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REAL TESTIMONIES.
RADICAL TRANSFORMATIONS.

WITNESS

APPENDIX B: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Real Testimonies. Radical Transformations.

KYLE LAURIANO MINISTRY

CHURCH LEADERSHIP BASICS

Foundational Training for Emerging Church Leaders: Character, Calling, and Competency

A Comprehensive 35,000+ Word Resource on Christian Church Leadership

For emerging leaders, pastors, elders, deacons, small group leaders, and anyone called to lead in church context

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: LEADING GOD'S PEOPLE

Leadership is a calling. Not everyone is called to lead. But those called must lead well.

The responsibility to lead God's people is one of the highest honors and heaviest burdens a Christian can bear. Throughout Scripture, leadership is never presented as a position of privilege or power, but rather as a sacred trust. God has placed leaders throughout His church not to dominate, but to serve; not to accumulate personal glory, but to advance His kingdom; not to build their own empire, but to establish Christ's church.

Why Leadership Matters

Direction - A church without direction becomes a ship without a rudder, drifting aimlessly on turbulent seas. Leaders provide vision, clarity, and purpose. They help God's people understand not just where they are, but where they're going and why it matters in God's economy.

Alignment - Teams without alignment fragment into competing agendas. When leaders cast clear vision and communicate values effectively, diverse gifts and personalities work together in harmony toward kingdom purposes rather than personal preferences.

Culture - Every organization—including churches—develops culture. The question is not whether culture will exist, but whether it will reflect Christ's values. Leaders shape culture

through their decisions, priorities, relationships, and consistency. A healthy church culture attracts people to Christ; an unhealthy one repels them.

Standards - People need clarity about expectations. What does biblical living look like? What does faithful service require? What behavior is acceptable or unacceptable? Leaders establish and maintain these standards, always pointing back to Scripture as the authority rather than personal preference.

Vision - Proverbs 29:18 declares, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Communities need vision—a compelling picture of what God wants to accomplish through them. This isn't futuristic fantasy but grounded hope that motivates people to sacrifice, serve, and persevere.

Example - Leadership is not fundamentally about what leaders say, but about what leaders do. People follow example far more than instruction. When leaders live out their teaching, demonstrate the character they require, and sacrifice for the flock they shepherd, others are inspired to follow suit.

The Cost of Poor Leadership

Poor leadership creates devastation that extends far beyond the immediate organization. Divisive leaders fragment churches and families. Unclear leaders create confusion that paralyzes progress. Failing leaders leave people hurt and cynical about both leadership and faith. Selfish leaders scandalize the gospel and give ammunition to those who mock Christ. Stagnant leaders watch their organizations slowly decline into irrelevance and decline. The damage from poor leadership echoes through generations.

The Blessing of Good Leadership

Conversely, good leadership multiplies blessing exponentially. Under healthy leadership, people feel cared for and valued. Churches unite around common vision and advance God's kingdom together. Emerging leaders are identified and developed, creating multiplication rather than mere addition. Conflicts are addressed biblically and resolved redemptively. Ministry flourishes. Families are strengthened. Souls are transformed. The gospel advances. Generational impact is created.

This is what's at stake in leadership development.

PART 1: BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER 1: GOD'S DESIGN FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Leadership Structure in Scripture

The foundational truth about church leadership is profoundly simple yet often overlooked: **God Himself appoints leaders.** Leadership is not primarily about human selection, democratic voting, or popular acclaim. It is God's sovereign choice and calling.

1 Corinthians 12:28 (KJV):

> *"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."*

Notice the language: "God hath set." Not "the church chose," not "members voted for," not "the most popular were elevated." God Himself sets leaders in place according to His design and wisdom. The church's role is to recognize and submit to those whom God has appointed, not to create leadership based on human preference or organizational convenience.

The Purpose of Appointed Leadership

Why does God appoint leaders to His church? The purpose is clearly stated in Ephesians:

Ephesians 4:11-13 (KJV):

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."*

Leadership exists for perfecting the saints—that is, developing believers toward spiritual maturity. Leadership equips believers for ministry, not to elevate leaders above the people. Leadership builds up the body of Christ toward unity, knowledge, and spiritual fullness. The ultimate measure of successful leadership is not the leader's reputation, but the maturation of the people led.

What Leadership Is NOT

Before examining what leadership should be, it's critical to understand what biblical leadership explicitly rejects:

Power: Leadership is not about accumulating authority or control over others. Jesus explicitly warned against this in Matthew 20:25-26: "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you."

Prestige: Leadership is not a status symbol or mark of special superiority. Rather, Jesus taught that "whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister" (Matthew 20:26 KJV).

