the Bible states that the church is the body of Christ, one must assume it is not only affirming the unity of the Christian community, but also the fact that the body cannot be separated from Christ Himself. As the head, Jesus has called His body into a relationship in which the body identifies with Him and He identifies with the body.

Leadership in the church of Christ demands that believers rediscover and reaffirm the nature of the church as the body and that they learn how to help the church be and become what it ought to be.

## The Church Is A Living Organism

### Resemblance Is Not Identity

Paul wrote that the church is like a human body, but he did not say it is like the body of Christ. Christians are the body of Christ. There is a huge difference between “is like” and “is.” Resemblance is not identity. The Bible does not state that the church resembles the body of Christ. It insists that the church is the body of Christ. Identity, not similarity, is what Paul taught. The church is not similar to something that could be called the body of Christ. The church is the body of Christ as surely as Jesus is the head of the body. A person’s physical body and physical head are one entity. Spiritually, Christ and the church are the same body. The church is Christ, and Christ is the church. That is why Paul wrote: *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me . . .”* (Galatians 2:20). Paul also wrote: *“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”* (Philippians 1:23). Paul was identifying with the body of Christ, not in a physical sense, but in a spiritual sense. One dare not teach and preach parallels between the body and the human body or the body in Christ and leave out the practical implications. When dealing with identity, not mere resemblance, people are not free to note parallels, and then ignore their practical implications.

### The Reality Of The Body

The church is in reality the body of Christ. There are two scriptures that really emphasize this statement. The first scripture is a rather long reading. Read without stopping because it was written to be read that way. 1 Corinthians 12:12–31:

*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one*

*part but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don't need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don't need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.*

Reading the last verse of 1 Corinthians 12 and continuing with chapter 13, students will find that the most excellent way

is the way of love. In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul wrote that some Christians had been misguided by their pride, their desire to be heard, and their desire to be seen to glorify the showy gift of tongues above the confirming and edifying gift of prophecy. What he wrote is simple. They were forgetting their body relationships.

Paul makes four points in the text of 1 Corinthians 12:12–31. **First**, the gifts are not given for individual benefit (verses 12–13). They are given to benefit the entire body (cf. verse 7). God gives gifts to everybody for the common good of the church. Whatever gift a person is given, it is given to benefit the body. Paul stresses that the church should be a united body.

**Second**, Paul wrote that the arrangement of the members are for the benefit of the entire body (verses 14–20). God has arranged every part of the body.

**Third**, Paul stresses the freedom of the members to exercise their particular giftedness and usefulness for the body (verses 21–26). Every part of the body is needed.

**Fourth**, Paul emphasizes that God gives gifts so that the church will be benefitted (verses 27–31). Members have been given different gifts. Paul's conclusion is found in verses 27–29. The answer to all the questions found in verses 29–30 is no.

The church is a living, vibrant organism of God. It is the body of Christ. It is not only given life by the blood strain, it is also given direction by its head. Jesus has never delegated his authority to anybody because the Head cannot delegate that function. A person can lose his eyesight, and his ears will somewhat compensate for the loss. He can lose his hearing, and his eyes and hands can make up for the loss by speaking with his hands. There are functions of the body that can, to some degree, be delegated to another member of the body. But the head's ability to think, plan, reason, and direct cannot be delegated to any other member of the human body. In the same way the Head of the spiritual body cannot delegate His ability to direct. That fact is significant! The church is the living,

vibrant body of Christ. Whatever one learns about leadership, he needs to put that concept into his framework.

In Ephesians 4:1–6 Paul wrote about the spirit of unity in the body: lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, diligence, and love. Then he wrote about the facts of unity: there is one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God.

Paul made a more specific and practical statement about leadership which he applied to the body, the church. He stresses two items. First, he stresses the gifts of the body in Ephesians 4:7–11:

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers*

Why did Jesus give these gifts to men, to the kingdom of Christ? “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12). The body of Christ is plural: “until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

Second, Paul emphasizes the special functions of the gifted in Ephesians 4:14–16:

*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him*

*who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Notice the corporate work (...*every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each...*) as well as the individual work (...as each part does its work) mentioned in verse 16.

In both 1 Corinthians 12:12–32 and Ephesians 4:7–16 the wholeness of the body is stressed. The gifts of the body are stressed so that the church, ruled by Jesus Christ and helped by gifted men, may understand their own individual giftedness in order that the whole body may be built up.

### **Comparison—Church Member And Body Member**

I think too many times Christians think only of being a church member and not a body member. A church member is a person who attends the meetings, gives his money, lives a moral life, recruits new members if he is really dedicated, and participates in the group projects. He is a club type member. He does the things that would get him into the Lion's Club or any other such organization.

A member of a body is a totally different person. First, each member of the body is dependent upon other members of the body to accomplish the work of the church. As the hand is dependent upon the wrist, the forearm, the elbow, the upper arm, the shoulder, the spinal column and the head. Every member of the human body must work when the hand moves.

Second, each member of the human body unites two other parts of the body. For example, the hand can unite the knuckle and the finger. The part of the body that does not function that way hurts the entire body.

Third, each member passes along nourishment to the rest of the body. When the blood reaches the elbow, it does not keep all the blood. If it did, then the arm, the wrist, and the hand would wither. No, the elbow allows the nourishment to continue to flow.

Fourth, each member of the human body remains in its place. When a person wakes up in the morning, his hand is still at the end of his arm and able to reach his glasses, put them on, and see the way to the kitchen to get a drink of water.

Fifth, each member of the body passes along orders. The head tells the elbow to tell the forearm, to tell the wrist, to tell the hand to start moving. The hand moves because no where along the line does the flow of command cease.

Sixth, each member of the body is elastic. If my feet were to be cut off, my hands would learn to wheel me along in a wheelchair. If my eyes were put out, my hearing would become acute. If I ceased to hear and ceased to be able to speak, my hands would begin to speak for me.

## **Conclusion**

Human body members support and sustain one another. The body of Christ, the church, is supposed to function the same way. The function of the body of Christ and the kind of leadership that is demanded in the church will be continued in chapter three. God give Christians peace when they believe in Jesus and walk as His people ought.

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# The Church Is The Body Of Christ (2)

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## Introduction

Many scriptures state that Christians are to be reflections of Jesus. He is the Light of the world, and He told His followers: “*You are the light of the world . . .*” (Matthew 5:14). Even the name Christian, first given to believers in Antioch (cf. Acts 11:26), means “little Christs.”

While the incarnation of Jesus is a unique, one-time event, it is also a continuing event. In the idea that the church is the body of Christ, with Christ as its head, the Bible suggests that He is still present in human flesh in the world. The continuing incarnation of Jesus in His body, the church, is related to God’s plans for the world. Through the church, God intends that the manifold wisdom of God be made known, not only on earth, but to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm (cf. Ephesians 3:10).

## **Jesus Is Incarnate In His Body, The Church**

### **The Church Is The Body Of Christ**

Since Jesus is the head of the body, the church is the living, vibrant body organism of Christ. This chapter will focus in on the implication that Jesus is incarnate, living again in His church, His body (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). It is not simply that Christians are following Christ, they are doing that, but they are being re-created in His image. The only Jesus the world will know is the Jesus that it sees in the church. Paul wrote that Christ is living again in Christians: “*I have been*

*crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me . . .*" (Galatians 2:20). Paul also wrote: "*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain*" (Philippians 1:21). When Christ is the life of a Christian, they will be blessed: "*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory*" (Colossians 3:4).

I was told the story about an African native who lived in a jungle. The American Bible Society or the British Bible Society dropped thousands of little books called the book of Luke and the book of Acts. After the fellow read both books, he walked barefooted a long distance to the home of a missionary. The man asked the missionary this question. "Is this the church that continues the life of Christ?" Is that not a good question? The man had read about the life of Christ in the book of Luke and had read about the continuation of the life of Christ in the book of Acts: "*In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach*" (Acts 1:1). The book of Luke was written so people would know what Jesus did and taught while on earth. Then Luke wrote Theophilus about the church of Jesus Christ, the body of Christ. The book of Acts is also about Jesus incarnate. The only Jesus the world will know about is the Jesus that it sees in the church, in the body of Christ.

### **Principles About The Church In Relation To Christ**

Consider these principles about the church as it relates to Christ. **First**, the church is the likeness of Christ, His image. Jesus taught His disciples about students and their teachers: "*A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher*" (Luke 6:40). God is changing Christians from one likeness into another likeness. Romans 8:28–30:

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many*

*brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

This change is done by the power of God through His Spirit. Thus, Christians are born to be in His image. 2 Corinthians 3:18:

*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Christians are being transformed. They are not conforming their lives to this world. The church of Jesus Christ, members of the body of Christ, are being transformed day-by-day from one likeness into another likeness. They are being transformed into the image of Christ as they receive the Spirit from the Lord. The word “metamorphosis” is derived from the word “transformed.” It is a total change. The yellow and brown caterpillar, a somewhat ugly creature, crawls up a cedar post, weaves about himself a cocoon, and dies. If the cocoon is opened during the winter, it contains ugly looking stuff. If the cocoon is left alone until spring, the bottom of it will burst and out will struggle a new creature. If he is helped, all the stuff will stay on his wings, and he will not be able to fly. But if he struggles upside down, he will finally crawl out of the cocoon. He will stretch his wings, and the air will be filled with the beautiful monarch butterfly. There is no similarity between the caterpillar and butterfly because it has been transformed from one image into another. In a similar way, the power of God can transform the lives of Christians, the body of Christ, into His image.

**Second,** the Church is the word written on flesh, or we are his letter and the word is written on our flesh, on our hearts. He says in verse 3:2-3:

*“You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”*

Jesus was the Word of God in the flesh, but on a believer's heart is written the word of Christ. If a person wants to know the word of Christ, he will find it in the Bible. But he will find it even more fully portrayed in the Bible being written on the heart of a disciple. As a Christian talks about the word that has become his life and his sustenance, one is listening to a letter from Christ that has been written on the heart.

**Third,** the church is the reflection of Christ's glory. Jesus told his disciples to let their lights shine before men. He said in Matthew 5:14–16:

*“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

Christians not only shine the Light as if a flashlight were in their hands, but they are the light. It is a reflected light like one can see on a moonlit night. The moon has no light. It reflects the light of the sun from the other side of the earth. Children of God have no light of their own. They reflect the light of the Son. It is the only light that the world has today. The light is the glory of the body of Christ. The leadership role in the body of Christ should be governed by that fact.

**Fourth,** the church manifests a new loving walk. 1 John 1:5–2:2:

*“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with*

*him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense-Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”*

The church of Jesus Christ is a loving, living walk. It is not only the light from God, it is the revelation of the love of God. It is the place where people can find God and walk in fellowship with Him. Christian leaders need to manifest that walk in the world today.

Fifth, the church is a new creation. When a person is baptized into Christ, he is raised from the water of baptism, a new person, and a member of the body of Christ. Colossians 3:3, 9–10:

*“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God . . .” “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”*

The church “gathered” focuses on its internal life and growth as the body of Christ. The church “scattered” focuses on continuing the mission of Christ in the world: “. . . to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

### The Greatest Wonder Of All

The greatest wonder of all is that Jesus walks the earth today in Christians. He speaks the good news. Living in believers, Jesus clothes the fatherless and feeds the orphans. Jesus exalts the Father in praise and worship. In Christians He continues to do good works. Jesus brings hope to the hopeless. Living in His disciples, Jesus today exposes the darkness of sin by positive, attractive holiness. He continues to show God's deep concern for justice. In believers Jesus manifests His healing touch wherever there is division and pain. Jesus takes a firm stance against evil. He continues to touch the leper and the sinner. Living in Christians today, Jesus takes contemporary shape and form. Through the body, Christ Jesus lives in believers and is empowered to help the world that is so hopeless and helpless. That thought is the most important consideration of this chapter about excellence in leadership.

### Implications Of The Incarnation – The Realization Of Power

#### **It Brings An Awareness Of The Supernatural In The Life Of A Christian**

Since the church is Jesus Christ incarnate, Christians have a realization of power in three areas. First, it brings an awareness of the supernatural in the world today. I do not mean miraculous. I mean something much more powerful than miraculous. Miracles are only a small study in the supernatural power of God. I am writing about the fact that ordinary people do extraordinary things. Timid Timothy became a powerful preacher, and an immoral woman (John 4) became a faithful, moral missionary to her own city and to all the world. People's lives are radically changed when they meet Jesus. It is not hard to believe that Jesus changed water to wine when He changes drunks into faithful fathers. There is power in Jesus Christ that needs to be taught. Colossians 1:15–18:

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created:*

*things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*

Paul emphasized that Jesus created everything in the world to show the power that is available through Him. He opens doors. He causes iron curtains to go up like window shades. He knocks down barriers that divide people because His desire is that His church, His body, His word and His will cover the earth, like the waters cover the sea.

The Creator of the universe is the Head of the body, of which Christians are members. Paul was drawing the first part of the book to a close when he wrote of the transforming power of Jesus in Ephesians 3:20–21:

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

The power is at work in the body of Christ, the church. All leadership models must take that into consideration. There must be an awareness that because Jesus incarnate lives in the body, the supernatural dwells there. Leaders must not always be dealing with problems relating to maintaining the institution and planning toward the achievements of its goals – budgeting, staffing, the building, committees, etc.. All these things must be done or delegated, but they must not be the priority of the spiritual leaders of the body of Christ.

The church is not brick and mortar on the corner, nor budgets to be met, nor reports to be filed, nor expectations. The church is men and women linked to God, formed by the Spirit, and called to live according to Jesus' continuing life. That is

what is meant when ones says that the church is the body of Christ, Jesus incarnate. Jesus wants to do good on earth, but He can only do good through His people.

### **It Brings Great Release**

The second implication of belief that the church is Jesus incarnate and the realization of His power is the great release given to the soul. Christians are freed from having to do detailed, significant planning of many things. Read often and carefully the following verse: "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight*" (Proverbs 3:5-6). God has promised to direct His children's steps!

The natural instinct of humans is to plan the future. James wrote that men make their plans even though their lives are like a mist that appears for a short time. Instead, men should say that they will do something if it is the Lord's will (cf. James 4:13–15). Notice the last part of the sentence, if it is the Lord's wills. That is an important way to live.

Four great benefits come from the release that Christians have received. First, they are able to trust God with the outcome of anything they do. They can study the situation, plan what to do, and do the work. Then they can trust God with the outcome. They are freed from worry because they are part of the body of Christ.

Second, Christians need to realize that failure from a human point of view might be success from God's perspective. As a matter of fact, it is always a success from God's perspective because in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (cf. Romans 8:28). Do you really believe that God will bring eternal good out of anything that occurs? If Christians have that release, if they have been freed to believe that fact, then they have been freed to believe the greatest thing they could possibly believe.

The third benefit of the great release is that people of God learn what it is to live with God as Master and themselves as

stewards. Paul wrote that Christians must be faithful stewards: “*Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful*” (1 Corinthians 4:2). The only thing that God expects of His children is faithfulness at what they are, the body of Christ. He has created them. They are His workmanship, His creation.

They are created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for them to do (cf. Ephesians 2:10). Since His stewards are a part of His creation, He is to be trusted. He is the Master. He determines what gifts each person is given and the work they are to do. God as Master determines everything about His stewards.

Jesus told His disciples a parable about a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. The steward was not faithful. The master called the steward in and told him to give an account of his management. The steward began planning what to do because he was too proud to beg and did not have the strength to work. He left and collected partial payment from the master’s debtors so that when he lost his job, he would be welcomed into their houses. The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly (cf. Luke 16:1–15). The body of Christ is free to use what it has for the benefit of the Master and to receive eternal rewards.

The fourth benefit of the great release is the liberation to trust other people. Since Christians are liberated to trust other people, they can quit trying to manipulate and control others. Because they are the body of Christ and because Jesus is incarnate in them, they should trust Him and not try to manage other people. Christians should simply serve their Master and trust each other to love the body of Christ. Thus, the believer’s belief brings great release.

### **Ministry, Not Administration, Is The Calling Of Spiritual Leaders**

Since Jesus is the head of His church, this makes ministry, not administration, the calling of the spiritual leaders. This statement may be the most important fact in this chapter. So

much time is spent by godly men, who have been given the charge of the flock of God, thinking about buildings, budgets, preaching, church programs, and everything but the spiritual guidance of the body of Christ.

