

UNIT 4 - QUALIFIED AND HUMBLE LEADERS

I lay my life down for my friends

TRUTH

"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:28

IN BIBLE

To this point, we have learned that Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship can be described as: Laboring in the lives of a few with the intention of imparting one's life, God's Word, and the Gospel in such a way as to see them become mature and equipped followers of Christ, committed to doing the same in the lives of others. Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship requires: a qualified leader, a faithful few willing to follow, with the intent to multiply. In this unit, we will focus on Jesus as the humble leader. We will also consider the attitude and job description of a "qualified leader." A leader has demonstrated (and continues to grow in) characteristics of a mature and equipped follower of Christ.

He or she makes a commitment to those in the group so they, too, will become mature and equipped followers of Christ. A leader intentionally invests his or her life in the lives of a few and develops a specific plan with each group member's spiritual growth in mind. The end goal is disciple-makers who are equipped and motivated to impart the Gospel and their lives to many spiritual generations.

John 13:1-15 – Jesus’ leadership was characterized by breaking with the social expectations of what a leader should do.

What characteristics of Jesus’ humble leadership in this story stand out to you?

Matthew 18:1-5 – Jesus challenged the norms of this society in the way He related to children.

What point was Jesus making as He talked to the disciples in front of the children?

Philippians 2:1-8 – The Apostle Paul brings his letter of Philippians to a crescendo about Jesus and especially about His humility as a servant.

What are the connections between Christ’s attitude and our attitude as servant leaders?

Hebrews 13:7, 17

What are the ways the writer of Hebrews encouraged the believers to respond to their spiritual leaders?

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What can you infer about the role of these leaders?

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1 Timothy 3:1-7 – Paul gave instructions to Timothy, about the qualities of overseers in the church. These qualifications can also be helpful to think about leadership in general. List the qualifications of an overseer. Circle the ones that are skills.

What observations can you make about the difference between character qualities and skill qualities?

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Titus 2:1-10 – Paul gives instructions to Titus about the characteristics and roles of different people in the church, home and workplace. Summarize the helpful insights about leadership.

Pastor

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Older Men

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Older Women

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Younger Men

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TO SUMMARIZE

In any discussion of leadership, we can look to the greatest leader of all history. Jesus not only modeled a counter-cultural servant leadership, but He empowered His followers to be servant leaders too. One of the most provocative scenes in the gospels is when Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Jesus knew that His death was fast approaching and that He had loved His own well. In a cultural norm-defying way, Jesus humbled Himself to do something for His disciples that only the lowest servants in society would do. Peter, in his pride and worldly view of leadership, reacted to Jesus when He started to wash his feet. Jesus pointedly tells Peter that if he doesn't receive this act of servanthood, then he has no part in Jesus' mission. Jesus told the disciples to serve others in the same way He served them.

Discipling a few people is not a publicly recognized and appreciated ministry like others in the church. It takes humility to serve a few in quiet, covert and loving ways.

In another passage, Jesus' disciples asked Him who is the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus created a living illustration by calling a child to the group. Here again, Jesus turned the cultural understanding of leadership upside down. He took this child, who would not have been highly valued in their culture, and pointed out that leadership in the kingdom takes on the qualities of child-like humility.

In the passage when James' and John's mother asked if her sons could sit with Jesus in glory, Jesus again redefined the definition of leadership. Even when Jesus asked the brothers if they could go through the suffering that He would experience, and they proudly said they were able. When the disciples heard this, they became indignant. We don't know why they were indignant; maybe they were jealous, or maybe they reacted to James and John getting their mother to make the request, or maybe they wished they had asked Jesus themselves. Jesus knew what was in the disciples' hearts and told them He wanted them to be great by being the ones who serve. He hints that He will give His life as a ransom for many as the ultimate suffering servant.

Leadership in a church can be motivated by jealousy, power plays, back-stabbing, bad reports, insecurity and pride, but Jesus says there is another way. For a leader to give his or her life away to a few others is one of the best ways servant leaders carry out Jesus' mission.

Paul exhorted the young Philippian church plant in his letter to be unified in love and humility. The only way they could humbly deny selfish ambition and conceit was to have the mind of Christ, much like the only effective way we can care for the interests of others today is to participate in the Spirit with the encouragement of Christ. The only effective way we can take care of the interests of others is to participate in the Spirit with the encouragement of Christ. One of the best catalysts for this is when believers commit to do life together in the unity of the Spirit with Jesus' humility. A small group of men or women is a great environment for the humility of Christ to be developed.

The writer of Hebrews encouraged these new believers to respond to their spiritual leaders by remembering the Word of God spoken to them, considering the outcome of the leader's way of life, imitating their faith, obeying and submitting to them. We can infer that the role of these leaders is to do the following: speak the Word of God, have a Christ-like lifestyle, model faith and lead in an accountable way which would make it possible for followers to submit joyfully. All these are examples of the role of a Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship leader.