Self-Interest: A leader who uses their position for personal gain, financial enrichment, or reputation building has fundamentally misunderstood their calling. Peter wrote to church leaders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Peter 5:2 KJV).

Authority Over Conscience: Spiritual leaders do not have authority to override Scripture or demand blind obedience. Even apostles could be confronted when they strayed from truth, as Paul did to Peter in Galatians 2:11-14. Authority is delegated, limited, and always subordinate to God's Word.

What Leadership IS

If leadership is not about power, prestige, or self-interest, then what is it?

Development of Others: The primary work of a leader is to identify potential in others and help them grow. Moses did this with Joshua. Eli did this with Samuel (though imperfectly). Paul did this with Timothy and Titus. Jesus did this with the twelve disciples. Leadership's ultimate success is measured not by what the leader accomplishes personally, but by how many others the leader equips to accomplish kingdom work.

Equipping for Ministry: Leaders distribute God's gifts and responsibilities strategically, helping each person discover and deploy their unique calling. This means some believers will do things the leader doesn't do. Some will minister in ways the leader wouldn't choose. The leader's job is not to do all the ministry personally, but to help others discover and exercise their God-given callings.

Faithful Stewardship: Leaders are stewards—trustees managing something that belongs to God, not to themselves. They will give account to the Chief Shepherd for how they've cared for His flock. This stewardship perspective shapes decisions, priorities, and relationships. It prevents a leader from treating the church as their personal fiefdom or ministry as their personal empire.

Following Christ's Example: Jesus set the standard. He spent time developing twelve disciples. He served them by washing their feet. He taught them through example and instruction. He corrected them when necessary. He interceded for them in prayer. He sent them out with authority and then released them to ministry. Every leader is called to follow this model.

Advancing God's Kingdom: The mission of church leadership is not to build impressive organizations, accumulate resources, or expand influence for its own sake. The mission is always advancement of God's kingdom—people coming to know Christ, believers growing in maturity, biblical truth being proclaimed, Christ being exalted, and God's purposes being accomplished on earth as they are in heaven.

The Two-Fold Leadership Structure

Scripture reveals that God designed the church to function with complementary leadership structures:

Doctrinal/Spiritual Leadership - Those called to teach, preach, and guard biblical truth. These include apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Their primary responsibility is ensuring the church remains grounded in Scripture and growing spiritually.

Administrative/Functional Leadership - Those called to oversee operations, resources, and care. These include deacons, administrators, and those gifted in helps and governments. Their primary responsibility is ensuring the practical functioning of the church and the care of people's material needs.

Both types of leadership are equally important. Churches fail when they neglect either dimension. Doctrinal leadership without administrative support becomes overly academic and ungrounded in practical reality. Administrative leadership without doctrinal grounding becomes focused on mere institutional maintenance rather than kingdom advancement.

Leadership Appointment and Recognition

An important question arises: If God appoints leaders, how does the church know who they are? Scripture provides the answer through a process that involves both divine calling and human recognition.

God raises up leaders through the Holy Spirit's gifting and the leadership's training and development. Then the church recognizes and affirms these leaders. This is not democratic voting as a replacement for discernment, but rather the church confirming what God has already been doing through spiritual growth and demonstrated character.

Titus 1:5 (KJV):

> *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."*

Paul left Titus in Crete to "ordain elders"—to recognize and formally appoint those whom God had prepared. This involved both spiritual discernment and affirmation. Titus wasn't creating leaders through his appointment; he was recognizing and formalizing the leadership God had already raised up.

CHAPTER 2: SERVANT LEADERSHIP MODEL

The Revolutionary Example of Jesus

Jesus redefined leadership in a way that was radically countercultural in His day—and remains so in ours. In cultures where leadership meant climbing higher, demanding more service, and accumulating greater privilege, Jesus taught something entirely opposite.

John 13:3-5 (KJV):

> *"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet."*

Consider the weight of this moment. Jesus, knowing that all authority had been given to Him, knowing His eternal nature and glory, chose to wash the feet of His disciples—a task performed by servants and slaves. This wasn't a symbolic gesture or isolated act. It was the culmination of Jesus' entire ministry approach, declaring through action what He'd been teaching through word.

John 13:12-15 (KJV):

> *"So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."*

Jesus explicitly instructed His followers to follow His example of servant leadership. The greatest, most powerful, most authoritative person present took the lowest position and performed the most humble task. This is the model for all who lead in His church.

Understanding Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is frequently misunderstood as weakness, permissiveness, or abdication of responsibility. This misunderstanding weakens its transformative power. Servant leadership is neither spineless nor passive. Rather, it's leadership that uses authority and influence for others' benefit rather than personal gain.