I am a great believer in the commissions (plural) of Christ. He gave a great commission to go preach the gospel to the whole world, to tell every creature the good news. Is that not a great commission? It involves everybody in all the world. There is an even greater commission. Jesus told Peter to feed His sheep, tend His lambs (cf. John 121:15–17). Taking care of His little sheep is the work of leadership. Their work is to be a spiritual guide to people's souls.

But the greatest commission of all was the last words Jesus said to Peter when he asked about John. Peter wanted to know what was going to happen to John. Jesus told Peter that it did not matter how long John lived. Jesus told Peter to follow Him! (cf. John 21:20–22). Following Jesus is the greatest commission. Following Jesus Christ is the hardest commission to obey. That means that when disciples see people who are forsaken and cast out by the world, like the leper was, they go and befriend them. When they see people terribly abused, like the woman taken in adultery (cf. John 8:3–11), they will not condemn, but charge them to be God's person and quit sinning. Where there is hurt, try to help. Where there is harm, stand up for those harmed. Where there is lostness, speak the word of God.

## Conclusion

Spiritual leadership is simple. It is seeing Jesus, desiring to be like Him, and following Him unto realms eternal. In the next chapter the study will be real spiritual leadership as it relates to the body of Christ. God give you peace in the study of the word.

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## The Church Is The Body Of Christ (3)

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### Introduction

The following verses give the New Testament vision of the people of God living shared lives. 1 Peter 4:8–10:

*Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others . . .*

A Christian’s life should be marked by love, by hospitality, and by service.

In Paul’s term, allegiance to others in the body of Christ can be summed up in one simple verse: “*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another . . .*” (Romans 13:8).

Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus contains this statement: “*. . . I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family . . . derives its name*” (Ephesians 3:14–15). A Christian’s identity as a family member is rooted in God’s nature and character as Father. Coming to know the Father in a deeper way is the root of one’s allegiance to God.

### The Nature Of Allegiance In The Body

Allegiance is a magic word. I remember as a small, school-age child holding up my right hand and pledging allegiance to

the flag and to the country that the flag represents. In the body of Christ, Christians, need to do the same thing. They need to pledge allegiance to Christ, to the Godhead, to one another, to the church, to the Bible, and to holy things in order be excellent servants of God.

The Spirit is the quiet member of the Trinity. Jesus said He would send the Spirit from the Father: “*... he will testify about me*” (John 15:26). The Spirit is with Christians in ministry. He gives gifts. He enables. He is the minister in a believer’s ministry. Building allegiance to the Spirit involves freeing each Christian to live confidently as an expression of the Spirit. It means helping each believer trust the Spirit’s presence enough to serve.

This point has been stressed again and again: Christ is the head of the church, the functional head of the body. This means that leaders must stand aside and let Him be head. For the body as a whole, it means learning to look to Jesus, not to human leaders, for direction. For each Christian, it means accepting personal responsibility for the ministries to which Jesus calls him.

### **Allegiance To One Another**

A number of the epistles in the New Testament, particularly the first epistle to the Corinthians, deal with the lack of allegiance. The problem was not so much the division in the church in Corinth; it was that the division showed a lack of allegiance and wrong focuses. Allegiance is defined as loyalty or devotion to a person, group, cause, or the like.

In the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians the emphasis seems to be on the threats to allegiance which cause division. The focus of the body was on human leaders: “*One of you says, ‘I follow Paul’; another, ‘I follow Apollos’; another, ‘I follow Cephas’; still another, ‘I follow Christ’*” (1 Corinthians 1:12). The real problem was not the men, but their focus on those men. The men focused on human leaders and thus sacrificed the allegiance that they should of had to one another. Perhaps the Jews thought that Cephas was their apostle. Others may have liked the oratory of Apollos so they followed him. Perhaps the

deep thinkers liked Paul's strong resistance to idolatry. Others even took the name of Christ and made it the name of a sect, a group within the church of Christ. They focused on the humanity of Christ. Although the humanity of Christ needs to be understood, the men focused on His human leadership rather than His words.

1 Corinthians 5 shows that one another allegiance can be sacrificed for "peace." The leaders were not disciplining the body properly. The church was in fellowship with a man who was living with his father's wife, and for the sake of harmony and unity, they sacrificed Christian allegiance to one another for human and worldly peace.

Paul wrote that one another allegiance was sacrificed because the men were focusing on their personal rights, their property (cf. 1 Corinthians 6). They were meeting their physical and lustful needs by taking their brothers to court and committing adultery with prostitutes. They were sacrificing Christian allegiance for financial and lustful gain.

1 Corinthians 7–10 focuses on Christian liberty. One another allegiance was sacrificed with disputes over freedom and propriety. The Christians felt that it was of utmost importance that they be freed from the shackles of legalism and even be freed from law to satisfy their own needs. This is a great problem in today's society. The believers in Corinth sacrificed their excellence for disputes over freedom and what they believed was best. Some people thought that eating meat sacrificed to idols was not a sin. Others felt that the person was worshiping the idol when he ate the meat. They were disputing over this matter, but they ought to have left each person free to make the decision the study of the word and their relationship to God gave them.

Paul wrote that Christians were focused on a cause which they believed was the mistreatment of the women in the church (cf. 1 Corinthians 11). They wanted the women to have the same rights that the men had. This is still a cause for some people today.

God made both man and woman. He made man a certain way to do certain things, and He made woman a certain way to

do other things, Paul argues. Even nature teaches that lesson. He wants the women deeply involved in the work, but he wants them involved in the work in a very beautiful, Christian manner. The people were sacrificing allegiance to one another for this cause.

In 1 Corinthians 12–14 the focus is on hierarchy. It may appear to be on spiritual gifts, but that is only the background for the text. In 1 Corinthians 14 notice that the focus is on their position in the church. Some believed that the gift of speaking in tongues was a very showy and remarkable gift that everyone ought to desire. Paul wrote that it edified nobody because the person was speaking in a language the people did not understand.

The gift to be desired among others was prophecy because that gift edified the church. They were not giving allegiance to each other. The tongue speakers were wanting a gift which glorified themselves and made them appear to be greater than others. They were not wanting a gift that served the body of Christ. So again, they were sacrificing their allegiance to each other for a higher position in the congregation.

In 1 Corinthians 15 Christians were focusing on doctrinal interpretation. There were some people in the congregation who did not believe that the dead would be raised. They not only believed that doctrine about the life to come, but they were teaching and pushing it upon others. Their intellect was becoming supreme to them and not their relationship to Jesus and to each other. They sacrificed a beautiful allegiance of unity for their intellectual interpretation of scripture.

Nothing should cause believers to sacrifice their allegiance. If what they believe and practice, causes them to lose their loyalty to God, to Jesus, to the Spirit, to a brother, and to the church, then they have the wrong interpretation of scripture. Because Jesus' intent is that the body be one as He and the Father are one. Christians need to pledge allegiance first to one another.

Notice an atmosphere of allegiance to the body not a doctrine, although doctrines are found in Ephesians 3:14–21:

*For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

In Romans 14:1–15:13 Paul wrote about the same atmosphere in more detail. Study that scripture before going further. In this text notice an atmosphere described that caused the people to show allegiance to one another. Love was in the church in Ephesus: “. . . you, being rooted and established in love” (Ephesians 3:17). Unity was there. Peace was there. Acceptance was there. A non-judgmental attitude was found there. Spiritual growth was there. There was an atmosphere where love caused allegiance to the family.

Paul was praying for the whole family of God (cf. Ephesians 2:14–15). I have a younger brother who is eight and a half years younger than I am. Most of the time growing up I did not even particularly like him, but now I love him. Our age difference caused us to not to be able to appreciate each other as we should have. I remember the day that he came home with a bloody nose, a bruised cheek, and a hurt ear. He said the bully down the street was really mad at me. The bully, eight years older, jumped him and beat him up. All of a sudden my allegiance appeared. I am not proud of what I did, but I had to do it. He is my brother. I am united with him. When it was the two of us, I wanted him go to another room. But when somebody bothered him, I found out how much I loved him. That is the way it ought to be in the family of God.

Maybe personalities, age differences, or whatever causes believers not to feel great warmth or closeness to each other. But I cannot hear my brother criticized and remain silent. I cannot see him being judged and remain inactive because Obadiah wrote that the Edomites were like the foreigners who attacked Jerusalem because they stood aloof (cf. Obadiah 1:11). He said: "*In the day that you stood on the other side— ... Even you were as one of them.*" He said your brother was in need and you stood on the other side. You stood aloof. You were all together as one of them. Jesus made this statement about allegiance: "*He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters*" (Luke 11:23).

Christians need allegiance to one another, but that does not happen in every congregation. A person can tell if a church is an institution or a body by its relationship to one another. Institutional alternatives might be reflected in the following statements. People are loyal to a certain preacher when they say, "You ought to hear Brother X preach." "We have the best youth program in the city." "We stress evangelism," or "we stress social service." "We minister to the upper middle class" (or to the blue collar worker). "We are committed to renewal" or "we meet in homes not church buildings." "We insist on one hour services." All of those statements are allegiance to people or activities. Although these things are legitimate and perhaps desirable, when they are placed above our allegiance to Christ and to one another, they become sinful. Instead, Christians need to show allegiance to the body.

Remember when Jesus wanted to teach his disciples a lesson, not about foot washing, but about love. Since nobody had washed anyone's feet, Jesus got up and washed His apostles' feet. As Lord and Teacher He had washed their feet to set an example. After Judas left Jesus gave His apostles a new command in John 13:34–35:

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this*

*all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”*

The next day Jesus would die for them, but He was referring to His death. He did not say, “love one another as I will love you.” He told them to love one another as He had loved them. Christians need to pick up their towels and show love to others. They need to practice love by caring for one another’s needs. They might take food to the hungry, give comfort to those who are suffering, and give money when it is needed. Christians should supply whatever is needed by his brothers because of the new standard for relationships taught by Jesus. Neighborly love will become brotherly love.

Because Jesus loved His disciples with sacrificial, humiliating love of the towel, there was a new outcome. Observance of the law became the practice of love. He was not stressing a new duty, even though they had a duty. He was stressing a new relationship. They were no longer related to God by the law that He had previously given. Now their relationship to God was to be closer as was their relationship to one another.

Because of different personalities, age differences, and other differences, believers may be hindered from feeling great warmth and closeness to each other. Yet, they need to show allegiance to one another. One should not hear his brother criticized and remain silent. Nor can he see him being judged and remain inactive.

### **Allegiance To The Father**

How should Christians show allegiance to one another? What will motivate them to move outside their comfort zone to take care of the needs of the brotherhood? Because of a three fold allegiance to the Godhead, people of God must show loyalty to the Father. He created them, He re-created them, and He cares for them, which brings obligations. A Christian’s relationship to the Father will enable him to be a good spiritual leader. A spiritually led person is loyal to Him because of a sustained relationship.

The previous passage, Ephesians 3:14–21, shows Paul’s reliance on the Father. Interaction with God comes from life experiences of His people. Confronted with problems of life the men and women in the early church turned to God. When the brethren were persecuted for the first time and carried before the Sanhedrin, the high court, they were charged not to preach anymore in the name of Christ. When Peter and John left, they gathered together with their own people to pray. Acts 4:23–30:

*On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: ‘Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.’ Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”*

God was with them during their prayer about the reality of their life. They talked about their corporate experience with God, the One who had brought them through evil times and empowered them. They affirmed in their prayer that they were going to worship the God who had created heaven and earth. They quoted David’s prayer and asked God to deal with their enemies. The men asked God to enable them to speak His word

with great boldness and to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Jesus. The room shook, and they were given power from God. Then they went back to the same place where they had been arrested and began preaching the word of God boldly. Peter and John still wanted to show allegiance to God despite what had happened. They continued to preach, not because of duty, but because of the relationship they had with their Father. Christians who have allegiance to the Father will pray to Him, worship Him, work for Him, and speak for Him.

In a world where there is much evil, Christians need to view God as sovereign Lord. With inadequacies, believers need to see God as adequate. Troubled by their sins, they need to believe that God is holy and forgives through Jesus Christ. When grief comes, they need to experience God as the Father of compassion and the God of all comforts (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:3–4). Children of God who long for joy need to see God as the giver of every good and perfect gift (cf. James 1:17). When confronted by enemies, Christians need the vision of a God who loves His enemies and has given His children the charge to be like Him (cf. Matthew 5:43–44). When their money is low, God's children need to remember that God is even concerned with a sparrow's fall. When believers agonize over a decision, they need to view God as wise and the One who gives wisdom to all who ask Him (cf. James 1:5).

Affirm God in worship, addressing Him in praise for the glory of His essential nature. Convinced by the vision of the Father, His children can address Him in prayer with complete confidence. Prayer to God is the heart of the solution to every situation.

### **Allegiance To The Spirit**

Christians can show allegiance to the Spirit by doing what He gifts them to do (cf. 1 Corinthians 12–14; Romans 12:3–8). Every Christian needs to know and use their spiritual gifts. I believe the Spirit has gifted me to teach, to exhort, and to preach. My allegiance to the Spirit is to do those things. I do not get involved in many other activities in the local body or in the

kingdom because I am not gifted by the Spirit in other areas. I trust others in the body to do with their gifts what I cannot do, and they must trust me to do with my gifts what they cannot do. Every Christian must show allegiance to the Spirit.

To find out your gifts, study the Book. First, explore every spiritual gift mentioned in the Bible. Second, experiment with some of the gifts which interest you. Third, examine your feelings toward each activity. Fourth, evaluate the results in other people's lives. Fifth, expect confirmation from the body. That process has helped several people to determine their gifts. Show allegiance to other people in the body through devotion, to the Father in worship and prayer, and to the Spirit by using His gifts in the ministry.

There is another series of lessons in the Sunset Bible Study Library of books on spiritual gifts. Call Sunset International Bible Institute External Studies division for a catalogue or go on-line at [www.extensionschool.com](http://www.extensionschool.com) to locate available material. Determine your gifts and then exercise allegiance to Him by using them.

### **Allegiance To The Son**

A final allegiance must be to the Son of God. There should be a desire to follow Him by personal obedience. Allegiance to Jesus is shown by telling others about Him, by helping His little sheep, and by following Him totally. In John 14:23–24 Jesus told His apostles how to love Him:

*"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."*

John wrote that obeying Jesus was not difficult: "*This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome*" (1 John 5:3). Showing allegiance to Jesus, having a relationship with Him, is characterized by the word love which is operative in all allegiant situations. Christians show

allegiance to the Son when they love their brothers. They obey Jesus' teaching because they love Him. God's children have problems in this area because they are human and the devil tempts them. Some brothers talk about their temptations among themselves, or they seek the wisdom of wise men, but they need to bring the problem to the head of the church, Jesus Christ. Bringing their needs in prayer to Jesus should always be the first step. Then they can share the burden with the entire body because in the multitude of counselors there is safety. The leaders of the church should be trying to help everyone fulfill Jesus' will in their life. It is beneficial to talk with other people in the body who have faced similar burdens. Brothers and sisters, listen to others for Jesus' answer. Look to people, not programs, for God's answer. Expect the solution to any problem to be found in people, not in programs. Remember that allegiance to the Son means learning to interact with Him as head of the body and as head of every individual.

## Conclusion

When Jesus walked the earth, He did not merely give instruction. He gathered twelve men out of the multitude who were following him, and He invested himself in them. Jesus came to see that all the world heard the word of God. He could have marshaled legions of angels. They would have willingly come and cheerfully told everybody the message. But His plan was to use the simple allegiance of brothers and sisters to God, to the Spirit, to the Son, and to one another. He multiplied their number, and He multiplied their effectiveness. Later this subject will be studied in more detail. Readers will find out that people are more important to God than the law. People are more important to God than the rules. People are more important to God than rulers. People are more important to God than their diseases. God so loves all the people of the world! When Christians completely understand the concept of allegiance, they will serve people as God, the Spirit, and Jesus did. God bless you in the continuing study of excellence in leadership.

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# Leadership In The Body (1)

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## Leaders in a Living Organism

### Introduction

If Christians are to understand who they are as the church, they must begin by affirming their identity as Christ's body. No approach to organization and administration can reach sound conclusions apart from the recognition that, in essence, Christians are members of a living organism. Every principle of organization must flow from this understanding; every practice must be in full harmony with it. There can never be effective leaders in the church until Christians realize, with Paul, that they are the body of Christ and each one is a part of it (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:27).