Paul gave some guidelines about the qualifications of spiritual leaders to Timothy, which can be very helpful to discipleship. It is interesting to see that the majority of the qualifications are character-related. The skills of family management and teaching are two skills mentioned. The life product of these leaders is godly character as expressed in the ministry skills of leading the church. It is clear that the formal-public leaders in the church should be involved in leading, serving, using their gifts and giving away their lives to others, but they are not the only ones to make disciples; informal-private leaders can also make them.

Every follower of Jesus can use his or her unique gifts and calling to contribute to the church's calling to "make disciples of all nations". One thing is true for all believers: we are to reflect Christ-likeness in our character and humbly serve those around us with our unique gifts, talents and experiences.

In the last passage, Paul told Titus about the characteristics and roles of different people in the church, home and employment. Pastors are to teach according to sound doctrine while exhorting and rebuking with all authority. Pastors are also to show themselves in all respects to be a model of good works, and in their teaching to show integrity, dignity and sound speech. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, selfcontrolled, sound in faith, in love and in steadfastness. Older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good and train young women. Young women are to love their husbands and children, to be selfcontrolled, pure, working at home, kind and submissive to their own husbands. Younger men are to be self-controlled. Employees are to be submissive to their employers in everything – without arguing and pilfering, but showing all good faith so that the doctrine of God is adorned. As people live out the faith in their unique callings, gifts and seasons of life, the church is purified as a people for God's own possession as they are zealous for good works.

We have looked at Jesus and biblical examples of humble servant leadership, and now we will look at the practical job description of a Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship leader.

1. Walks with Jesus the Ultimate Disciple-Maker as a humble leader
2. Carries out discipleship because of a biblical conviction
3. Lives a life of repenting, believing and obeying in the power of the Gospel
4. Casts the vision for a movement (not a program) of Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship
5. Prepares to lead the weekly group meeting using the summary of the TEAMS elements
6. Helps group members make progress along the Spiritual Formation Pathway to become mature and equipped followers of Christ
7. Relationally challenges a few FAITH disciples to be in a "with / sent" relationship
8. Practices Kingdom Prayer
9. Associates with the disciples outside of group meetings and engages their whole hearts with the Gospel and Scripture
10. Prepares equipped disciples to lead a group and coaches them effectively.

Now, you might be overwhelmed as you consider this job description. You can do all things through Him who gives you strength. Abide in Him and you will bear much fruit. Remember that Jesus modeled this Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship process, He commands His church to do the same and He will give you the power to do it!

EQUIPPING

In addition to what we have studied in the Bible, what are some additional characteristics of a humble, life-shaping leader in discipleship?

With Jesus as our example, how does God develop humility in us? How do we cooperate with God as He develops humility in those we shepherd and lead?

Evaluate the ways your church has identified, matured and equipped future leaders. What has been effective? Ineffective?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Before your group meeting, reflect on the questions below. You may be asked any of these questions, and you may be asking them of another group member. These questions can be helpful for you to examine your attitude of humility and your role as a group member. Be vulnerable and open as you address these accountability questions.

What experiences in life has God used to produce humility in you?

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As you read the job description of a Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship leader, what are your positive thoughts, emotions, deep desires and choices?

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What fears and concerns do you have about leading a discipleship group?

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What equipping and support do you need to be a leader or assistant leader in a discipleship group?

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MISSION

"I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ."

Philemon 1:6 (NIV)

The Mission section of this series of The Journey is focused on challenging you to use the equipping you've received to get engaged in missional living, praying, serving, telling, or conversing. Last week, you evaluated the spiritual condition of one person on your prayer list and created a simple plan to make the gospel known to this person through word and deed. This week, your Mission assignment is to begin using the Mission Activity Log to keep track of how you're progressing on your plan. An example is provided on the next page. Just enter whatever you have done (however small) to make the gospel known through word and deed.

This isn't a one-week assignment. You can work on this for weeks to come. So it's important to have an accountability partner to encourage and motivate you to follow through on your plan. Here's a challenge for you: why not consider making it your goal to follow through with your plan and keep track of your progress for 60 days? This would be a good way to begin a grace commitment to intentionally engaging in missional living, especially if you pair up with someone from your Journey Group as an accountability partner.

Mission Activity Log

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SUPPLICATION

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, I will make you become fishers of men.’”

Mark 1:17 (ESV)

Pray that God would open the door for you to share the good news of Jesus with someone this week.

In prayer, beforehand, ask Him to prepare the way. To prepare hearts. Ask Him to give you boldness, and His words to speak in proclaiming Him.

My prayer request regarding the truth for this week:

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My prayer request regarding a situation in my life:

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My prayer request regarding living a missional life:

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Prayer requests from others in my group:

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