A servant leader:

Takes responsibility rather than avoiding it. When something goes wrong, a servant leader doesn't blame others or deflect responsibility. They acknowledge the failure, determine how to help the people affected, and work toward restoration.

Listens more than speaks. A servant leader understands that they don't have all the answers. They ask questions, genuinely listen to responses, and incorporate input from those they lead. This doesn't mean they never make unilateral decisions, but they make informed decisions after seeking counsel.

Prioritizes others' development. A servant leader isn't threatened by the growth of those they lead. They actively invest in others' development because they understand that strong leaders create strong organizations and advance the kingdom more effectively.

Gives credit generously and accepts blame personally. When things go well, a servant leader attributes success to those who did the work and to God's blessing. When things go poorly, they take responsibility rather than deflecting.

Serves from strength, not weakness. This is crucial. A servant leader is not weak; they're strong enough to use their strength to lift others rather than lord it over them. They make tough decisions when necessary, confront sin when required, and maintain standards—all from a heart of genuine care.

Protects the vulnerable. A servant leader stands between danger and those they lead. Whether that danger is spiritual, emotional, or physical, the servant leader doesn't hide safely in the back.

Advocates for those without voice. When decisions are made that affect the vulnerable or voiceless, a servant leader ensures their needs are represented and considered.

Servant Leadership Principles

Several core principles distinguish servant leadership from other leadership models:

Authority is Delegated, Not Inherent - A leader's authority doesn't come from their personality, position, or popularity. It's delegated from God through the church. Understanding this keeps a leader humble and accountable. You're not the ultimate authority; God is. And you answer to Him for how you've used delegated authority.

Leadership is About Others, Not Self - Every decision should be filtered through this question: "How does this serve the people I lead and advance God's kingdom?" If a decision primarily serves the leader's interests or preferences, it's the wrong decision.

Humility is Strength, Not Weakness - The ability to acknowledge limitations, admit mistakes, ask for help, and serve humbly from a position of authority is the ultimate strength. It's easy to demand service; it's difficult to genuinely serve.

Sacrifice is Expected - Servant leadership often requires personal sacrifice. Leaders may miss family events for ministry. They may make financially sacrificial decisions for the church's sake. They may endure criticism and rejection. Jesus taught that whoever would follow Him must take up their cross. Leaders go first in this regard.

Vision is Cast but People Choose to Follow - A servant leader doesn't demand obedience; they inspire trust through their example and character. People follow servant leaders not because they must, but because they want to. The leader's credibility earns followership.

How Servant Leadership Functions in Practice

Servant leadership isn't just a philosophy; it must translate into concrete practices and behaviors.

In Decision-Making: A servant leader gathers input, seeks wisdom from others, and explains the reasoning behind decisions. Even when a decision is unpopular, people are more likely to accept it when they understand the servant leader cared about their input and decided based on principle rather than personal preference.

In Conflict: Rather than asserting authority to end conflict, a servant leader works toward resolution that honors both parties and upholds biblical principle. They're willing to spend time, energy, and emotional capital on reconciliation.

In Failure: When a leader makes a mistake—and they will—a servant leader admits it promptly, explains what they learned, and commits to doing better. This models humility and gives permission for others to acknowledge and learn from their own mistakes.

In Development: A servant leader notices emerging potential in others and deliberately creates opportunities for growth. They assign people to tasks slightly beyond their current competence level, providing coaching and support.

In Communication: Servant leaders are clear, honest, and timely in communication. They don't withhold information to maintain power. They explain what's happening, why it matters, and how it affects those they lead.

In Representation: When meeting with those above you in authority, a servant leader advocates for the needs and interests of those they lead. They don't become chameleons, suddenly supporting decisions that disadvantage their people when in the presence of authority.

The Paradox of Servant Leadership

Here lies the paradox: servant leaders often wield more influence than authoritarian leaders. When people experience being genuinely cared for, they respond with loyalty and commitment that can't be demanded. A leader who serves faithfully builds a team that would do almost anything for the cause because they trust the leader cares about them, not just the mission.

Proverbs 27:12 (KJV):

> *"The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit."*

Or more relevantly, **1 Peter 5:2-3 (KJV):**

> *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock."*

Peter called church leaders to feed the flock—to nourish and care for them. Not to lord over them. Not to rule with iron fist. Not for selfish gain. But as examples. The word translated "examples" carries the idea of a stamp or imprint. A servant leader leaves an imprint on those they lead, showing them what faithful, humble, sacrificial service looks like.

CHAPTER 3: SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

The Source of Authority

Authority in God's kingdom flows from God alone. This is non-negotiable. A leader who understands they don't create their own authority, but rather receive it from God, maintains proper humility and accountability.