The Bible does not state that the church resembles a body. It insists that the church of Christ is a body. The reality is that Christians are confronting a concept that is at the heart of the nature of the church. They must, with complete seriousness, realize the nature of the church as a living organism, particularly those specific points of identity that the Bible stresses. Their understanding of the tasks of human leaders and their ministries must grow out of their understanding of the church as a living organism in which leaders play a significant part.

Notice that excellence is different from human success or human abilities. The nature of the church as the body of Christ has been presented in the last few lessons. In order to understand the kind of leadership that the body needs, excellent leadership in the excellent body of Christ will be studied.

## Some Preliminary Thoughts

### Scriptural Basis Of Body-type Organization

A basic passage for the study of leadership, including the purpose of leadership, is found in Ephesians 4:1–16. Reference to this tremendous text will be made often in this chapter. There are four divisions in the text.

The first division is the attitudes that the whole church needs, and therefore, the elders and all other leaders need. Ephesians 4:1–3:

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

Humility, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, love, and peace are attitudes which must reside in people who would become mature leaders in the kingdom of God. His children need to find among them people who possess those attitudes. Then they should imitate them, listen to them, and become like them in order to become like Christ.

Second, Paul mentions some absolutes. Ephesians 4:4–6:

*There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

One Body ... unity of organism.

One Spirit ... unity of direction.

One Hope ... unity of destination.

One Lord ... unity of authority.

One faith ... unity of belief.

One baptism ... unity of entrance

One God ... unity of all unities

Christians need to fellowship with people who believe there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. They need to find leaders who take the body into the heart of God, into the unitary belief of one God and one Way. For all things exist in Him, because of Him, and for Him. God is through them, He is in them, He is above them, and He is over them.

Third, Paul wrote about some agencies that will help leaders draw members of the body closer to God: Ephesians 4:7–12:

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up*

Christians have the word of God written by the apostles and prophets, men who lived in the flesh.

John wrote this to Gaius: “*I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us*” (3 John 1:9). John did not say that Diotrephes did not receive what was written. When Diotrephes rejected what was written, he rejected John. When the letter was read in Ephesus, John spoke to the church. When Christians read Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul brings unity. He wrote about excellence in leadership.

Christians also have men who live among them in the flesh—evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These men teach the word of God with their mouths and by their lives. They are excellent disciples of Christ when they mature others.

Fourth, there are achievements of the organization. Ephesians 4:13–16:

*. . . until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Did you notice the results that can be achieved if believers have the attitude of Christ, if they follow the absolutes of unity, and if they yield themselves to the agencies that God has placed among them. Paul wrote that they will be prepared for works of service, the body will be built up, and they will reach unity in the faith. Christians will come to know the Son of God, will quit being infants, will mature, and will grow up in all things in Christ. The body will be matured and will grow numerically. Those achievements will come as surely as a crop follows the sowing of seed and the rain falls from heaven. Christians sow and water, but God gives the increase to those who follow the principles of unity.

### **Some Basic Questions**

There are some basic questions that need to be asked and answered. The basic questions will clear the ground as a farmer does before planting a crop. He must remove all the rocks and weeds to prepare the soil. That is what the questions are intended to do.

First, who owns the store? The person who owns the store has the right to determine what happens to the items in the store. Jesus is the owner of the body of Christ (cf. Ephesians

1:22–23). He is the head and holds ultimate power, but some of the duties of the store he has delegated to under-shepherds. Peter wrote to elders to tell them how to be shepherds of God's flock. They are to be under and in obedience to the chief Shepherd of their soul. Elders have a Shepherd who is the owner of the flock, but He delegates some of the work of tending to the sheep to spiritual men who have achieved greatness in Christ (cf. 1 Peter 5:1–4).

God reconciled men to himself and gave them the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:18–20:

*All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

The idea is simple. God has taken His word and placed it in human hearts. Christians are responsible for seeing that the word is proclaimed to others. God owns the store, and His children are but store keepers. It is God's message, but Christians are ambassadors who should willingly take it to the world.

The second question follows quickly. Who directs the affairs of the church? Again, ultimately God does, but He does not speak in human ears to tell people how to fulfill His will. How are His stewards, the allegiant body of Christ, to reach a judgement as to what to do? The meaningful word is consensus. In the multitude of counselors there is wisdom, Solomon said (cf. Proverbs 15:22 NKJV). He also said, that in the multitude of counselors there is safety (cf. Proverbs 11:14 NKJV).

How does a person learn God's will? It is found in the body of Christ. The elders were admonished not to lord it over the flock entrusted to them. If an elder meets in a small group

to make a decision and enforces it on the sheep, that would be lording it over the flock. A conference was held in Jerusalem to consider if Gentiles needed to be circumcised. The apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:22). Probably not every everybody was in agreement with the decision, but in the discussion a consensus was reached. When a consensus is reached, it becomes the responsibility of the leaders to equip the body so they can carry out the decision. Rulership of a few people is not the will of God. Consensus of all the rulers is a safeguard.

The third basic question is: Why do Christians feel so hemmed in, so bound, when they desire to be free? Paul wrote about this freedom: "*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free . . .*" (Galatians 5:1). As Paul dealt with an important matter of giving money to relieve the poor saints in Judea, he gave advice, not a command (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:8–9). He wanted the church in Corinth to have the freedom to choose. Paul did not want to make them his bond-servant; he wanted to remind them to express their willing service to God through the generous gift they had promised. Paul could have commanded them as an apostle to respond, but he wanted them to meet the needs of God's people in a spirit of freedom (cf. 2 Corinthians 9:1–5). God wants Christians to serve Him as free men. Excellent leaders seek to help their people make their own free and responsible choices. This type of leader does not command. He advises, he teaches, he admonishes, and he shows through example.

The fourth basic question is: Am I to be trusted? Everybody wants to feel as if they are significant. And everybody is significant to God. He loves everybody so much that He sacrificed His son. The study of 1 and 2 Corinthians shows that the church in Corinth, by my count, had seventeen serious moral, personal, and doctrinal problems. Yet, Paul wrote that he was totally confident they were going to overcome their problems because his confidence of them in Christ. Paul taught them the things they need to know so they can fulfill his trust.

Paul wrote that only the unseen is real (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16–18). The seen things are not real. He taught that the mortal life is going to be swallowed up eternally and people are saved by Christ's love and His death (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:1–15). Paul also wrote the church about their relationship to Jesus and to one another (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:16–17). He taught that Christians have been reconciled, brought back to God (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18–21). The beauty is that God does not count their sins against them anymore. Paul urged the church to obey (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:1–2) and to serve sacrificially (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:3–10). Paul encouraged them to open their hearts and be transparent to God and to themselves, as well (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:11–13). Because Paul trusted the Christians, he taught them. People give up on people because they quit trusting them. They do not believe that the people are really desiring to do what is right or wanting to please God and one another.

The fifth question is a very important question: Does every believer have loving help? Can he expect others to support him? Does he receive supervision rather than judgement? Does he receive participation rather than condemnation? Of course, the answer to those questions must be yes. Christians need to be able to trust others to help them. Two verses that were studied in the last chapter form the heart of what Jesus does and commands others to do. John 13:34–35:

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

Jesus did not merely say to love one another. He commanded His followers to love one another as He loves. Jesus had supported His apostles by participating in their lives and by giving them an example. They were to show love to one another with personal sacrifice. Jesus went sleepless for them. Jesus walked multiple miles for them. Jesus endured persecution from the Jews for them. Jesus endured the disciples

own unbelief, lack of regard, lack of trust, and lack of understanding of Him. The reason he did is stated by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:14–15. Parents lay up for their children. The children do not lay up for the parents. Parents sacrifice their will, their time, and their desires for their children. Spiritual leaders should exhibit the same sacrificial life. If the leaders do not live sacrificial lives, then they are not excellent, biblical leaders.

Christians should receive loving support from personal concern. Notice all the epistles Paul wrote. He wrote them because there were people who needed help. He could not work in Ephesus knowing that brothers and sisters in Corinth were troubled. Thus, he wrote them twice. He could not solve problems in the Corinthian church when he knew the Galatian church and the church in Rome had problems. So he wrote the book of Galatians and the book of Romans. When he was in a prison cell and did not know what Nero would do to him, he wrote letters to the church at Ephesus, to the church at Colossae, to the church at Philippi, and to an individual named Philemon. He had many problems, including being chained between two Roman guards. He did not know whether he would live or die, but his brothers and sisters needed his loving help.

Christians need to be available for each other in the same way. They need to pray for each other, spend time together, eat together, exercise together, travel together, and evangelize together. Believers need to \_\_\_\_\_ together. Fill in that blank. Whatever there is to do that is beautiful and wholesome, children of God need to do it together in order that they may give each other the personal concern that is needed.

Believers need to minister to the whole person. Jesus grew as a whole person which serves as an example for all who would be like Jesus. He went to the feast at age 12 with his parents. When his parents found him, He was sitting with the teachers listening to them and asking them questions. He went home and was obedient to his father and his mother. Jesus grew as a whole person: *“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men”* (Luke 2:52). He grew in wisdom; that is mental growth. He grew in stature; that is physical

growth. Jesus grew in favor with God; that is spiritual growth. He grew in favor with man; that is social growth.

Jesus grew every way there was to grow because He was receiving personal help from His Father. When Jesus emptied himself and came to earth, he did not have all the wisdom of deity. He had to grow in wisdom. When Jesus emptied himself, He was first an embryo and then a tiny baby. He had the same needs that any baby has. He needed to be fed and have His diaper changed, if diapers were available back then. He needed all of the things that little babies need. Jesus' growth teaches that leaders need to minister in the same way to the whole person to help him mature. Spiritual leaders need to hold people's hands in moments of sorrow and laugh with them in moments of joy. They need to be available. Leaders need to be with families when they are having problems in their home. They need to be with people when they are being recognized for great service in the community or on the job. Leaders need to be available when people are on a mountain peak and with them when they are in a valley. Spiritual leaders of God's people need to minister to the whole person.

Christians are to love one another, build each other up, and accept one another. They are to help one another and admonish one another. They are not supposed to provoke one another, lie, or cheat. There should be a one another relationship in the body of Christ, and it will occur when leaders minister to the whole person—to his body, his mind, his spirit, and his soul.

Spiritual leaders need to give others a realistic view of themselves as Paul did: "*Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst*" (1 Timothy 1:15).

What a remarkable self-image. Notice the progression in Paul's life. He wrote that he was the least of the apostles and did not deserve to be called an apostle (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:9). The verse shows his humility. Paul also wrote that he was less than the least of all God's people (cf. Ephesians 3:8). The verse shows even more his humility. Paul felt that he was the number one sinner of all who had ever lived. Recognition of his relationship to God grew from being humble to being the chief of sinners. Thus, he was from that time forward capable of being a spiritual leader of the church of God. May each leader

grow in humility until God can rule in his life, and he can lead other people toward God.

## **Conclusion**

So many times leaders, especially preachers and elders, are aloof from the body. That is wrong. Christians need to see that the preacher, elders, deacons and other servant leaders in the body of Christ are nothing but sinners saved by the grace of God. They are merely beggars who have found food, and they need to tell other beggars where the food is found. Leaders need to let people see that they are in need of the same bread. Leaders need to let others know that they have struggles and weaknesses, but God still loves them. He can make leaders different day by day, and they can help others be different in the same way.

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# Leadership In The Body (2)

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## The Leader's Prime Directive

### Introduction

Jesus Christ, before ascending to the Father, spoke directly about the purpose of the existence of the church. One day on a mountain in Galilee He spoke in clear and simple language to the remaining eleven disciples. Matthew 28:16–20:

*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Prior to leaving His disciples to carry on His work and to fulfill His prophetic words, Jesus told them what they must do. They were to make disciples of all nations by teaching them to be obedient to His teachings! The command is clear, concise, and comprehensive! The church, therefore, exists to carry out two functions—evangelism and edification. These two functions in turn answer two questions: First, why does the church exist in the world? Second, why does the church exist as a gathered community?

Earlier Jesus had said in the presence of the disciples, and more specifically to Peter: “*. . . I will build My church and the gates of Hades [the power of death] will not overcome it*” (Matthew 16:18).

This chapter is a continuation of the last chapter. The previous chapter centered on the fact that leadership is not to be a commanding approach. Instead, spiritual leaders guide people toward obedience to God. In this chapter leadership will be presented in relation to the purpose of the church. Two prime directives will be studied: making disciples and building a people who will fulfill the first prime directive.

## **Leadership In Relation To The Purpose Of The Church**

Matthew 28:16–20 has been called “The Great Commission.” In reality, it might be better called “The Prime Directive.” These words so impelled and guided the apostles that in less than twenty years, one of them wrote that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven (cf. Colossians 1:23). What leadership that is! Leaders today need to imitate and emulate that kind of leadership.

### **The Prime Directive: Make Disciples**

There are three words that need to be considered as one considers the prime directive of making disciples. The directive is not to preach the Word. Preaching is a tool toward the directive. The directive is to make disciples. Three words will help one follow the directive. First, is the word “follow.” The word denotes a man answering the call of Jesus as his whole life is redirected in obedience. It means “to walk along behind” and view Jesus ahead and do what He does.

Second, one needs to consider the word “imitate.” The word “imitate” is translated from the Greek word **mimeti**. The words “mimic” and “mimeograph” come from the same Greek word which means “to make an exact copy.” It is impossible for one to be an exact copy of Jesus, but Christians need to try to

be an exact copy. Jesus said a student should be like his teacher: “*A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher*” (Luke 6:40). A student should mimic his teacher. He should be a mimeograph copy of his teacher. The student’s life should be as close to the original, the teacher’s life, as possible. That is what Christians are to do.

Third, one needs to consider the word “disciple.” The word “disciple” literally means “one who has heard the call of Jesus and joins Him in the activity.” Later in the study readers will learn that a disciple is a certain kind of person who has joined Jesus in a certain kind of work.

There are four biblical precepts of discipleship that need to be studied. First, new wine should not be poured into old wineskins. A disciple is not a copy of something old. He is a new creation: “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Christian leadership is similar to new wine. Much of the disciple training in the church involves placing people in roles. Christians are trained to be Bible class teachers, to be visitation workers, and to be youth workers. But biblical leadership focuses on freeing individuals for growth in their own personal faith and uniqueness. Jesus gave priority to people. Therefore, Christian leaders must free people to do whatever God would have them do and to go wherever He would have them go.

The second precept of discipling is a priestly or interpersonal process. Making disciples is not a one-on-one operation. It is team work. The needed discipleship process will enable converts to teach and learn from each other rather than from a single leader. It is interesting to me that Jesus taught His apostles a lesson and then send them on their way. They would talk on the way and reason with one another. Because their reasoning was not always correct, Jesus would sometimes interrupt and correct some of their concepts. But He did not always interrupt them because He wanted them to grow together. Because of their spiritual gifts the apostles were able to function as Jesus’ followers.

The third precept of discipling is two words that are used in mission studies. One is “indigenousness,” and the other is “contextualization.” Primarily, they mean that the work is to be turned over to the trained natives as soon as possible. The local people need to take over the leadership of the body so the missionaries can go home or go to another field. The same principle needs to be followed in every leadership environment. Leaders need not be bound by old ways and traditions. They need to let people mature so new leaders can be developed to take over the leadership of the church. This is a very important principle that needs to be heeded in the mission field as well as in every congregation.

The last precept is discipling that leads to service. In biblical discipling, priority is given to needs, not goals. It is not wrong to have goals, but the biblical emphasis is on the needs of the person not the goals of the organization.

Three elements must be stressed to make disciples in the contemporary world. For leaders to accomplish the purpose of the work of discipling there must be commitment. I am reluctant to use the word total commitment because commitment should always be total. But many people today show only partial commitment to making disciples so perhaps the word total is needed.

**First**, there needs to be a total commitment to Scripture, the trustworthy and reliable word of God and the sufficient guide to all that Christians intend to do.

**Second**, there needs to be a commitment to Jesus Christ as the Lord, not merely a lord. Christians must be open to hearing and obeying His voice.

**Third**, there needs to be total commitment to one another in the body of Christ so that each person might gain insight from his brothers and sisters. A Christian’s thoughts might be tested and either rejected or confirmed by the body. The emphasis in the church needs to be disciple making, not accomplishing the goals of existing programs.

**Fourth**, Christians must not only have total commitment to the word of God, to Jesus Christ, and to one another, they must believe in one another.

