

The Compass

a tool for disciplers



Equipping Believers for Ministry

Spiritual Leadership

Conversation On the Journey

First of all, for anyone interested in learning more about what it means to be a spiritual leader, perhaps the best book on this subject is Spiritual Leadership by J. Oswald Sanders - it should be required reading! With that said...you can ask a lot of great questions to begin discussing this subject...questions like:

- In your opinion, are leaders “made” or “born”?
- How do you define “leader”?
- Who are some leaders in today’s society?
- Why do you say those people are leaders?
- What do you think are some qualities or characteristics that a leader should have?
- Do you consider yourself a leader? Why or why not?

Have fun with this topic with your disciple, being clear to communicate that we are all in process and no one but Jesus is the ultimate spiritual leader.

Some Definitions

Leadership has been described as:

“influence, the ability of one person to influence others.” -J.Oswald Sanders

“the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and the character which inspires confidence.” -Lord Montgomery (one of the greatest military leaders of all times)

“that quality in a leader that inspires sufficient confidence in his subordinates as to be willing to accept his views and carry out his commands.” -Fleet Admiral Nimitz

“There are only three kinds of people in the world - those that are immovable, those that are movable, and those that move them!” -Li Huang Chang (an old Chinese leader)

“A leader is a person who has the ability to get a person to do what they don’t want to do, and like it.” -President Truman

This Week’s Excursion

Your objective in this lesson is to help your disciple get the bigger picture of what it means to be a spiritual leader and to help him grow in this area. Discipleship is leadership, and so as your disciple gets serious about multiplying his faith, he’ll need to know what the qualities and characteristics of a spiritual leader are, and what the indispensable requirement is for effective spiritual leadership.



What do you think it means to be a spiritual leader? Any differences? How do you think Jesus would define a spiritual leader?

“Natural” Leadership vs. “Spiritual” Leadership

In his book *Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Sanders states that, “spiritual leadership is a blending of natural and spiritual qualities.” In natural leadership, personality is a critical factor. Lord Montgomery states, “The degree of influence will depend on the personality of the man, the ‘incandescence’ of which he is capable, the flame which burns within him, the magnetism which will draw the hearts of men towards him.” One of the most distinctive things about spiritual leadership though is that it is not about me - it’s about *Christ in me*.

J. Oswald Sanders states:

The spiritual leader, however, influences others not by the power of his own personality alone but by that personality irradiated, interpenetrated, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Because he permits the Holy Spirit undisputed control of his life, the Spirit’s power can flow unhindered through him to others.

Again, from *Spiritual Leadership*:

Natural leadership and spiritual leadership have many points of similarity, but there are some respects in which they may be antithetical. That is seen when some of their dominant characteristics are set over and against one another.

Natural

Self-confident

Knows men

Makes own decisions

Ambitious

Originates own methods

Enjoys commanding others

Motivated by personal considerations

Independent

Spiritual

Confident in God

Also knows God

Seeks to find God’s will

Self-effacing

Finds and follows God’s methods

Delights to obey God

Motivated by love for God and man

God-dependent”

The Indispensable Requirement

“Select...seven men...full of the Spirit...And they chose Stephen, a man full of...the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 6:3,5) Only God can make a spiritual leader. Simply put, if a person is not filled with the Holy Spirit, he *cannot* be a spiritual leader. Take a look at 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, as well as Galatians 5:22-26. Re-read the J. Oswald Sanders’ quote above about the Holy Spirit, and observe again what he says are specific characteristics of a spiritual leader. Without God’s Spirit filling you, these characteristics will not be flowing through your life.

Next Steps

After you’ve talked through the different qualities, characteristics, and roles of a spiritual leader, ask some questions about where your disciple thinks he is in those different areas. Ask him in what areas of his life he most needs God to develop. Ask him which areas he thinks are strongest for him. Based on his answers, suggest some different passages for him to take a look at and pray through until the next time you get together. Be sure to pray with him and for him, asking God to continue to develop qualities of a true spiritual leader in his life as he steps out in faith to lead.



Other Crucial Qualities

Glorify God - A spiritual leader needs to understand the basic motivation in life...life is about God, not me. It is critical that a leader of any sort understand the direction he is going - and therefore, a spiritual leader must understand what is most important to God...His glory. ("See First Things First" in *The Compass* for more on this) Jesus Himself came to glorify the Father (John 17:1-5) and therefore, any spiritual leader should have the same goal, and should help those he leads toward that goal as well.

Servant heart - Jesus is certainly our greatest model for what a spiritual leader should be. And along with His purpose of glorifying the Father, He came not to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:26-28). Philippians 2 is an excellent passage to look at to talk more about what it means to serve, and therefore lead, like Christ.

Grace Motivation - Again looking at Christ as our primary example of a spiritual leader: He was full of grace and truth (John 1:14, 17). He constantly extended grace to the people who were following Him. Mess-up after mess-up Jesus gave grace. A neat study to do sometime with your disciple would be to look up every interaction Jesus had with someone who messed up. Two of the most powerful words in the English language when put together are, "It's o.k." We know that because of Romans 8:28 (and other passages) that in the whole grand scheme of God's plan, your disciples' failures and shortcomings are going to be o.k. Communicating that to them brings great freedom and motivation to press on, as opposed to condemnation and guilt.

Identity in Christ - A common definition of a leader is one who knows who they are, where they are going, and how to get others to go there too. So, do you know who you are? Your identity in Christ? A study of Ephesians is a great place to go. If this is a struggle for your disciple, I recommend going back over the "Identity in Christ" lesson in *The Compass* and I also highly recommend the book *Victory Over the Darkness* by Neil T. Anderson.

Eternal Perspective - A leader must have the proper perspective on life...and a spiritual leader understands that life is short. It must be used to make maximum impact on eternity. Our brief days on this earth should be invested in the things that will last forever - God's Word and people's souls. Ecclesiastes, Psalm 90:10, Psalm 39:4-6, and John 17:3 are great passages to remind your disciple (and yourself!) what it's all about.

Not afraid of failure - Great leaders fail. Take a look at Moses, King David, Peter - they all messed up, but God used each of them greatly. A great question you can ask your disciple is, "Why is it that many of us are afraid to fail?" The conclusion you'll probably come to is perhaps it's because we're putting too much trust in what I can (or cannot) accomplish or achieve, as opposed to trusting God for what He wants and is able to accomplish. The core issue really is pride. Encourage your disciple to step out in faith and trust God for great things. And remember to say, "It's o.k." when he fails!

Side Trails

Spiritual Leadership. J. Oswald Sanders. Moody Press.

The Calvary Road. Roy Hession. CLC Publications.

Order at christianbook.com

Discipleship is Leadership.
Werne Mischke.

Free download at mission1.org



Four Things to Do (Roles of a Spiritual Leader)

When in doubt, as you seek to lead others spiritually, remember four primary ingredients:

- Be Spirit-filled.
- Pray
- Serve
- Appreciate

If you are *walking* in the power of the Holy Spirit, praying for those you are leading, serving those you are leading, and appreciating those you are leading for who they are and the work that they're doing, then you can rest assured that you are leading in a way that is pleasing to the Lord and bringing glory to His name.

Notes to Self

End

The Compass is the discipleship curriculum for Campus Crusade for Christ's Campus Ministry. It was created by Centerfield Productions, the field based division of CruPress. We'd love to hear your feedback on this lesson. Please write us at centerfield@uscm.org

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