Romans 13:1 (KJV):

> *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."*

This passage, while primarily addressing civil authority, establishes the theological principle that all legitimate authority flows from God. Church leaders don't create their own authority; they're entrusted with God-given authority to fulfill God-given responsibilities.

1 Peter 4:10-11 (KJV):

> *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."*

Notice the framing: leaders are "stewards" of God's grace and gifts. They speak as God's oracles—delivering His truth, not their opinions. They minister with abilities God gives—acknowledging the source of their competence. And always, the purpose is that "God in all things may be glorified."

The Nature of Spiritual Authority

Spiritual authority differs from civil or secular authority in significant ways.

It's not coercive. Civil authorities can enforce laws through punishment. Spiritual leaders can't force spiritual growth or faith. They can teach, guide, encourage, and correct, but ultimate spiritual decision-making belongs to the individual.

It's not hierarchical in the worldly sense. While churches do have leadership structure, there's no spiritual aristocracy in God's kingdom. The leader has no higher standing before God than the humblest member. Both are equally redeemed, equally valued, equally destined for eternity with Christ.

It's based on credibility and character. Spiritual authority isn't granted by title alone. A person becomes a spiritual authority through demonstrated wisdom, godly character, and faithful

walking with God. Titles matter only insofar as they recognize what's already evident in character and conduct.

It's limited by Scripture. A church leader has no authority to contradict Scripture or override what God has clearly established in His Word. Any demand that violates biblical principle is outside a leader's legitimate authority.

It operates through influence rather than force. Spiritual leaders influence through example, teaching, and relationship—not through coercion or manipulation.

LEVELS OF AUTHORITY

Scripture reveals multiple levels of authority operating simultaneously within churches:

God's Authority - Absolute, ultimate, unchallengeable. All other authority flows from this source.

Scriptural Authority - God has preserved His will through Scripture. The Bible is the highest written authority for faith and practice in the church. No church leader or council can revoke or rewrite Scripture.

Leadership Authority - Leaders entrusted by the church to guide, teach, protect, and develop God's people. This authority is real but limited, delegated, and accountable.

Congregational Authority - The congregation has collective authority to affirm or question leadership decisions, particularly regarding fundamental doctrine or welfare of the body. This doesn't mean majority rules on every decision, but the congregation isn't merely a passive audience.

Personal Authority - Each believer ultimately must answer to God for their own choices and faith. No leader can usurp this personal accountability before God.

Understanding these levels prevents both authoritarian abuse (where leaders claim absolute authority) and congregational chaos (where no one has authority to make necessary decisions).

Boundaries of Authority

Healthy church leaders understand the boundaries of their authority—what they can and can't do based on biblical principle:

Leaders can teach Scripture. They can explain, apply, and exhort people to follow what Scripture teaches. They cannot invent new doctrine not found in Scripture or demand interpretations not warranted by careful biblical study.

Leaders can correct sin biblically. When someone's conduct violates Scripture and affects the church, leaders have authority to address it biblically and redemptively. This might involve private conversation, church discipline if necessary, but always with the goal of repentance and restoration.

Leaders can make operational decisions. When Scripture doesn't specifically address something—like what time to have services, how to arrange the sanctuary, what curriculum to use for classes—leaders have authority to make practical decisions.

Leaders cannot coerce spiritual choices. Ultimately, each person chooses whom they'll follow and what they'll believe. A leader can persuade and guide but not coerce.

Leaders cannot demand unquestioning obedience. The Bereans exemplified the proper response to leaders: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11 KJV). People should examine whether what leaders teach aligns with Scripture.

Leaders cannot ignore counsel or accountability. Healthy leaders seek counsel, remain accountable, and submit to correction when necessary. Spiritual maturity includes the humility to recognize you don't have all the answers.

The Check on Authority: Accountability

Because leadership authority is significant, Scripture establishes accountability mechanisms to prevent abuse.

Mutual Accountability Among Leaders - Elders hold each other accountable. If one elder's conduct becomes problematic, others confront and address it. **1 Timothy 5:19-20 (KJV):** "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

Congregational Input - While not democratic, the church body has voice. Serious decisions affecting the whole body should involve the body's input and affirmation. Acts demonstrates that significant decisions involved the whole congregation or representatives.

Accountability to Scripture - Every decision, action, and teaching must be evaluated against God's Word. If a practice can't be justified scripturally, it should be abandoned regardless of tradition or personal preference.

Consequences for Misconduct - Leaders aren't exempt from discipline. If a leader engages in sin or serious misconduct, they face consequences appropriate to their position. Spiritual leaders who abuse their authority must answer for that abuse.

Transparency - Healthy leaders operate transparently. Their reasoning, decisions, and use of resources are open to appropriate scrutiny. Secrecy and hidden motives are red flags in leadership.