## **Building A People Who Will Fulfill The Prime Directive**

How do spiritual leaders build a people who will fulfil the prime directive of making disciples? There are seven things that will enable leaders to build a people who have the ultimate aim in life of fulfilling the prime directive. These suggestions are logical, and they are also biblical.

**First**, leaders must communicate a vision of the purposes that God seeks to achieve through his people. Jesus told His apostles God's vision for His people before ascending back to heaven (cf. Matthew 28:18–20). God's vision must be the vision of the leaders of the body before it will ever be the vision of God's people. God has a vision that disciples will be made in all the nations of the world by teaching people, baptizing them, and continuing to teach them. Therefore, that must be the leaders' vision, as well. Leaders must have the vision of people from every nation hearing the word of God, obeying the word by being baptized into Jesus, and being taught to do all that Jesus instructed.

When leaders have God's vision, then they must communicate the vision to the people. The vision of the leaders, whatever it is, will be the vision of the people. The vision of the Chief Shepherd is that all people of the world hear His word. Therefore, the vision of the under-shepherds must be that all the people of the world hear of Jesus Christ. Then the vision of the sheep should be that all of the people of the world hear the good news.

**Second**, after communicating the vision of the Lord's will, then leaders must build a community of love in which close, personal relationships are nurtured. Christ gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers so the body might be built up (cf. Ephesians 4:11–16). The gifts were given so that Christians might be knit together in love. Speak the truth in love, grow up in love, and communicate love so a close feeling of love, of goodwill, and of active benevolence toward one another will be encouraged.

Paul many time used the “one another” phrase in his writings: “*so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others*” (Romans 12:5).

Literally, Christians belong to one another. There are many “*one another*” relationships mentioned in the Bible that need to be discovered. Lonelle Waters in her book, The One Another Way, lists all the Bible passages that dealt with one another relationships. Then she lists in bold print all the verses that contain the words “one another.”

To have true brotherly love believers must be devoted, dedicated to each other: “*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love . . .*” (Romans 12:10). They must be involved in each other’s life to the extent they hurt when others hurt and they rejoice when others rejoice. Christians meet the needs of their brothers and sisters because of their devotion. Their devotion to one another is only slightly less than their devotion to God and to Christ

Christians are also instructed to honor other children of God: “. . . *Honor one another above yourselves*” (Romans 12:10). Paul states the degree of honor to be shown. Christians should rightfully honor themselves because they are a creation of God. But they are to honor their neighbor more than themselves. Spiritual leaders should be godly examples by honoring others above themselves.

To build a community of love God’s children are to share with one another. Paul indicates that Christians are to be generous people: “*Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality*” (Romans 12:13). When there is a need for companionship, give it. When there is a need for food, give it. When there is a need for honor, give it. Share with one another by being hospitable.

Christians can build a community of love when they live in harmony with one another: “*Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited*” (Romans 12:16). God’s people must rid themselves of pride and be willing to associate with people who are of a lower social standing. There should never be pride or conceit in the life of a Christian.

Spiritual leaders today must encourage the church to love one another as Paul encouraged the church in Rome to love one another: “*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another . . .*” (Romans 13:8).

Believers can also build a community of love by putting others before themselves: “*Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up*” (Romans 15:2). So many times people please others in order to build themselves up, but they need to please one another.

The body must be united to have close, personal relationships. God desires unity in the body: “*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus*” (Romans 15:5). Be unified with one another, and have a spirit of unity with one another. Do not simply agree, but always have the desire to agree, the ambition to agree.

Paul wrote that Christians are to accept one another: “*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God*” (Romans 15:7). Believers are not to merely accept one another. They need to accept one another in the same way Christ accepted them in order to bring glory to God. Jesus does not accept a person when he makes it to a certain spiritual plateau. He accepts him while he is a sinner, an ungodly wretch. Jesus lifts the person to a place that is acceptable to Him. His life then needs to bring glory to God.

Christians can build a community of love by instructing one another: “*I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another*” (Romans 15:14). The Greek word translated “instruct” is an interesting word. It literally means “to confront.” It can mean to bring something to the attention of a person that is not being done or the wrong that is being done. Instruct can mean to counsel. Christians need to counsel one another.

Spiritual leader, as well as all members, need to excel in each of the one another areas. They need to be good examples to other members of Jesus’ church and to nonbelievers. A community of love is built when each member belongs to all

the others, when members are devoted to one another, when they honor one another, share with one another, lives in harmony with one another, loves one another, pleases one another, is unified with one another, accepts one another, and counsels one another. The key word is one another.

To build a people who will fulfill the prime directive leaders must communicate a vision, build a community of love and then learn to make disciples, not simply church members. In the first chapter a contrast between the church member and the body member was presented. The church member is tested by what he does and the body member is tested by his relationship, what he is (cf. Romans 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Christians need to be people who are joined to Christ. They accept the call of Christ and His lordship. When they join themselves to Christ, they therefore join themselves to anybody who is joined to Christ. Jesus taught His followers the great cost of discipleship. Luke 14:25–35:

*Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the*

*soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

Christians must give Jesus an unrivaled love. They must die daily to self , to sin, and to society.

To make disciples and not simply church members people need to make a fearless accounting of all the costs of their commitment. Leaders need to lead the way in counting the cost of following Jesus. Then leaders need to encourage the brethren to count the cost so God may be glorified. Spiritual leadership not worldly leadership is needed.

Believers must renounce self, all that they are and all that they have, to belong to Christ and avoid the unhappy alternative of being cast out.

To fulfill the prime directive leaders need to guide the people of God to become servants (slaves) to one another and to the world. Jesus taught His apostles about serving in Matthew 20:25–28:

*Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

The text is normally translated with the word “servant,” but the word literally means “the purchased possession of another,” a slave. The slave does not belong to himself; he belongs to a master. Christians do not belong to each other. They are fellow slaves of the one Master, Jesus. Because believers are slaves to Jesus, they render slavish service to each other and to the world. Jesus taught the same lesson about service the evening before His death when He washed the apostles feet (cf. John 13:1–5). Jesus humbled himself. The task of foot washing was done by

the lowest slave in the household. God's people need to have the same serving attitude that Jesus exhibited. Philippians 2:5:

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant . . .*

To build a people who will fulfill the prime directive, training in ministry needs to be provided so that members of the body of Christ will be effective in their service to one another and to the world. God gave gifts to the church. He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be teaching pastors (cf. Ephesians 4:11–16). God gave the gifts to equip the saints for service and enable them for works of ministry. The primary work of spiritual leaders is the same primary work that Christ had when he was on earth. That work is to train a few good men to carry on the work, to see that all the world hears the message of Jesus Christ.

Sixth, leaders must extend freedom to the people of God to respond to the voice of God in order to build a body that fulfills Jesus' commission. This is extremely important. So many times Christians do not feel free. In chapter five of this book a question was asked about freedom: If I am free, why do I feel so hemmed in? Maybe it is because leaders have not told the church that they are free to respond to Christ. Paul wrote about the freedom: "*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free . . .*" (Galatians 5:1). Paul also wrote the church in Rome about the freedom in Christ (cf. Romans 8). Moses gave Pharaoh the same message. Maybe Moses' message needs to be spread today. Do not bind the people with the old ways. Rather, follow the new way of the gospel. Christ did not come to bind people with a new set of laws. He came to set them free. The law was necessary because it told people the difference in right and wrong. But Christians are not under law. They are under grace. So sin will not have dominion over them. Believers will no longer be controlled by their lust and flesh if they are told about

their freedom. Spiritual leaders are needed to communicate the freedom to the people of God in order that they might respond to Jesus Christ.

Seventh, to build a people who will fulfill the prime directive the church must come to a better and clearer understanding of leadership in the Body of Christ. This is really the primary objective of this book, to find out what the Word of God reveals about excellence in leadership.

## Conclusion

Jesus explained spiritual leadership when James and John came to him thinking that leadership was about a place, about position, and about prestige. The apostles wanted to be on the left hand and on the right hand of Jesus when He came into His kingdom. Jesus said if anybody wants to be great, let him become the servant of others. He used a word that means “table servant.” Let him serve in a physical way (cf. Mark 10:35–45). Christians ought to want to be first, not mediocre. They should want to be the very best that they can be for God. If anybody wants to be first, let him be a slave. Jesus told them to go a step beyond that. They should be like Jesus. The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many. Serving, slaving, and sacrificing is what excellence in leadership means.

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## Leadership In The Body (3)

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### The Servant's Heart

#### Introduction

The terms chosen by God to denote the leaders of His church reveal something about the function and personality of the leaders in the congregation that is not institutional in character.

For instance, elder (*presbuteros*) literally speaks of individuals who are older and who in biblical cultures had earned respect by virtue of their character, experience, and years.

Bishop (*episkopos*) speaks of individuals who oversee, take care of, care for, and visit. The picture is of a very person-oriented individual, who stays in close touch with and cares for others.

Pastor (*poimen*) is literally “shepherd.” Used of church leaders, it again focuses attention on close relationships and care for the growth and well-being of members of the body.

The emerging picture of the local church leader, then, is not that of the manager of an enterprise or a decision maker, but of one who with the wisdom gained by personal experience builds an intimate relationship with others whom he cares for and tends with a view toward their growth and maturity.

### The Biblical Approach To Leadership In The Body

#### The Task Of Leaders: A Healthy Body

Paul wrote the church in Ephesus about God’s appointed leaders: “*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be*

*prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers*" (Ephesians 4:11). There are four spiritual offices of leadership mentioned.

The apostles were the first people to go into all the world laying the foundation upon which the church was to be built and leadership was to be sustained. They were emissaries or ambassadors for God (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:19–20). The apostles were inspired spokesman as was Luke and James, the Lord's brother. Their words were supplied to them word for word exactly as God wanted them to be said.

The prophets were inspired spokesmen who still speak today through the written word of God, the New Testament. New Testament prophets were gifts to the church to provide edification, exhortation, and comfort (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:3–4). Since the apostles and prophets were foundational, they did not exist after the first generation of believers.

Evangelists are preachers who, along with Shepherds, are spiritual leaders in the body of Christ today. They study the word of God and share the text as they have occasion. They try to be the voice of God. Evangelists to preach and teach the word. They reprove, rebuke, and exhort with great patience and careful instruction because the time will come when people will not want to hear the word of God (cf. 2 Timothy 4:2–3).

Evangelists are men who spread the Gospel locally and those who share the message in foreign nations. The prophets of the Old Testament declared that the people who did not want to hear the word, were the people who needed to hear it the most. God appeared to Isaiah and told him to preach to the rebellious people who would not hear him. God knew that they would not respond, but He wanted Isaiah to preach until the cities had no inhabitants and there were no more people in the land (Isaiah 6:11ff). As long as there was one stiff-backed, hard-hearted, unhearing, unheeding Jew to preach to, God wanted prophets to continue to preach. That is spiritual leadership! Preachers are not to worry about how the word is going to be received. It is not the job of a preacher to police the word, to see that people obey it. It is the job of a preacher simply to preach, whether it is accepted or not.

The same work needs to be done by teaching pastors, pastors who teach. These men are to shepherd the flock of God. This study is centered on how the leaders of God's people are to be shepherds of His sheep. The work of this leader is not to proclaim the word; the work of shepherds is to train, teach, instruct, guide, and help people to obey the word.

What is the mission of the leaders? To train, equip every member of the church for meaningful service in the kingdom. Ephesians 4:12–13:

*. . . to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

The mission of leaders is to equip the saints for service, not management. God does not want the saints equipped for management because Jesus Christ, the head of the church, is sufficient to manage the body. The leaders are to see that God's people, who are given spiritual gifts by God, use the gifts to minister to others.

The job of spiritual leaders is to equip the people of God. Equipping involves training by word. This involves instruction in the word. Equipping also involves being a model of the word. This means being an example of the word by one's life. Equipping also involves counseling. And equipping involves encouragement, admonition, and prodding. Leaders do whatever is necessary to get the people of God to use their God-given abilities and gifts for His glory.

A second mission of leaders is to mature the saints for growth. Ephesians 4:14-16:

*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him*

*who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

If leaders equip people for service, they will become mature and will not be tossed back and forth by every wind of doctrine. Spiritually immature Christians believe whatever they hear being taught. But spiritually mature believers listen to what is said and search the word of God to see if the teaching is correct. Spiritual leaders, evangelists, and teaching pastors are to mature people until they are able to recognize truth. Doing that will hold the church together. The church will be joined and held together by every supporting ligament. Every member should be involved in holding the body together.

Second, maturing Christians will cause the church to grow and build itself up in love, as each part does its work. Each part means each individual. The church will not grow as God intends for it to grow until each person does his own particular work, in his own particular place for the ultimate glory of God. This will happen when leaders lead them. Ephesians 4 has been studied several times in this book because that instruction by Paul is at the heart of spiritual leadership.

### **The Identity Of Leaders: Leaders Are Servants**

The word that most identifies a leader is the word servant. The words elder, shepherd, steward, and overseer also identify a leader, but the responsibilities of each have a single identifying quality. No matter what they do, they serve. They are slaves of other people.

Again read the account of James and John asking Jesus to let them sit on His left and right side in glory. Mark 10:35–37:

*Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”*

Jesus had earlier said that if two of His disciples agreed about anything they asked for, it would be done for them by His Father (cf. Matthew 18:19). So James and John came to Jesus with a request, but Jesus told them that they did not understand what they were asking: “*You don't know what you are asking,*” Jesus said. “*Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?*” (Mark 10:38). Jesus was asking them if they could endure what He was going to endure. But they did not understand the suffering and death He was facing. Jesus told them that He was unable to give them their request. Mark 10:39–40:

*“We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptised with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”*

Jesus was not referring to particular people. He meant that a person has to have different preparation to receive a prominent places in the kingdom. Notice how the ten other apostles responded: “*When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John*” (Mark 10:41). I personally think their response was because James and John had the courage to ask for what they wanted, and the other apostles did not.

Then Jesus very simply explained what leadership involves. Mark 10:42–45:

*Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of 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.”*

Leadership involves a relationship to those people who are led. Spiritual leaders must be among the people. Jesus told His followers not to be like the Gentiles. Instead, they should be servants to others, which involves a heart commitment not a behavior modification. Notice that when Jesus got to the heart of leadership, He said they were not to lead the way that worldly people lead. That is the contrast again between biblical excellence and worldly success. Worldly success is in ruling, and leaders are the rulers. Worldly success is exercising authority. being in a place of dominion and those being ruled liking it.

On another occasion Jesus made a similar statement to the same men, minus Judas who had already betrayed Him. Luke 22:25:

*“Jesus said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.’”*

Jesus on this occasion again told His apostles that they were not to be like the Gentile rulers who exercised authority though not in an ungodly way. Not in a hard handed way. Not in an evil way but in a way that the people ruled said, this is good. These are good influences in our life. We like these kind of rulers. Jesus said, you are not to be like that. Then what are leaders to do? If leaders are not to rule, if leaders are not to exercise authority, if leaders are not to lord it over, if leaders are not to be the people in high places, what are leaders to do? Jesus says, leaders are to serve. That word means "to serve in an humble yet in a significant way." They were to be people who served. Leadership is an humble sacrificial slavery to people who are in need. Jesus used the word that has been transliterated into English as “deacon,” which means a high class servant. Leaders are to render significant, high-class service to people. Thus, a leader is a high class servant.

If a believer wants to advance beyond being great, he will have to become a slave. Whoever wants to be first must become the slave of all. It is not hard to render slavish service to a likable or loveable person, but Christians are to remember that Jesus washed Judas' feet knowing that Judas would betray him to the Jews that very night. Now that is the kind of slavery, the kind of service that Christians need to render to Jesus. Paul gave the reason for that kind of slavery: "*Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible*" (1 Corinthians 9:19). That verse gives the concept of spiritual leadership. Christians have been set free by the blood of Christ and belong to no man. Because they belong to God, they become slaves to win as many as possible. Serve and sacrifice in order to be like Jesus: "*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 10:45). A leader cannot die to save another person, but he can die to his belongings to see that another person is served and benefitted. That is true biblical leadership.

Paul wrote a timid, fearful, young man named Timothy about how to deal with contentious people. 2 Timothy 2:14–19:

*Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."*

This as a test case of the kind of leadership that needs to be exercised. Paul encouraged Timothy to tell the contentious people in the sight of the Lord not to strive about words. Godless chatter is to be avoided because it is ungodly. Paul also wrote that every one who had confessed the name of the Lords needed to depart from unrighteousness.

Paul instructed Timothy about his own behavior in 2 Timothy 2:20–22:

*In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

Paul instructed Timothy about how to deal with foolish and stupid arguments in 2 Timothy 2:23-26:

*Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*

Paul points out true spiritual leadership in those verses. The difference between a quarrel and a discussion can be the level of the voice. Discussions are in ordinary tones. Quarreling is when people raise their voice. It also can be the sharpening of the eye or the pointing of the finger. Christians are not to argue because it is always a lose-lose situation. Foolish and stupid

arguments are definitely not even a win-lose situation, much less a win-win situation.

Instead of quarreling, be kind to all people. Gently instruct and expect God to intervene. Many times teachers and preachers of God's word think it depends on them to change a person's mind. It does not. They are not obligated to change people's mind. They are obligated to be kind and gently instruct. Then teachers and preachers must wait for God to work in the person's heart. Maybe God will give them a change of mind, leading to repentance. If the person changes, it will be God who changes them.

Paul instructed Timothy, a timid, fearful, young man, about how to be the spiritual leader. First, Paul encouraged him to have a servant's attitude of gentleness and humility.

Second, Paul reminded Timothy to use a servant's resource. Timothy's resource was his life and gentle instruction. Timothy needed to live the life that he had been created to live and gently instruct others to lead the same kind of life.

Third, Timothy was to have a servant's expectation. He needed to expect God to intervene. God will act to change lives. God's word does not return to him void. It accomplishes that which he pleases and prospers in thing whereunto he says.

## **Conclusion**

Leaders need to become servants, become slaves. We need to sacrifice our will so that we can have the servants attitude of gentleness and humility, the servant's resource of a good life and gentle instruction, the servant's expectation that when I speak and I am involved, God will enter in. God will be involved. God can be trusted and therefore I must trust him.

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# Leadership In The Body (4)

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## The Servant's Method

### Introduction

The basic attitude of the servant-leader is sketched in both the Old and the New Testaments. Yet in a striking incident reported in two of the Gospels, Jesus goes beyond attitude to define more clearly the servant's leadership style. More than a servant's heart is required. There is also to be a servant's method.

### Word Studies In Leadership

#### Introduction: Servant Leadership

A group of students studying to be missionaries and leaders in the church were on a retreat with an individual. He asked them to draw a logo for some T-shirts to sell to leaders who would then wear it as an example. The logos that were designed were interesting. There were T-shirts with logos of a crown, a lion's head, a sword, a shield, and a scroll. Some of the students had looked up the word leadership in a dictionary to see what the word meant, and they looked in a thesaurus to find the synonyms of the word. They found such words as authority, control, administration, effectiveness, superiority, supremacy, skill, capacity, and power. Leaders were called a general, commander, director, manager, head, officer, master, chieftain, governor, ruler, executive, and boss. So they designed the logos to manifest what others thought leadership meant. Then the leader of the seminar read the scripture where Jesus contrasted the leadership style and method of secular rulers against the leadership style and method of those called to lead in His body. Luke 22:24-27:

*Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.*

The students were then given an hour to walk in the woods to reread and think about the passage. Then they were given the opportunity to redraw their logo. Not a single student left their logo the same. They all tore up their old designs and drew new ones. Some of them drew a towel and a basin of water. Others drew a person serving at a table. Some drew a shepherd carrying a lamb. Some drew a shepherd with his crook. Their concept of what a leader is was changed by reading the four verses of scripture. Does that not show the power of the word of God!

This illustration shows that many Christians have an incorrect concept about the kind of leadership that ought to exist in the body of Christ. In the final analysis, it is the word of God which can change a person's concept. It is words, plural, that can change a person's concept.

### **Meanings And Pictures In Words**

The original words that were used to describe leaders will be studied in this chapter and the next chapter. It will be a word study of the depth of spiritual leadership. The Greek word **doulos** is translated “servant” or “slave.” A person can look up the English word servant or slave in W.E. Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. The dictionary will give the meaning of the Greek word. Without knowing the Greek language, a person can know the meaning of the Greek word **doulos**. Vines states that it is the “purchased possession of another.” It has been purchased with either money or taken as

the spoils of war. When the Roman army fought wars, the people they captured were considered their purchased possession. The Romans purchased a slave with the sword or at the marketplace. The idea is that the person does not belong to himself. He is the total possession of another. A slave makes no decisions each day or very few because his master tells him in detail what he is to do day-by-day.

The use of the word slave in the New Testament is interesting. Paul consistently uses the word slave in the first verse of most of his epistles to describe himself. The word slave comes before the word apostle in the first verse of every letter except for one. Only in the book of Galatians, where his apostleship is under question, does the word apostle come before the word servant. In every other letter Paul described himself as the “purchased possession of another.”

Yes, Paul was proud of his Roman citizenship (cf. Acts 16:37–38; 22:23–29). He used it on several occasions for the good of the gospel of Christ and on several occasions to protect his own life. Yes, Paul rejoiced in his freedom, that Christ had set him free (cf. 1 Corinthians 9). Yes, Paul rejoiced in his past education in the university at Tarsus and in the rabbinical school in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, the finest teacher of that day (cf. Acts 22:3). Yes, Paul had apostolic authority. 2 Corinthians 13:10:

*This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.*

Paul used his apostolic authority, and people had to obey. But more importantly, Paul wanted everybody to know he was a slave to Christ. It is no wonder then that his ministry and his life was always Christ centered because the slave’s total significance is found in the master. His significance is not found in his slavery. His significance is not found in his performance of duty. When Christians have done all they have

been commanded to do, they are to say, “I am an unprofitable servant. I have only done what is my duty to do.”

The significance of the slave is determined by the significance of the master (cf. Philippians 1:20–21). The greatest service rendered to the devil, 24 hours a day, is not as significant as a momentary service to Christ.

I visited Bangkok, Thailand, on several occasions. One thing that has impressed me about the Thai people is the deep respect they have for their king. Most Thais would rather be a slave in the king’s house than own the largest bank in Bangkok because of the significance of serving the king. Paul had the same joy in serving his King: *“For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake”* (2 Corinthians 4:5). Notice that Paul wrote a double proclamation. He preached Jesus as Lord and preached himself as His slave. Paul preached himself as one whose life was found in serving others for the life of Christ. That is a wonderful concept, is it not?

The words servant and slave, *doulos* in the Greek, are relatively easy to say. It is relatively easy to pay lip service to this concept. But in the world where human freedom is honored so much, people often fight for their rights. If Christians fight for their independence. It is difficult to be a slave. It is almost impossible sometimes to hand over all one has and all one is to Christ, but it is absolutely essential for leaders in the kingdom to do so.

A medical doctor went to Africa not only to benefit Africans with his medicinal expertise, but to tell them about Christ. There was a native mangled by a lion who was brought to his clinic from another village. The man was so close to death that the doctor did not think he would be able to save the man, but with his medical skill and the grace of God, the African was healed and went home. One day there was a lot of noise and commotion at the edge of the village, so the doctor went to see what was happening. It was the African man coming toward the doctor with all his sheep, all his goats, all his wives, all his children, and all his possessions. When he got to the doctor’s house, the African native said, “according to the

laws of our tribe, a man rescued from the jaws of a wild beast no longer belongs to himself. He belongs to his rescuer. All that I have is yours. My hens, my ducks, my sheep, my goats, my servants, my children, my wives and myself. Everything is yours. You are Bwana, African for chief, and I am your slave.” This story illustrates spiritual leadership. It begins when a leader recognizes that all he has, all he is, all he will ever have, and all he will ever be belongs to Christ. True leadership is found in the Greek word **doulos** which is translated as servant or slave.

**Diakonos**, **diakoneo**, and **diakonia** are Greek words that describe a spiritual leader and have been transliterated as deacon, minister, server, and aide. The words literally mean “one who waits on a table.” They are like a waitress or waiter at a restaurant who serve customers. They take the customer’s order, turn in it, and bring the food back. Waiters normally bring back the exact food that was ordered because they are not there to serve themselves. They are there to serve customers.

The original Greek word **diakonos** was used to describe Jesus’ position as one who serves. This is what He said when He was teaching His apostles at the last supper: *“For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves”* (Luke 22:27). Jesus was willing to render ordinary, but significant service to others. And that is what leaders should do. It thrills me when I am at a dinner at the church building, and the elders and their wives serve the food and the drinks. By that symbolic gesture they are showing that they are available to do any menial job. They are not over other Christians, commanding them. They are beside them, helping and serving. This example demonstrates leaders who are willing to serve in any way needed. They should also be willing to serve by giving their time to listen when brothers need to talk about a problem.

It is interesting to trace the use of the word **diakonos** in the New Testament. It was used by Martha when she was working alone while her sister was listening to Jesus. Luke 10:40 KJV:

*But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.*

The Lord did not severely rebuke Martha. He simply told her that she was concerned about a secondary situation while Mary was involved in a primary situation. Martha was a great servant, but Mary was doing a more significant task by listening to the Master. The only thing more significant than serving a brother is listening to the Master. By listening to the Master, leaders gain strength and encouragement to serve one another.

The same Greek word was used after Peter's mother-in-law was healed by Jesus and she began serving Peter, Jesus, and the other brethren. Mark 1:30–31:

*Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.*

The Greek word was also used when the Grecian Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food:

*"So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables'" (Acts 6:2).*

The same Greek word was used by Paul and is translated ministers: "*He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life*" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

If a student reads every scripture where the Greek word **diakonos** is found, he will have a much fuller understanding of what spiritual leadership is. Particularly study 1 Corinthians 3:1–9 where Paul wrote about human leadership contrasted

with spiritual leadership of God. Paul rebuked the Corinthian Christians for their immaturity in 1 Corinthians 3:1–3:

*Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?*

Notice, Paul was writing to brothers, Christians, disciples.

The Corinthians were making more of men than they ought to have: “*For when one says, ‘I follow Paul,’ and another, ‘I follow Apollos,’ are you not mere men?*” (1 Corinthians 3:4). They were making Christ an ordinary man when they compared Him with Peter, Paul, and Apollos. They were making personality cults much like what happens today. A particular, powerful leader begins to be inebriated with his own success by getting people to follow him. Then he quits being a leader and becomes a lord. A cult develops around the personality of various leaders. Paul wrote in such a way that they could not misunderstand that they were man followers, not Jesus followers.

Paul asked the believers an important question: “*What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task*” (1 Corinthians 3:5). In the original Greek language Paul wrote: “What thing is Apollos? What thing is Paul?” They were only servants. Servants in the first century were not given full personage. They were like cattle and chattel. They were mere things to be used. Paul and Apollos were only servants through whom people came to believe, not in whom they were to believe. They were agents not objects.

When Paul and Apollos instructed people, they came to believe in Christ: “*I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow*” (1 Corinthians 3:6). God made it increase.

Paul and Apollos were God’s fellow workers. 1 Corinthians 3:7–9:

*So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow-workers; you are God's field, God's building.*

Paul and Apollos were only servants. They were only people who plowed the ground, planted the seed, and watered the seed. They were like workers who lay bricks for a building. Why would believers glory in the laborers? They should glory in Him whose building it is, not the agents of God's glory.

I love Paul's statement that they were God's fellow-workers. Paul and Apollos were fellow-workers, *Sunergoi*, in God's field, on God's building. Is it not beautiful that God came down to work with men? Matthew wrote that an angel told Joseph about the expected arrival of God: "*The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel*"—which means, "*God with us*" (Matthew 1:23). The angel said that Jesus would be born of a virgin to fulfill prophecy, and His name would be Immanuel, showing that God would dwell among His people.

Paul and Apollos were workers together with God. They were servants to God, but men whom God counted as equal. They were men whom God trusted. They were men whom God relied upon to plant, to water, and to wait. That is all Christians can do today. They can only plant, water, and wait. Worrying about a crop does not make it grow any quicker. The only thing a farmer can do once he has planted and watered is to wait to see what the increase will be from the hand of God. Spiritual leadership is being a fellow-worker with God.

There is a third Greek word that is used for spiritual leaders. The Greek word *huperetes* is translated simply as "servant," but it means much more than that. *Huper* means under, and *retes* means a rower. So *huperetes* means an under rower. On a Mediterranean galley, there were several tiers of oars. The men on the top tier had it fairly easy because they had a high fulcrum and a long lever. But the men on the bottom,

the under rowers, had a low fulcrum and a short lever. They had to work harder. The people who were being punish were placed on the lower tier because they were disposable. After working there for a few days the men would be absolutely worn out and would bring very little money when sold at a slave market.

Paul wrote that he and Apollos were merely under rowers, the lowest of servants. He did not even consider himself a slave. He definitely did not consider himself a deacon. He considered himself an under rorer who did hard work under difficult circumstances, totally under the authority of the Master.

In contrast, a worldly ruler would not even want to be a man on the top tier, where rowing was easier. He would want to be the person with the megaphone yelling instructions. Paul and Apollos did not have that attitude. They considered themselves servants through whom people came to believe.

The spirit of the world often creeps into spiritual excellence, spiritual leadership. It occurs not only by those men who are leading, but also by the people who are being led. In the quest for efficiency and success Christians often create a superstar image for their leaders. Then believers wonder why their leaders are not able to be the kind of leaders they want them to be. I recently read a book called The Christian Executive. The author wrote about men who work for large corporations. He believes that ministers of the gospel should be spiritual executives. The author wrote about the kind of impressions ministers should exhibit. The suit they wear ought to declare that they are not the worker; they are the executives. Ministers ought to fly first class and charge the tickets to the church, according to the author. If they cannot afford to drive an executive car, they should rent an expensive car on occasion to make a good impression or be driven in a limousine. Their office should be designed by professionals so it will declare human excellence. The author also wrote that ministers ought to demand the power to hire and fire co-workers. Is that Christian leadership? Is there room for mutual submission in the author's description? Is there room for accountability to the Lord? Is there room in the description for service to (not service by) one another? No, there is not!

## Conclusion

Spiritual leaders and the author of the book need to often read Psalm 23:1–4 :

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

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# Leadership In The Body (5)

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## The Leaders, Guardians, and Shepherds

### Introduction

Commitment to servant leadership carries with it a high cost. By forsaking the world's kind of leadership, the body leader is sure to be misunderstood. He will seem unimpressive. He will suffer under misunderstanding and may be reduced at times to near-despair because it takes so much longer to gain heart response than behavioral conformity. His gentleness itself, in a world where decisive and competitive men are admired, will lead to charges of weakness. But if he retains a total commitment to servanthood and all it implies, the spiritual leader will be used by God in the body, and Jesus will build His church.

The character and nature of servant leadership is enlarged by a study of several Greek words in the New Testament. *Doulos*, *Diakonos*, and *Huperetes* were studied in the last chapter. Each one of these words added a little different shade of meaning to leadership. Two more servant-words will be noted in this chapter which will also add enlargement to the concept of body leadership

### Word Studies In Leadership (2)

#### More Servant Words

*Oikonomos* is another Greek word found in the Bible for spiritual leaders. It means "steward" or "manager." It literally comes from two Greek words. *Oikos* means "house" and *nomos* means "manager," "ruler," or "law." So an *oikonomos*

was a house manager. Normally it was a slave who had earned the respect and trust of his master to the point that the master could turn everything he had over to the slave. His job was to supervise other slaves and manage the domestic affairs for the benefit of his master, not for his own benefit or for the benefit of the other slaves.

An outstanding Biblical example of a *oikonomos* is Joseph who was the steward of Potiphar's household in Egypt. Potiphar got richer because of Joseph's astute management and God's blessings (cf. Genesis 39:1–6). Later Joseph became the steward of Pharaoh's household. Pharaoh became the richest man in the world, and Egypt became the richest nation because of Joseph's shrewd management of the abundance of crops that came during the seven years of plenty (cf. Genesis 41:41–49).

Stewards serve in five or six categories. **First**, They serve as trustees and are responsible for another person's possessions. Paul wrote about being a trustee: “*So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God*” (1 Corinthians 4:1). It is required of those who are stewards, those who have been given a trust, to prove faithful. Paul wrote about being a steward of the word of God (cf. Ephesians 3:2–5; Romans 1:14). Paul was entrusted with the stewardship from God to see that all men heard the word of God. A steward has a single requirement according to the text; he must be faithful to his trust.

**Second**, stewards serve as guardians. Jude urged men to guard the faith. Jude 3:

*Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.*

Notice that Christians are stewards of the faith. It is not faiths, subjectively. It is the faith, objectively. The word of God was delivered to the saints, and they are to be stewards of His word.