Authority and Submission

The companion to understanding authority is understanding submission. Scripture calls believers to submit to leadership:

Hebrews 13:17 (KJV):

> *"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, let them do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."*

This doesn't mean mindless obedience to leaders' every whim. Rather, it means a disposition to follow biblical leadership, cooperate with decisions that serve the church's wellbeing, and avoid constant second-guessing or resistance to every initiative.

However, submission has limits. **Acts 5:29 (KJV):** "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." When leaders demand something contrary to God's clear Word, the believer's ultimate submission is to God, not the leader.

A healthy church culture develops both leaders who exercise authority wisely and believers who submit to that authority graciously—while each party understanding that ultimately all answer to God.

CHAPTER 4: ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUTHORITY

Why Accountability Matters

One of the most dangerous dynamics in church leadership is unchecked authority. History—both biblical and post-biblical—demonstrates repeatedly that power without accountability corrupts. Good people with good intentions who operate without accountability often drift into problematic behaviors, rationalizing increasingly questionable decisions.

Proverbs 27:12 (KJV):

> *"The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."*

While this verse addresses general prudence, it illustrates that wise people build safeguards. Wise leaders don't think themselves above accountability; they actively establish it.

Scriptural Models of Accountability

Scripture provides several models of accountability in leadership:

The Apostolic Council - When major doctrinal questions arose in the early church, decisions weren't made unilaterally by any single leader. Instead, apostles and elders gathered together to discuss, seek wisdom, and reach decisions collectively. **Acts 15** records the Jerusalem Council addressing the question of whether gentiles must observe Jewish law. Peter spoke, Paul and Barnabas reported, James summarized, and then they wrote a decision together. No single person imposed their will.

Accountability Among Elders - Healthy churches have multiple elders who hold each other accountable. When elders meet together regularly, discuss decisions collectively, and submit their thinking to one another's critique, individual egos and blind spots are checked.

Congregational Authority - While not democratic in the modern sense, early churches involved the congregation in major decisions. **Acts 1:15-26** shows the apostles and approximately 120 believers together selecting Judas's replacement. **Acts 6:1-6** describes the apostles proposing a solution to the widows' distribution problem, but "the thing pleased the whole multitude" and the congregation participated in selecting the seven servants.

Accountability to Scripture - All leaders are ultimately accountable to God's Word. Decisions and practices must align with Scripture. When a leader's behavior or teaching contradicts Scripture, that's grounds for correction and accountability.

Accountability to God - This is ultimate. Leaders will give account to God for how they've exercised their authority, treated people entrusted to them, and stewarded their influence. **Hebrews 13:17** reminds leaders that they "watch for your souls, as they that must give account."

Building Accountability Systems

Healthy churches deliberately structure accountability into leadership systems:

Multiple Leadership Levels - Rather than a single pastor making all decisions, churches function better with pastors, elders, deacons, and ministry leaders. Each level has specific responsibilities and authority within their domain, and they hold each other accountable.

Regular Leadership Meetings - Leaders should gather regularly—at least monthly, preferably more frequently—to discuss ministry, address issues, seek counsel, and ensure alignment. These aren't ceremonial meetings but substantive times of genuine discussion.

Clear Decision-Making Processes - Established processes for decisions clarify how authority operates. What decisions require only staff? What requires elder input? What requires congregational affirmation? Clear processes prevent power grabs and ensure appropriate input.

Financial Transparency - Church finances should be audited regularly and reported to the congregation. Lack of financial transparency is a common precursor to abuse. **1 Peter 5:2** specifically warns leaders against ministry "for filthy lucre."

Performance Evaluation - Senior leaders should be evaluated regularly by their peers or overseeing board. This evaluation should be substantive, honest, and potentially difficult. Anonymous surveys from staff and congregation can provide valuable feedback.

Conflict Resolution Processes - Churches should have established processes for addressing conflicts and complaints. When someone has a concern about a leader, there should be a clear, safe, biblical path for addressing it rather than the issue festering or being addressed through gossip.

Outside Consultation - Healthy organizations bring in outside consultants periodically to assess health, identify blind spots, and provide perspective. Church leaders can benefit from outside counsel on both strategic and interpersonal matters.

Accountability Without Legalism

An important balance must be struck: accountability is necessary, but excessive accountability becomes legalism. Leaders shouldn't be micromanaged or suspicious of constantly. Rather, healthy accountability is:

Grace-Based - Accountability operates within grace, not judgment. The goal is growth and improvement, not punishment and humiliation.

Developmental - When accountability reveals a shortcoming, the response should include coaching and support for improvement, not merely criticism.