Leaders are to be stewards of God's people. Peter wrote elders that they are not to lord it over the charges allotted them

(cf. 1 Peter 5:2). They are to be overseers. God put His people into the hands of His leaders. He put his sheep into the hands of His shepherds. They are God's sheep, but the leaders are responsible for them as stewards of God.

Paul wrote Timothy to guard the good deposit that had been entrusted to his care (cf. 2 Timothy 1:14). That is the same idea that is found in Jude 3. Christians are to guard the faith that is given to the saints. They are to see that the faith is not mistreated by people. That statement does not mean that the faith needs defending. It simply means that believers are guardians of the faith; they watch to see that it is properly administered and properly received.

**Third**, stewards serve as transmitters of apostolic teaching. Leaders need to apply the principles of 2 Timothy 2:1–2:

*You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

There are four generations mentioned in the verse. Jesus entrusted the word of God to the Apostle Paul. Paul became a steward of the word and then entrusted the word to Timothy. Timothy was to entrust the word to faithful men who would be able then to entrust it to others. Paul, Timothy, faithful men, and others are the four generations of God's plan. God's plan is for every man and every woman. All people are included in the plan of God. Paul was a steward who entrusted the message to Timothy, thus making him a steward. Timothy entrusted the word to reliable men thus making them stewards. When the men taught other people, the people became stewards. The process of transmitting the apostolic teaching from generation to generation enables the continuation of the mission. There should always be a transmission of God's word among the people of God.

**Fourth**, stewards serve as managers. It is required that a steward be found faithful. Jesus told of a good steward (cf. Luke 12:35–44) and of an ungodly steward (cf. Luke 16:1–15).

One of them was faithful to his stewardship; the other was unfaithful. One man managed the possessions of his master well, but the other man did not.

The same thing happened in the parable of the talents (cf. Matthew 25:14–30). One man was given five talents, another man was given two talents, and another man was given one talent, each according to his ability. The man who was given one talent was condemned, not because he had only one talent. He was condemned because he was not faithful to use that one talent. His master called him a wicked, lazy servant. The master told the man that he should have at least taken the talent to the bank so the master could have gotten back the talent plus interest.

**Fifth**, shepherds of God's people, stewards of God's people will one day have to give an account to God of how they dealt with that which was placed in their hands. The managers of God's people also have a requirement. That requirement is to be faithful stewards.

**Sixth**, stewards of God's people need to have qualities that will lead them to be faithful. Read what Paul wrote about the qualification of elders in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. Those are the qualities of life that will enable a man to be the kind steward he needs to be. A steward would need those qualities in order to be faithful to the task of stewardship to the word of God and among the people of God.

**Poimen** is another Greek word that describes the office of leadership and is translated “pastor” or “shepherd.” Pastoral scenes refer to scenes with sheep and green pastures. The word “pastor” means “shepherd.” So one of the identifying words for excellent, spiritual leaders in the kingdom of God is the word “shepherd.” It is my favorite designation of the leader because I have seen true shepherds with their sheep, and I have seen the glory of being cared for by good and honest shepherds.

Most Christians are familiar with Psalm 23, and think of the chief Shepherd when they read it: “*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want*” (Psalm 23:1). Realize that all of the qualities that the chief Shepherd possesses are to be found to some degree in all the shepherds of God. The Lord is

an example of what good shepherds do: They provide food and rest: “*He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters*” (Psalm 23:2). Good shepherds refresh and renew the soul: “*he restores my soul . . .*” (Psalm 23:3). They lead the sheep in a prepared way: “. . . *He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake*” (Psalm 23:3). Good shepherds anoint the wounded or maybe they anoint them for rulership: “*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows*” (Psalm 23:5). They are good and merciful to the very end: “*Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever*” (Psalm 23:6).

Isaiah described God as a good Shepherd: “*He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young*” (Isaiah 40:11). God tends, gathers, carries, and gently leads His sheep. Sheep cannot be run. Cattle can be run. Horses can run. Even goats can be run, but sheep must be led very gently. They have to walk because they have a small body in contrast to all the heavy wool they possess to benefit their owner. Therefore they must be dealt with in a very gentle way as is stated in the 23rd Psalm.

There are many passages in the Old Testament about good and bad shepherds. The 23rd Psalm is about a good shepherd. David was called from tending sheep to be a good shepherd for God. Psalm 78:70–72:

*He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.*

David led God’s people with integrity of heart. That is a good shepherd.

There are also some bad examples of shepherds. Ezekiel 34:1–10 is a long, but important passage because God’s leaders are shepherds:

*The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.’”*

Ezekiel 34:17–24 explains what God will do:

*“As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet? Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the Lord will be their God, and my servant*

*David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.”*

There is some beautiful, brilliant contrast in Ezekiel 34. God said that the shepherds did not take care of His sheep. What are shepherds to do? Look at the positive to the negative. Every time God said a negative, it is something the shepherd should have done. The shepherds did not take care of His sheep. They did not strengthen the weak sheep. The shepherds did not heal the sick sheep. They did not bind up the injured sheep. The shepherds did not bring back the strays. They did not seek the lost. They ruled harshly. The shepherds ruled brutally. They scattered God’s sheep. They harmed His sheep.

What did God tell Ezekiel He would do? The Lord said He would judge the shepherds and help the sheep. God said He would send a good Shepherd to take care of them. Ezekiel 34 explains the work of shepherds, the spiritual leaders of the church. Thus, this chapter in Ezekiel is one of my favorite passage. It explains the work of shepherds. They are to take care of sheep. They are to strengthen weak sheep. Shepherds are to heal sick sheep. They are to bind up injured sheep. They are to bring the strays back. They are to seek the hillside for the lost. Shepherds are not to rule the sheep brutally or harshly. They are definitely not to scatter the sheep. They are not to devour the sheep. The sheep are not there to benefit their shepherd. The shepherd is there to benefit the sheep. Ezekiel 34 defines the meaning of excellent spiritual leadership. The Israelites must have been eagerly awaiting the good Shepherd.

Jesus claimed to be the Shepherd, the David, that the Jews were awaiting. John 10:1–18:

*“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on*

*ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."*

Jesus did not say, "I am a good shepherd." He said, "I am the good Shepherd." I am the one that Ezekiel wrote about. I am the Lord of Psalm 23. Jesus is the good Shepherd.

Notice seven things Jesus said about the good Shepherd. Those men who are called to spiritual leadership in the Kingdom of God are to have these qualities because they are shepherds, and they should strive to be like the good Shepherd.

**First**, the good Shepherd knows each sheep by name (cf. Psalm 23:3, 14, 27). He shepherds each sheep in the flock. A lady received a letter from a department store about a problem she had there. There was a typographical error in the letter that really manifests some people's attitude. The letter said, "We want to assure you that we **fake** an interest in each customer." Someone had mistyped a "f" rather than a "t". I think some shepherds fake an interest in their sheep.

**Second**, Jesus said the good Shepherd is always with his sheep serving (cf. Luke 22:27).

**Third**, the good Shepherd leads His sheep, and they follow Him because they know His voice (cf. John 10:3–4).

**Fourth**, Jesus said that the good Shepherd displays a deep concern for the lost sheep. Ezekiel told the shepherds of Israel that they had not brought back the strays or searched for the lost sheep (cf. Ezekiel 34:4). Jesus told three parables that are recorded in Luke 15. He told parables about the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost sons. These parables show God's deep concern for the lost.

**Fifth**, Jesus protects his sheep. He said that He lays down His life for His sheep. If a wolf comes, the shepherd stands between the wolf and the sheep (cf. John 10:11–13). When the devil comes after a Christian, the Shepherd stands between him and the devil. As long as the believer follows Jesus, He will protect His sheep. Christians will overcome the evil one, not because of what they know, but who they know. Faithful sheep will overcome, not because of where they go, but because the Shepherd goes with them. If Jesus is in front of His sheep, they do not have to fear what is ahead of them.

**Sixth**, the Good Shepherd was prepared to die for His sheep. No one took Jesus's life. He willingly laid down His life (cf. John 10:11, 15, 17–18).

**Seventh**, the Good Shepherd seeks other sheep: "*I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd*" (John 10:16). This is one of the most beautiful statements in the Bible. The Good Shepherd not only tends the flock God gives Him, He is interested in the increase of the flock. He seeks other sheep.

A fisherman became a shepherd (cf. John 21) Jesus commissioned Peter to be a shepherd to His sheep. Jesus told

Peter to feed His sheep, tend His little lambs, and feed His sheep. Jesus did not tell Peter to feed His giraffes. To feed a giraffe a person must get up yonder it. To feed a sheep a shepherd has the sheep lay down on the ground. God made it understandable because He has sheep in his flock and not giraffes.

### **SECULAR AUTHORITY – “LORD OVER”**

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- Power base
- Gives orders
- Unwilling to fail
- Absolutely necessary
- Drives – like a cowboy drives cattle
- Needs strength to subject
- Authoritarian
- Has gold, makes rules
- Seeks personal advantage
- Expects to be served

### **SERVANT AUTHORITY – “SERVE AMONG”**

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- Love/Obedience base
- Under orders (takes orders)
- Unafraid to fail and model of transformation
- Expendable
- Leads – like a shepherd with his sheep
- Finds strength in submission
- Steward of authority
- Follows Golden Rule
- Seeks to please master and others
- Expects to serve

Notice the contrasts between secular leadership and servant leadership on the leadership chart. Secular leadership is power based. Spiritual leadership is love based.

- Powerful secular leadership gives orders. Spiritual leadership is under orders (takes orders).
- Secular leadership is unwilling to fail. Spiritual leadership is unafraid to fail because he is transformed every time he fails.
- Secular leadership drives the people like a cowboy drives his cattle. Spiritual leadership leads his flock like a shepherd.
- Secular leadership needs strength to make people be subject to him. Spiritual leadership finds strength in submission.
- Secular leadership is authoritarian. Spiritual leadership is the steward of God's authority.
- A secular leader has goals and makes rules. A spiritual leader follows the golden rule.
- Secular leaders seek personal advantage. Spiritual leaders seek to please the master and others.
- Secular leadership expects to be serviced. Spiritual leadership expects to serve.

Spiritual leadership is what is needed. Christians should not be concerned with success. They should be concerned with excellence.

## Conclusion

Christians are not very concerned with success. They are more concerned with excellence. If the people of God live in the spirit of God and speak the word of God, then whatever happens is the absolute will of God. A natural question would be, "how do you develop leaders like this?" "How will the church live and teach so that spiritual leaders will arise to lead the people of God?" Those good questions will be studied in the next chapter. The process of developing servant leaders from secular leaders will be addressed. The change from a boss to a shepherd and from making commands to serving will be studied.

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## Leadership In The Body (6)

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### Developing Leaders

#### Introduction

Excellent Leadership is servant leadership. That type of leadership was often shown by Jesus. The Greek meaning of biblical leadership words that describe body leaders was studied in previous chapters. For example, *doulos* means “slave”. Such words as shepherd, pastor, and overseer indicate that the leader exists to serve those who are being led.

One of the practical lessons that needs to be studied is the process of developing leaders. What process does one who strives to be an excellent spiritual servant, one who can lead and shepherd the people of God, go through? What does scripture indicate about the way a man is to become a serving slave of God? These questions will be addressed in this chapter.

The reader will learn the four important levels in the process of developing leaders in the Lord’s church with one scripture to illustrate each one. The levels will be illustrated with a pyramid.

#### The Process Of Developing Leaders

##### Level One: Personal Bible Study

The foundation of the pyramid is personal Bible study. There is no substitute for a daily personal study of the Word. I would suggest that it be done at a person’s brightest hour. A man who wakes up bright should study the Bible in the morning. A person who takes a while to get started in the morning should watch himself to determine the time of the day that he is the most mentally alert, functioning at his utmost.

Take some of that time and spend an hour in daily Bible study. This study is different from the occasional study where a person studies for four or five hours for a specific reason or a special assignment. The daily Bible study is not about listening to good tapes although that is good to do. Listening to men and women teach the Word of God in an effective manner is not the same as personal Bible study. Reading the latest books about the Bible, reading commentaries, and readings study guides should not take the place of reading and studying the Bible.

Having a good guide in addition to the Bible is helpful, but never let any of the books be anything but a guide to aid you in putting your heart, soul, and mind into the Word of God. Search The Scriptures by Inter Varsity Press and the Outline On Bible History by this author are two good study sources.

Read the Word, study the Word, and mediate upon the Word. Total attention must be given to the inspired, infallible, and inherent Word of God.

As one reads and studies the Word of God, he needs to have a notebook to record some thoughts. Only when one writes his thoughts has he really learned. The potential leader needs to learn the material well enough to write what he has learned.

Using these questions may help a person learn to record his thoughts in a notebook. What was learned about God in personal Bible study today? Be definite in self examination of what was learned. What did I learn about myself today in the study? How do I look through the lense of Scripture? Is there a sin or sins to forsake? Is there any command that I need to obey? Is there any warning that I need to heed? Is there any promise that I need to receive? Then ask, answer, and fulfill this question. What verse or verses do I want to memorize from this section? Every day memorize at least one verse from the text. At the end of the year, you will be amazed at how much God has spoken to your soul and how much you have learned.

Television, radio, internet, and books have distracted many Christians from diligently reading and studying the Word of God. Read the 119 Psalm. Notice how David praises the Word

of God in all 176 verses of the longest Psalm. In the midst of that psalm, he wrote: “*My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises*” (Psalm 119:148). Is it not interesting that at nighttime David longed for the daytime when he could study and at daytime, he longed for the quietness of the night that he might meditate upon that Word. The word that is translated “meditate” in the verse should literally be translated “ruminate”. Ruminate is the word that describes the cow chewing the cud, the partly digested food that is returned from the first stomach so the cow can chew it further. When a person reads the Bible, it is similar to when a cow partially chews his food. But when a person meditates on the Word, it is like a cow chewing the cud. When a person meditates, he thinks through what he has read so that it can be assimilated and become a part of his life. That is a responsibility of every son and daughter of God. Excellence is needed in personal Bible study. Without a daily, ongoing, personal Bible study a person will never get to be the excellent spiritual leader he needs to be.

### **Level Two: Bible Exposition**

From the foundational level of Bible study one needs to move to Bible exposition, the actual speaking of the Word to others. At this level a person shares what he has studied with his closest friends, relatives, associates, and brothers and sisters. God has gifted some brothers and sisters with the ability to be teachers, to equip other people for service. Ephesians 4:11–13:

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

Not every person has been gifted to teach, but that does not relieve him of the responsibility of sharing the word of God. Even though a person has not received the gift of evangelism or the gift of teaching as a pastor, that does not mean he has been relieved of the responsibility of teaching and preaching the Word. There is a responsibility to teach as well as a gift to teach. Every Christian has the responsibility to teach the Word of God, and some are gifted to do so.

In a vision John saw the redeemed who had overcome Satan around the throne in heaven: “*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death*” (Revelation 12:11). John describes their victory with a three-fold designation. First, “*the blood of the Lamb*” represents their forgiveness. Second, “*the word of their testimony*” is their function. Third, “*they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death*” is their attitude. Everybody must have a testimony about Christ. Of course, it is the one written in the Bible. Jesus is the testimony of the redeemed, but they still have the responsibility to speak for Him. That is why personal Bible study is needed. After enough Bible study a person will be able to preach or teach the word of God. Paul charged Timothy to preach the word. 2 Timothy 4:1–2:

*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word . . .*

God has commanded ministers to preach the word.

God has also commanded preachers to train other men to preach the word: “*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach*” (2 Timothy 2:2). This scripture is one of the most important texts in spiritual leadership found in the Word of God. In order for someone to teach others the person must first be taught. Spiritual leaders teach and train reliable people who will be qualified to teach.

### **Level Three: Group Bible Study**

Level three in the pyramid is group Bible study. I do not mean just Bible study on Sunday morning or Wednesday night. I mean a group of people that are committed to each other and to the Word to grow spiritually. Bible study on Sunday mornings or Wednesday nights is not group Bible study. It is an informal setting of people who are committed to each other and to the study of the Word in order to grow spiritually. It is best held in a home where everybody can see each other. Everybody can see others as they receive, internalize, are convicted by, and are inspired by the Word of God.

This is not intended to be an evangelistic Bible study. The study is not an attempt to reach people who do not know Jesus, although unbelievers can and will be reached in the informal Bible study. Maybe the wife or the husband or the children of some believer will come. Perhaps a friend will be invited by a believer. The intent of the group Bible study is not to reach the lost, it is to mature Christians. The study is intended to provide believers with an opportunity to grow in a spiritual environment.

The group Bible study should provide an environment where members can be open and honest. It should be an environment where they can confess what they have done wrong and praise God for what they have done right. But that is not the primary purpose of the study group. The purpose is to make a planned progressive study through a set text. I like to have a study through the gospels. Study the life of Christ for a full year or however long it takes. It is profitable to read every incident, every statement, everything about the life of Christ in chronological order. The life of the sinless, Son of God and the sympathetic Son of man might be set forth in a maturing, helpful way.

The program in such a study is really very simple. Observe the text to understand what the text says. Interpret the scripture to reveal the meaning for yourself. Apply the text by planning how to incorporate the text in your life. Share the text by telling other people what you gained from the study. This is the perhaps the most important way to train leaders.

Jesus came down from a mountainside, having prayed all night, and called His disciples. He chose twelve of them whom He also designated apostles (cf. Mark 3:13–14). Jesus told the fishermen to follow Him and He would make them fishers of men (cf. Matthew 4:19). They were not yet fishers of men. They were not yet able to go out to catch men. They needed three years with Jesus. The key words are “with Jesus”. Look up the phrase “one another” in a concordance and read all the Bible texts to understand the importance of being with others. See the importance of having, as Jesus did, a small group to whom you commit all you know, all you are, and all you have. The group also commits to you all they know, all they are, and all they have. You are with them, not merely in study, but in the experience of seeing the Word, visualizing what it means, and urging one another to live the Word. Small groups help Christians to fulfill the commands found in Hebrew 10:24–25:

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Troublesome times come, do they not? In the world Christians have tribulation, but they can still have peace because Jesus said He had overcome the world (cf. John 16:33). When difficult days come, there is a need for multiplied assemblies. The assembly of the whole church is very, very powerful, but the assemblies of groups like Jesus and His twelve and like Paul and his ten will encourage believers to remain faithful. Like Timothy committed unto his faithful men the Word that he heard from Paul. This is perhaps the most beneficial part of training and developing leaders.

#### **Level Four: Discipling Others**

The fourth level of the developing leaders pyramid is discipling others. The top level of the pyramid is the point that spiritual leaders learn to multiply themselves. They need to

grow to the point that they can lead Bible studies. Making other disciples is the commission Jesus gave before He departed this world. Matthew 28:19–20:

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Christians are to first make disciples. Then they are to teach the disciples to observe all things that Jesus commanded. It does not say to teach them all things that Jesus commanded. Jesus said to teach them to observe, to do, all things that I have commanded. The central key is not what a person knows; it is what he does. A believer's walk must match his talk.

The key reason Christians exist as sisters and brothers of Christ is to make disciples. When Paul met with the Ephesian elders in Miletus, He reminded the elders to be shepherds of the church: *“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood”* (Acts 20:28). Shepherds are to feed the flock. They are to protect the flock. Shepherds are to educate the flock. They are to see that the flock is doing what the flock ought to do. Paul told the shepherds to guard themselves. Shepherds exist for one reason, the flock. The shepherd is a sheep herder. The “e” was taken out of the words. The shepherds exists for the sheep. The sheep do not exist for him. This lesson was studied in chapter nine (cf. Ezekiel 34:1–10; John 10:1–18).

Peter gave instructions to fellow elders about how to fulfill the assignment they had been given. 1 Peter 5:1–4:

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are*

*willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

Shepherds should be willing and enthusiastic disciple makers. They should not do it because it is a duty or a job or a responsibility. It is a duty, a job, and a responsibility, but they do not do it for that reason. People know when a shepherd is not wanting to do what he needs to do for them. He must be willing and enthusiastic.

Shepherds should not have a boss-type personality. He should not lord it over his flock. Elders should not act like they are in charge of their flock because the shepherd is really not in charge of the sheep. He should be caring for the sheep and providing them that which they need.

Peter wrote that shepherds should not be motivated by money or self-interest. Money is not as much of a temptation today because most of the leaders of God's people are not paid elders. But put another way, elders should not be motivated by self-interest. Overseers should not be motivated because serving makes one feel important, feel good, or feel needed. Although elders may feel all those things, that should not be their motivation. Serving should be an elder's life not his function. Shepherds cannot oversee souls in weekly meetings. They must willingly and enthusiastically be out among the flock.

Servant leaders must be an example in word and life. This subject will be addressed in greater detail in the next chapter, but it is important to note it in this context. The leader's life, his leadership, his guidance, and his care is primarily by being an example of all that God wants a person to be.

Peter wrote that elders should be a standard. They should understand the principle of accountability. Christians are accountable for each other. Cain asked the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (cf. Genesis 4:9). Yes, a Christian is his

brother's keeper. Overseers are responsible for their brothers. They should toil to meet their brothers' spiritual needs.

J. Oswald Sanders states in his book, Spiritual Leadership: It remains to be said that the training of leaders cannot be done by employing the techniques of mass production. It will require patient and careful instruction and prayerful and personal guidance of the individual over a considerable period. "Disciples are not manufactured wholesale. They are produced one by one, because someone has taken the pains to discipline, to instruct and enlighten, to nurture, and to train one that is younger."

When a man is really marked out by God for leadership, He will see to it that he receives the necessary disciplines to make him effective.

## **Conclusion**

What beautiful thoughts are in this chapter. The crux of leadership development are found in this chapter. Potential leaders have to be students of the Word. They will have to be able to share the word with others. They need to have a one another relationships in a small group. They will ultimately have to become a disciple maker. Future shepherds will need to take the responsibility of fulfilling the commission of Jesus. In so doing, they will find out what excellence is, what leadership is, what service is, and what slavery is. May God give you peace and build your holy faith.

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# Special Study On “Example”

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## Introduction

What can leaders who are servants do to touch the hearts of those they are called to lead? There are two primary and compelling roots of the servant-leader’s power to influence. Paul linked them together when he wrote to Timothy: “*Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers*” (1 Timothy 4:16). The root of the servant leader’s power is the reality of the Word of God expressed through lifestyle and teaching.

The Spiritual leader who is a servant does not demand, he *serves*. In his service the spiritual leader sets an *example* for the body—an example that has compelling power to motivate heart change. In the previous chapter the word example was used several times. This chapter is a special study of that word. A number of scriptures are used in this chapter in order to learn the full significance of being an example. The four koine (common) Greek words that are translated “example” will be studied.

## The Excellence Of Example

### An Important Word Study Concerning Example

The first Greek word, *hypodeigma*, is found in the text where Jesus washed His disciples’ feet . It is a word that means “to place upon, to give a law upon, to give a word upon” “*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you*” (John 13:15). The word example means “something that is proposed for imitation or admonition.” By washing their feet

Jesus preached a sermon. The apostles were to see the principle involved in what He had done and not simply the activity.

**Hupogrammos** is the second Greek word that is translated as example. In a gram or diagram is "something written again" and so this is a copy "to write after", an imitation: "*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps*" (1 Peter 2:21). Jesus gave His life as an example for Christians: "*When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly*" (1 Peter 2:23). When I was a youngster starting in school, the teacher would write a letter on the board, and then the students would write the letter on their page. She would write a word on the board, and then the students would write the word on their page. The teacher wrote an example that was to be copied. Students copied her words and letters as best they could, but never as good as her writing.

Jesus gave a life to copy even though no man will ever copy it perfectly. He did not know sin. When Jesus was reviled, He did not criticize scornfully. When He suffered, He did not threaten. Jesus committed Himself unto Him who judges justly. That is the example, the imitation that Christians are to copy.

The third Greek word **mimatai** is sometimes translated mimic, mime, or mimeograph. Someone is copying another person to the best of his ability. These words all basically mean the same, but the meaning of the original word is "to follow as an example, to strive to resemble." Christians are to try to look as much as possible like Christ. Paul wrote brethren to become imitators or followers of him: "*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ*" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul indicates that believers can get close to Jesus by looking at Paul. Christians can observe someone doing their very best to imitate Christ. I am grateful for the gospels because I can diligently study those books to learn what Jesus loved, what He hated, what He did, what He did not do, who Jesus touched, and who He befriended. People sometimes become discouraged studying the life of Christ because His examples seem so far beyond their

reach. Be grateful that Paul, a mere man, wrote 1 Timothy 1:15–16:

*. . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.*

If Paul, a persecutor of the church who murdered believers and blasphemed Christ, came to Jesus, God can save any sinner. By following Paul’s example, any sinner can follow Christ.

Another Greek word that is translated “example” is **tupos**. Paul used that Greek word when he wrote Timothy to encourage him to be an example: “*Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example (**typos**) for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity*” (1 Timothy 4:12). Timothy was to be an example even though he was young.

The word “type” comes from the same Greek word and means “to press something down upon something else.” It is like the butter mold that the farmer’s wife used to make butter. She pressed the mold down upon the butter, pressed it again, pressed it again, and pressed it again. Each pattern was like the first one because there was a mold being pressed down each time.

Sometimes the Greek word **hupo** which means “upon or on top or superior” is added to the Greek word **tupos** to make the Greek word **hypotuposis** which means “to be a moral pattern”. Paul became a moral pattern, a model for the church. 2 Thessalonians 3:7–9:

*“For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of*

*you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow."*

### The Example Of Christ

There are people who are excellent examples for Christians to follow. There are many scriptures in the New Testament that indicate the Christ is the superior example. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He is the only One who deserves the title "Good".

There are different kinds of service. The President of the United States serves when he makes his State of the Union address. The King serves when he gives orders to his people, but that is not how Jesus served. Jesus did not serve as a president of a nation nor did He serve as king in the sense of ordering or commanding. Jesus served as an example.

An example of His service is found in John 13. The day before Jesus died, He wanted to teach his disciples a lesson they would never forget. He had previously told them that leadership is found in sacrifice, in service, and in surrender, but they had not heard Him (cf. Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:25–28). When Jesus and His apostles entered the rented room to observe the Passover, nobody washed any one else's feet. After they had walked in sandaled feet through the dusty or maybe muddy roads of Jerusalem, their feet were filthy. When they reclined to eat at a table, their feet were close to somebody's face. So Jesus got up, took off His outer garment, the garment of the teacher, and girded Himself with a towel, the sign of slavery. He put on the slave's towel, got on His knees with a basin of water, and washed eleven, no, twelve sets of dirty feet. Judas was still there. Yes, He even washed the betrayer's feet. Jesus set an example for His followers to serve one another with the service of the towel, not the robe. He was not illustrating the service of teaching great lessons. Jesus was showing the example of a lowly, insignificant slave washing feet that did not deserve to be washed. That is a lesson that the eleven probably never forgot, and it is a lesson that all believers should never forget.

Jesus is not only an example in service, He is an example in obedience to His Father. Jesus said that it was His life, His

significance, to obey whatever the Father gave Him to do (cf. John 4:34). Jesus said that by Himself He could do nothing. He could not judge anything by Himself. Jesus sought to please His Father, not Himself (cf. John 5:30). The Father who sent Jesus told Him what to say and teach (cf. John 7:16). Jesus also said that He had come down from heaven, not to do His will, but to do the will of the Father who sent Him (cf. John 6:38). Throughout the New Testament and particularly in the book of John there are numerous examples of Jesus’ obedience to His Father.

Jesus is also an example in prayer. The thing that I am most displeased with in my life is my prayer relationship. Many of my fellow believers in Jesus feel as I do. I do not pray as much as I should, nor as deep as I should. So why do Christians not pray as they should? Jesus gives examples of a constant, consistent, deep prayer life. He prayed when he was baptized (cf. Luke 3:21). Jesus prayed all night before selecting His apostles (cf. Luke 6:12–13). He prayed in private. Jesus’ disciples found Him praying in private (cf. Luke 9:18). Jesus prayed for Peter who was about to falter (cf. Luke 22:31–32). He prayed in the garden when He felt His relationship to God being threatened (cf. Luke 22:41, 44). He prayed the prayer of forgiveness on the cross for the people who were crucifying Him (cf. Luke 23:34). Undoubtedly, it was that kind of prayer life that drew His apostles to Him: *“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples’* (Luke 11:1). They did not ask Jesus to teach them to teach, to teach them to preach, to teach them to debate, nor to teach them to defend the faith. The disciples watched Jesus preach, watched Him teach, watched Him debate, and watched Him defend the faith, but they did not ask Jesus to teach them to do any of those things. They heard something different in Jesus’ prayers. His prayers were divine. His prayers were deeper. So one of His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. His teaching was simple, but that is not the lesson. The lesson is that Jesus’ example drew them to Him for prayer instruction.

Jesus is also an example to Christians about relationships. He had relationships with sinners (cf. Matthew 9:11). He was

concerned about the woman caught in the act of adultery (cf. John 8:3–11). Jesus not only saved a tax collector (Zacchaeus) (cf. Luke 19:1–10), but He called one (Levi) to be in His inner circle, an apostle (cf. Matthew 10:2–4). Jesus was concerned about the woman who washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair because she was grateful that He had forgiven her (cf. Luke 7:38). Christians should notice the relationship Jesus had with sinners and make the same attitude a part of their lives.

Also notice Jesus’ relationship with children. It has been said that one can tell the depth of a person’s character by how he treats children. That is correct. Jesus received little children and made them examples of the way people have to become to enter the Kingdom of God (cf. Mark 10:13–16; Matthew 19:13–15).

Notice Jesus’ relationship with His disciples, those He brought out of the world for His work. As was noted in the last chapter, the word “with” shows their relationship. Jesus spent time with His apostles. He cared for them. Jesus is an example to leaders in the Kingdom.

Jesus needs to be an example for leaders in regard to their relationships with women. Notice the number of times Jesus is mentioned with women. Jesus was with His mother at a wedding feast when He preformed His first miracle (cf. John 2:1–11). Jesus honored an immoral Samaritan woman by talking with her and by revealing His Messiahship to her (cf. John 4:1–2). Jesus also talked with the woman taken in adultery. He did not condemn her, but said to go and sin no more (cf. John 8:3–11). As Jesus hung on the cross He told John to take care of His mother. From that time on John took Mary into his home (cf. John 19:25–27). Jesus was tender and yet demanding with Mary Magdalene and the other women. He chose Mary Magdalene to tell the brothers that Jesus was returning to God (cf. John 20:10–18). Jesus is an excellent example in relationships.

Jesus is also an example in suffering (cf. 1 Peter 2:21). Jesus chose to be poor so Christians could be rich: *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was*

*rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich*” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus had a choice, and He chose to be poor. From the time Jesus started His ministry, when He left His mother’s house until He died, Jesus chose to have no house and no bed of His own (cf. Luke 9:58). He had no home in which to find refuge. He had no bed in which to find rest. His home was his Father’s house and his bed was his Father’s will.

Jesus was rejected by his own family (cf. John 7:1-5). His own brothers and sisters rejected him. Jesus predicted that even His disciples would reject Him when He had to go to the hill called Calvary (cf. John 15:25). His father, His mother, His brothers, His sisters, and His disciples rejected Him.

Peter wrote about Jesus, an extreme example for believers. 1 Peter 2:21–23:

*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.”*

Jesus had no sin. There was no deceit found in his mouth. There was no retaliation in his practice. There was no threat from his lips. Only trust and commitment to the Father was found. If anybody had a right to retaliate for the evil done him, surely the sinless son of God did. But Jesus trusted the Father, He knew the Father would take care of the situation.

The disciples learned from Jesus. When Peter and John were told not to preach anymore in the name of Jesus or they would be killed, the men relied on God to care for them. They told the Jewish men that they had to speak about what they had seen and heard (cf. Acts 4:1–20). Peter and John knew that the Lord would take care of the threats against them. Where did they get their boldness? It was their duty to speak, but that is not why they were bold. There was no law that said they ought to be

bold. The apostles were bold because of Jesus’ example. Leaders, pay attention! Those who strive to be leaders, pay attention! Pay attention to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### The Example Of Paul

As has been stated previously, the example of Paul is so encouraging because he, the chief of sinners, was able to change his life and completely obey Jesus. Notice four examples of Paul handling controversial matters. First, notice Paul’s example of handling controversial matters (cf. 1 Corinthians 8). Christians have been given knowledge, but knowledge puffs up. Love builds up. So Christians cannot handle matters by knowledge (cf. v. 1). Paul wrote that there is only one true and living God (vs. 4–6). There is no doubt about that statement. Thus, idols have no real existence because they are made out of wood and stone. Christians have the knowledge, but they should not use it to hurt the weak ( vs. 4–5). Believers should not flaunt what they know in a way that cause the weak to hurt their conscious (vs. 11–13).