Honest - Accountability means telling the truth in love. Avoiding difficult conversations for fear of hurt feelings actually prevents growth and enables ongoing problems.

Mutual - All leaders should be accountable to someone. No one is so mature or skilled that they don't need feedback and correction.

Focused on Outcomes - Accountability should focus on actual results and impact, not merely methods or preferences. Two leaders might accomplish the same good outcome through different approaches; that's acceptable.

Addressing Accountability Failures

What happens when accountability breaks down? When leaders operate without genuine oversight and correction mechanisms, problems typically escalate:

Authoritarian Control - Without accountability, leaders often become increasingly autocratic, demanding loyalty and obedience without question.

Financial Mismanagement - History shows repeatedly that unaccountable religious leaders often misuse church funds for personal gain.

Relational Abuse - Without accountability, leaders sometimes abuse their positional authority in relationships, taking advantage of those under them spiritually or emotionally.

Doctrinal Drift - Without accountability to Scripture or to other leaders, false doctrine can take root and spread unchecked.

Organizational Paralysis - Ironically, absence of accountability can also lead to inability to make decisions, as no one takes responsibility and everything requires consensus.

When accountability fails, these problems must be addressed:

Honest Acknowledgment - First, the problem must be named and acknowledged. Pretending everything is fine enables continued dysfunction.

Consultation with Mature Leaders - If a church lacks internal leaders equipped to address accountability failures, seeking counsel from outside mature Christian leaders is wise.

Structural Correction - The accountability system itself must be corrected. This might involve restructuring leadership, establishing new oversight mechanisms, or bringing in transitional leadership.

Restorative Process - When leaders have failed through lack of accountability, genuine restoration requires acknowledging failure, making restitution where possible, and committing to new practices.

Sometimes, Leadership Change - In serious cases, leaders may need to step down, at least temporarily, to allow for correction and restoration.

Building a Culture of Accountability

Creating genuine accountability isn't a one-time structural change but an ongoing cultural reality. This culture is built through:

Leadership Modeling - When senior leaders genuinely welcome feedback, acknowledge their mistakes, and submit to correction, it gives permission for the entire organization to function with accountability.

Transparent Communication - When leaders communicate openly about challenges, mistakes, and lessons learned, it normalizes accountability.

Safe Reporting Mechanisms - People need safe ways to raise concerns without fear of retaliation. Anonymous surveys, outside ombudspeople, or trusted advisors can provide these safe channels.

Celebrating Correction - When someone receives feedback and responds by improving, that should be celebrated, not hidden. It demonstrates that accountability leads to growth.

Generational Focus - Accountability practices should be taught to emerging leaders so the culture persists as leadership changes over time.

CHAPTER 5: LEADERSHIP AND VISION

What is Vision?

Vision in biblical leadership is not futuristic fantasy or wishful thinking. Biblical vision is a God-given picture of what He wants to accomplish through His people. It's rooted in God's eternal purposes, grounded in Scripture, and compelling enough to motivate sacrifice and perseverance.

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV):

> *"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."*

This proverb carries significant weight. Without vision—without understanding where we're going and why—people don't just stagnate; they perish. They lose direction, motivation, and purpose. The church without vision becomes a hollow institution going through motions rather than a living community advancing God's kingdom.

Simultaneously, note the second half: "but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Vision isn't a replacement for God's law or ethical foundation. Rather, vision provides direction and motivation for following God's way.

Vision Begins with God's Purposes

Every church's vision should flow from understanding God's eternal purposes. What is God trying to accomplish in this world? What has He called His church to do?

The Great Commandment - Matthew 22:37-40 (KJV):

> *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

All of God's law and purposes hang on these two commands: love God completely and love your neighbor sacrificially. Every church's vision should somehow flow from this foundational calling.

The Great Commission - Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV):

> *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*

Jesus' final command to His disciples established the church's fundamental mission: making disciples of all nations. This involves going, teaching, baptizing, and training people to obey Christ's

commands. While not every church can physically go to all nations, every church participates in this mission by making disciples where they are.

The Church's Purpose - 1 Peter 2:9-10 (KJV):

> *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."*

The church exists to show forth God's praises, to declare His works, to demonstrate His character through collective life together. The church is God's chosen people, set apart for His purposes.

Vision Brings Clarity and Direction

Healthy vision clarifies what matters and what doesn't. It provides a filter for decisions.

Without clear vision, organizations drift. Leaders disagree on priorities. Resources scatter across numerous competing initiatives. Some people push for one direction, others for another. The organization fragments into different visions of what they're trying to accomplish.

Clear vision unites. When everyone understands and embraces the central mission, diverse efforts align. Different ministries serve the same ultimate purpose. Disagreements about methods

become easier to resolve when agreement exists about the destination.

Habakkuk 2:2-3 (KJV):

> *"And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the last it will speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."*

Note the instruction to "write the vision, and make it plain." Vision should be clearly articulated, not vague. When people can clearly see and understand the vision, they can run toward it. Vague, poorly articulated vision confuses and slows progress.

Casting Vision as a Leadership Responsibility

One of the primary responsibilities of church leaders is casting and maintaining vision. This involves several components:

Discovering Vision - Leaders first must discern what God wants to accomplish through their particular church in their particular context. This isn't invented in a leader's office but discovered through prayer, Scripture study, listening to people, assessing community needs, and sensing God's direction.

Articulating Vision - Once vision is discovered, it must be clearly articulated. How can leaders describe it? What words, images, or stories communicate it compellingly?

Communicating Vision - Vision must be communicated repeatedly through multiple channels. Vision casts best through stories, examples, and repeated articulation. Leaders should regularly remind people of the vision and connect current activities to that vision.

Living Vision - Leaders must embody the vision. If a church's vision is "reaching the unreached," but leaders don't personally engage in evangelism, the vision lacks credibility. Leaders go first.

Adjusting Vision When Necessary - While vision should provide stability, it's not immutable. As circumstances change or understanding deepens, vision might be refined or adjusted. However, these adjustments should be rare and carefully considered, not frequent whims.

Different Types of Vision in Churches

Various types of vision operate simultaneously in healthy churches:

Missional Vision - The fundamental "why" of the church. Why do we exist? For most churches: to make disciples, glorify God, advance His kingdom. This vision rarely changes and is shared across most Christian churches.

Strategic Vision - How will we accomplish our mission in our context? Different churches in different locations with different populations might have different strategic visions. One might focus on planting churches; another on deep discipleship; another on mercy ministry to the poor.

Relational Vision - What kind of community do we want to be? Do we envision a church known for deep relationships? For welcoming outsiders? For biblical rigor? For joy and celebration? This shapes culture.

Developmental Vision - How will we grow people spiritually? Do we envision a church that moves everyone toward deeper discipleship? That identifies and develops leaders? That equips saints for ministry?

Organizational Vision - What systems and structures will we build? Do we envision multiple campuses, or one intimate congregation? Simple structure or more complex? This shapes how ministry functions.

Healthy churches have clarity about all these types of vision and how they interconnect.

Vision and Planning

Vision without planning remains a dream. Planning without vision becomes mere activity. Healthy churches connect the two.

1 Peter 4:7-11 (KJV):

> *"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."*

Peter emphasizes being good stewards. Good stewardship of God's resources requires planning—thinking through how to deploy money, people, time, and effort most effectively toward the vision God has given.

Planning involves:

- Setting specific goals aligned with vision

- Identifying resources needed

- Assigning responsibilities

- Establishing timelines

- Creating accountability mechanisms

- Measuring progress

- Adjusting as needed

Obstacles to Vision

Several obstacles commonly undermine vision in churches:

Lack of Leadership Unity - When leaders don't genuinely embrace the vision or believe in different visions, they undermine each other's efforts. The church receives mixed messages and pulls in different directions.

Insufficient Communication - Vision must be repeated. Leaders underestimate how many times people need to hear the vision before it becomes internalized. Monthly reminders over years work better than intensive communication followed by silence.

Competing Priorities - When many "good things" compete for attention and resources, vision gets diluted. Healthy churches practice saying "no" to good opportunities that don't align with vision to protect capacity for great things that do.

Lack of Progress Visibility - When people don't see progress toward vision, they lose motivation. Regular communication about how the church is moving toward vision and celebrating progress maintains momentum.

Changing Leadership - Pastoral transitions often bring vision changes. While some adjustment is natural, frequent radical vision shifts confuse people and waste energy. New leaders should understand existing vision before proposing changes.

Burnout and Fatigue - When people are exhausted, vision seems abstract and irrelevant. Healthy churches pace themselves, celebrate milestones, and ensure people experience joy and rest alongside sacrifice.

Evaluating Vision

Periodically, leaders should evaluate whether the current vision remains God's direction:

Is it grounded in Scripture? - Does the vision align with biblical priorities and principles?

Is it being accomplished? - Is there actual progress toward the vision, or merely activity? If the church has pursued the vision for years without progress, it might need adjustment.

Does it still feel like God's direction? - Through prayer and discernment, do leaders sense that God still wants to accomplish this vision through this congregation?

Is it sustainable? - Can the church sustain effort toward this vision long-term with the resources available? If not, perhaps the vision is too ambitious, or resources need increase, or the vision needs adjustment.

Does it compel and unite people? - A true vision from God compels people and brings unity. If the vision requires constant manipulation to motivate people or creates persistent division, it might not be God's vision for this congregation.