In the second example Paul wrote abut how to handle the difficult issue of freedom and rights in 1 Corinthians 9. He defends a believer’s freedom, but encourages the believer to not use his rights if a brother will be hurt or if souls will not be won (vs. 1–14). In the latter part of the chapter Paul declines his freedom (vs. 15–17). Paul explains why he made himself a slave: *“Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible”* (1 Corinthians 9:19). Christians must use their freedom carefully.

In the same chapter Paul wrote about his example of self-discipline (cf. 1 Corinthians 9). Pay attention leaders! Pay attention those who wish to be leaders! If there is anything needed in leadership today, it is self-disciplined people. To be self-disciplined, a person needs to run the race to win. Do not run lackadaisically. Do not run half-heartedly. Run in such a way as to get the prize (v. 24). Train to win with the goal in mind (v. 25). A leader and a future leader must be in mastery of his body. Please listen, leaders and those that wish to be leaders.

Begin to train as if you are about to run the most significant race ever run because you are.

In the fourth example Paul wrote about pursuing life’s goal (cf. Philippians 3). Paul is an example for all Christians in pursuing life’s goal: to be like Christ. To know Christ is to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ (vs.8–9). To know Christ is to experience the power of His resurrection (v. 12). The only way to do that is to let the new life in Christ control a person and share in His sufferings (v. 10). To pursue the life goal one must press on to take hold of the goal (vs. 12). Primarily, Paul wrote to count everything loss or dung in comparison to the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus Christ the Lord (v. 7–8). Oh, that is a good example!

### **The Example Of Other New Testament Leaders**

There was a young man watching Paul. That young man was named Timothy. He was young (cf. 1 Timothy 4:12). He was sickly (cf. 1 Timothy 5:23). He was timid (cf. 2 Timothy 1:7). He was frightened (2 Timothy 1:6–7; 2:1). Christians can identify with those four attributes or perhaps three of them: sickly, timid, and frightened. Yet, this young, sick, timid, and frightened man followed the example of Paul. He made himself an example in faith, love, and purity (cf. 1 Timothy 4:11–12). He devoted himself to the Word of God and to prayer (cf. 1 Timothy 4:13). Timothy continued to persevere (cf. 1 Timothy 4:15–16).

Perhaps it was Timothy’s young example that led men like Titus to be an example of Christ (cf. Titus 2:6–7). Perhaps Epaphroditus and Tychicus were examples of Christ because they saw Jesus Christ living in the Apostle Paul and in Timothy (cf. Philippians 2:25–30; Colossians 4:7). May God give each leader and potential leader an example similar to Paul and Timothy to follow to draw them closer to God.

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# The Leader's Goal

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## **Introduction**

Of all the words associated with leadership that have cultural connotations not in harmony with biblical usage, “authority” is perhaps the most significant. Just as “leader” in our society denotes a control position, and “teach” denotes the transmission of information, so “authority” seems necessarily to imply power.

God gives human leaders authority, but it is a unique authority. It does not rest on power in any way. Most importantly, it does not imply a right to control the behavior of others. The authority of Christian leaders is an authority granted to build up brothers and sisters so they will be able to live out the will, not of men, but of God.

## **Seven Principles Which Will Let The Leader Reach His Goal**

The study of the seven principles in this chapter will let the leader reach his goal, the edification of the church. The brethren will be matured if the seven spiritual principles are followed. Read Ephesians 4:7–16. Compare carefully 2 Corinthians 12:14–15; 13:9–10, 11.

### **Depend On The Holy Spirit (God) Instead Of Flesh (Man)**

First, leaders must depend on God, the Holy Spirit, rather than man, the flesh. In religion today some people depend on their buildings and have a large, imposing edifice. Some

religious people depend on their Bible classes, or their preacher and his sermons, or the song leader and his songs, or the visitation teams, or social fellowships with multiple activities. The church needs multiple professional ministers, but some churches have so many ministers on staff that I think they may be dying of “staff” infection. Buildings, Bible classes, ministers, etc. are good, but Christians must not depend upon them.

So many times leaders gear their services to appeal to the immature and the carnal minded among them. There are carnal minded brothers in the church (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:1–3; Romans 8:3–7). Some leaders carefully pamper touchy saints feeling like they cannot pay the bills unless they do. They say they are only being realistic. Immature, carnal people need to be taught, but leaders must not depend upon them.

Notice the work that the Spirit has done for the church. The Spirit has guided men into all the truth, and the truth has been recorded in the New Testament. The Spirit today convicts men of their sin through the Word (cf. John 16:8–10). The Spirit fills saints (cf. Ephesians 5:18–20); He empowers the church (cf. Acts 4:31, 9:31); The Spirit leads Christians (cf. Romans 8:14; Acts 16:6–7); He enables believers to endure suffering (cf. Romans 5:1–5; The Spirit unifies the church (cf. Ephesians 4:3); He increases the effectiveness of prayer (cf. Romans 8:26–28). The Spirit does so much for Christians today. God will do everything possible when saints work for Him. He will add to human efforts, programs, and plans. He will operate in spite of man’s willful, stupid, and blind occupation of the place that the Bible reserves for Him. But would God not do so much better if leaders depended on Him?

Leaders in the church today need do what the Lord told His type A men to do in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4. Wait! Leaders need to wait for the promise of God. They need to wait until they are filled with (influenced by) the Spirit. Leaders need to wait until God has control of them. They need to wait until God begins to work through them. Leaders need to depend upon God. They need to be reading the Word, studying the Word, meditating upon the Word, and then, by His power, doing the

Word. Spiritual leaders must first depend on God and not on man.

### **Concentrate On The Maturing Of Christians**

Second, leaders must concentrate on the maturing of Christians. Paul wrote that everything Christians do is to be done to edify and mature the body of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 14). This though has been presented in every lesson in this series on excellence in leadership. God wants His children to become mature and go into the world and be His mature children. People will be won to Christ by the life and by the lip, by the walk and by the talk of children of God. Christians have been tricked into believing that they should be evangelizing when they are together when only one percent of those present are non-Christians. Believers have been taught that they are to be a separated people from the world. That is true as to what they believe and how they live, but that is not true as to their function. Christians are to function in the world as leaven. They are to function there as light. The purpose of early Christian gatherings was for the people to grow. They gathered together to be matured not to evangelize. But their evangelism was explosive. Why? Because their assemblies were edifying. Because they came together to be edified, and they left to evangelize. Leaders, please pay attention to the New Testament on that point!

All of the epistles have the same emphasis. Parts of each of the epistles are useful to lead pagans to Christ, but all of the epistles have another basis purpose: to bring believers to maturity. Again, read Ephesians 4:11–16. God gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be teaching-pastors for the church to perfect them for service, to mature them in their faith, and to cause the church to grow. God gave leaders to the church so God's people might become mature in assembling as the body and in small groups. His people must be matured to carry on the work of God upon the earth. If they do not mature, God's work will not get done.

**Recognize The Priesthood Of All Believers**

Third, leaders are to practice the priesthood of all believers.  
1 Peter 2:4–10:

*As you come to him, the living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

Each child of God is a priest. Each child of God is a living stone in a holy temple. Each child of God possesses the Holy Spirit. Each child of God is led by the Holy Spirit. Each child of God walks by the Holy Spirit. Each child of God bears the fruit of the Spirit. Each child of God is to exercise the gift or gifts of the Spirit for the common good. Each believer is to serve so that the body of Christ may be built up. Every Christian is a priest under the High Priest, Jesus Christ. The priesthood of believers is also seen in Hebrews 10:24–25:

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing,*

*but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

The assembly was not then and should not be today “a one man show.” It is to be a one another ministry. We are to consider in our assembling together how we can provoke one another unto love and good works.

The gifts of the Spirit lay dormant and unused when a Christian gives the Spirit no opportunity for their use in his life. Small groups are needed so priests can encourage one another to be led by the Spirit. They need friendship times when they can get together with brothers and sisters to share how Jesus is changing their life. Less structured services are needed in our congregations so that men can share in the assembly what is happening in their life. Frequent use of “laymen” are needed in all areas of church life. The church needs to practice the priesthood of all believers.

### **Build Fellowship Around Christ**

Fourth, leaders needs to build the fellowship around Christ. All that they do must be centered in Jesus. Paul wrote that God made Jesus to be head over everything for the church: “*And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way*” (Ephesians 1:22–23). It is His power that is for believers, He is working on their behalf. Christians need to center all of their life, all of their thinking, everything, around Jesus so they can literally say with Paul: “*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain*” (Philippians 1:21). Christians speak the truth when they say: “*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*” (Galatians 2:20). Consider carefully because this can be misunderstood. It is not doctrine that saves. There is a saving doctrine, but it is Christ who saves. A person has to know the truth, believe the truth, obey the truth, and Christ will save him. It is Christ who died for sinful people. It is Christ who bestows eternal life. It is

Christ who places baptized believers in His body as it pleases him (cf. Acts 2: 47). It is Christ who makes saints glorious, distinctive, and different, not like anyone else. To find out how Paul dealt with the problem of division read 1 Corinthians 1–4. Notice that he centered his answer in who Jesus is, what Jesus has done, and what Jesus can make the church to be.

All the activities, all the services, and all the gatherings of the fellowship should have one single aim: to enhance God's children's relationship, to enhance their dependence upon, to enhance their service to, and to enhance their life in the person, Jesus. Christians have to depend on Him for their life. They should not depend upon the preacher, not on the buildings, not on programs, and not on the distinctiveness of the church. They must depend only on the Lord Jesus Christ. Diligently read about the Word of life found in 1 John 1:1–4:

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.*

The Apostle John wrote that his hands had touched the One from the beginning. His eyes had seen Him. John proclaimed concerning the Word of life. John wrote that Jesus is Life, and he was writing so that believers can have the Life. If Christians walk in the light, then they can have fellowship with Him.

### **Release Church Life From The Confines Of The Church Building**

The fifth principle is for leaders to release the church life from the confines of the church building. The building is where

Christians come to encourage one another, but church life needs to be out in the arena called the world. Jesus came into the world to minister to the world of prostitutes, the world of lepers, the world of tax collectors, the world of Samaritans, the world of Pharisees, and the world of Sadducees. Leaders, pay attention to Jesus! Church leaders need to understand that the life of the church is not to be boxed in by the building. The early church did not have to be reminded that its ministry was to the world. There was no where else. It knew nothing of architectural wonders made of timber and stained glass in which to gather the faithful. There were no church buildings built until the second and third century. They worshiped in homes, temples, marketplaces, and wherever they could find room to gather. The church was multiplying so fast that if a buildings was built, it would not hold the church when it was completed. Church on Monday morning did not mean an empty building to them. They did not build buildings, and call them churches. They built people, and called them the church. First century Christians were in the people business.

Until a number of years ago, I had the conviction that one of the keys to a successful church was that the lights were on every night at the building. Now I believe success will be attained only to the degree that believers move out of their buildings into the mainstream of the life of the lost. In the first seven chapters of the book of Acts the church was centered, not exclusively, but mainly in the city of Jerusalem. That was the Lord's will for a while. Then it spread from Jerusalem to Samaria and into the uttermost part of the earth. God brought a persecution upon the church so it would scatter abroad, except for the leaders. The leaders stayed to continue building the church with great numbers in the city of Jerusalem. When the church was scattered abroad, they went everywhere preaching the word. That is my prayer for the church. Every Sunday morning as soon as the last amen is said, I pray that the church will be scattered abroad and go everywhere preaching the word.

### Leaders Need To Recognize Their Place In The Body

Sixth, leaders must recognize their place as a part of the total body of Christ. Read carefully because this principle can be misunderstood. This sixth principle is essential. Christians need to recognize that their local body is not the heart and center, nor the total of the body of Christ. It is only a part of the whole body. It is a significant part no matter its size. God has no insignificant parts. It is a part of the body of Christ. Individually, a Christian needs to recognize himself as a member of a local congregation as well as a member of the body of Christ universal. Since that is true, the true body of Christ cannot be divided. No one can divide the true body of Christ. A person can divide from the body, or they can lead a sect within the body, but the body of Christ will remain because it has one head. The Bible does not say there must be one body. Paul wrote the church in Ephesus that there is one body. Ephesians 4:4-6:

*There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Paul also wrote about the one body to the church in Corinth: “*For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink*” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Paul encouraged Christians to make every effort to stay unified: “*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:3). If there is only one God, then there is only one body. If there is only one Christ, there is only one body. But in spite of that truth, many people today who claim body-life are tragically splintered and divided from others in the body. Read the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians. Notice that the one body at Corinth had divided itself into warring factions. They even made the name of Jesus a party name and followed Him as if He were a human leader. The Sunset International Bible

Institute has a book on 1 Corinthians. Students may want to order that book and read information about 1 Corinthians 1–4.

However, the greater sin at Corinth was not the division into warring bodies, but the attitude of the division. It was their mind. That is why Christians are admonished to have the mind of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:16). That is why they are admonished to speak the same thing Christ spoke (cf. Romans 9:1). Many times believers think they are scripturally correct because they have renounced denominationalism and have organized independent, local churches. But independence is as divisive as sectarianism. In fact, they are the same. Christians are not independent, they are inner-dependent. Each congregation is autonomous as each person is autonomous, but Christians need each other. They are inner-dependent on one another.

I pray every day for the day to come when all who follow Jesus Christ and live by His gospel can forget all of the man-made divisions, with their hollow traditions, and let the political, organizational walls of distrust, dispute, and self-righteousness crumble through purposeful neglect. Over the rumble of all the broken down walls, may God's children see one another as inner-dependent parts of the one body in Christ.

### **Build Unity On The Basis Of Love**

Seventh, leaders need to build unity on the basis of love. I cannot imagine the members of the early church going dutifully to their religious meetings as individual islands surrounded by the cold waters of an impersonal image, sitting shoulder to shoulder to hear what is said at the front, never seeing or never being seen by, never caring or never being cared for by the people with whom they met.

In the church in century one, the one thing that characterized their meetings was a soul fellowship (cf. Acts 2:42). The soul fellowship had as its heartbeat a spirit-igniting and brother-serving love.

The first century church was a personal church. Brothers knew their brother. They knew his hurts. They knew his needs. And he knew his brothers' hurts and needs. Brothers were

confronted. Brothers were ministered to by other brothers. They spiritually served one another when they came together. Brothers considered one another, provoked one another, and encouraged one another. That sometimes takes more than one hour a week. Christians today need to get back to the New Testament example.

The first century church was a personal church. Brothers did not hide in their favorite pew and slip out unnoticed. They were confronted, they were noticed, and brothers reached out to each other. Sometimes the assemblies are not like that today. All the coffee times together, all the fellowship meals, and all the business and committee meetings may not build unity in the church. Perhaps leaders need to practice tough love. They need to practice the kind of love that Jesus had for his disciples. They need to practice the kind of love that those who followed Jesus must have had for each other. That tough love must be done with lots of love. If a Christian sees a brother sin, he should rebuke him. If he sees a weak brother, he needs to support him. If a Christian sees his brother's lack of knowledge, he should teach him. The love that leaders show for one another and teach other Christian to show will build unity in the body.

## Conclusion

The most important thing to face today is the fact that the world has made dangerous inroads into the church and has by virtue of long standing practice become firmly entrenched. Pray for the kind of heavenly dynamite that will blast the church free from the debilitating crutches of the world so the church will advance spiritually. May the church look only to the Holy Spirit for all it needs to become once again God's church guided by spiritual leaders. May God give each leader the grace, courage, and love to see that the church is lead by servant leaders who build up and mature a people who will follow God's will. God bless you and make you leaders of his growing church.



## Richard Rogers

Richard Rogers was one of the brotherhood's most accomplished expository teachers until his death in July of 2000. His knowledge of Leadership qualities and methods as presented on these video lessons will enlarge your ability to be the kind of spiritual leader that God desires to lead His church in the 21st Century. He will discuss aspects of leadership which seldom are considered when selecting church leaders. His insight into what the Bible says concerning spiritual leadership is fresh and will be well presented. He had the reputation of being one of the most traveled and respected expositors in our brotherhood. His college credits included Abilene Christian University and Florida Christian College. He was also a diligent student of the Bible through self-study in his many years of preaching and teaching God's Word.

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