PART 2: CHARACTER REQUIREMENTS

Character is foundational to biblical leadership. A leader's competencies matter, but character matters more. Competent leaders without character inevitably damage those they lead and undermine God's kingdom. Character-driven leaders with growing competence become increasingly effective.

CHAPTER 6: INTEGRITY

Defining Integrity

Integrity means wholeness, consistency, and alignment between internal values and external behavior. A leader of integrity is the same person in public and private, says what they mean, means what they say, and conducts themselves according to stated principles even when no one is watching.

Psalm 26:1-2 (KJV):

> *"Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart."*

David invites examination, confident that his integrity will withstand scrutiny. He demonstrates the confidence that comes from consistency between internal reality and external presentation.

Integrity is not perfection. A person of integrity makes mistakes, struggles with temptations, and has areas of ongoing growth. But they acknowledge their struggles rather than hiding them, work toward growth rather than excusing failures, and maintain consistency between their stated values and their actual behavior.

Why Integrity Matters in Leadership

Leadership authority is built on credibility. People follow leaders they trust. Trust is earned through demonstrated integrity over time.

Titus 2:7-8 (KJV):

> *"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."*

Titus is called to be a pattern—a model—of good works. His doctrine should show uncorruptness. His life should demonstrate gravity (weight, substance), sincerity (genuineness), and sound speech. The result? Even those who oppose the faith would have nothing evil to speak about him.

This is integrity: living in such a way that even your critics can't find genuine fault with your character.

1 Timothy 3:2-3 (KJV):

> *"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous."*

The qualifications for bishops emphasize character and conduct. Someone whose life demonstrates integrity, consistency, and alignment with Christian values.

Dimensions of Integrity

Integrity manifests in several dimensions:

Financial Integrity - A leader handles money honestly. They don't inflate expenses, misappropriate funds, or exploit their position for financial gain. They're transparent about financial decisions and open to audit.

Relational Integrity - A leader treats people consistently, not as means to ends. They don't manipulate relationships for advantage. They keep confidences, follow through on commitments, and treat people with genuine respect.

Doctrinal Integrity - A leader accurately represents Scripture rather than distorting it to support their preferences. They teach the whole counsel of God, not merely convenient passages. They acknowledge where Scripture is difficult or unclear rather than imposing false certainty.

Emotional Integrity - A leader is emotionally honest. They acknowledge struggles, fears, and limitations rather than presenting a false persona. They're willing to be appropriately vulnerable rather than always projecting invulnerability.

Moral Integrity - A leader's conduct aligns with their stated values. If they teach purity, they live purely. If they teach honesty, they're honest. If they teach generosity, they're generous. Hypocrisy—teaching one thing while practicing another—destroys leadership credibility.

Consistency - A person of integrity behaves consistently across contexts. They're not one person in public and another in private. Their character remains stable whether praised or criticized, whether their decisions are popular or unpopular.

Building Integrity

Integrity is built through disciplines and practices:

Self-Awareness - Understanding your own weaknesses, temptations, and blind spots allows you to establish safeguards. A leader aware they're tempted to take shortcuts in financial matters establishes accountability around finances. A leader aware they're prone to harsh words under stress establishes discipline and sometimes removes themselves from decisions when overstressed.

Accountability Relationships - Trusted friends or mentors who know you well enough to speak hard truth are invaluable. These aren't yes-men but people willing to confront inconsistencies between your stated values and actual behavior.

Regular Self-Examination - Periodically reviewing your conduct against your stated values reveals drift before it becomes serious. Journaling, prayer, and honest reflection help maintain awareness.

Transparency - Being willing to have your decisions, reasoning, and conduct examined keeps you honest. Leaders who demand privacy or resist scrutiny often have something to hide.

Admitting Mistakes - When integrity lapses occur—and they will—admitting them promptly and making restitution restores credibility. Hiding mistakes or making excuses compounds the problem.

Following Through - Keep your commitments. When you say you'll do something, do it. When you say something will happen, make it happen. Over time, consistent follow-through builds a reputation of integrity.

Living Below Your Means - Financial pressures often lead to financial compromise. Living below your means reduces temptation to misappropriate church funds or engage in unethical financial behavior for personal benefit.

Integrity Under Pressure

Integrity is most tested under pressure. It's easy to be ethical when it's convenient. Real integrity persists when being ethical is costly.

Daniel 6 tells the story of Daniel's integrity under pressure. Ordered by the king to stop praying to God, Daniel faced a choice: compromise his faith-practice or face lions. He chose integrity, and God protected him. His willingness to suffer for his principles rather than compromise demonstrated genuine integrity.

1 Peter 4:12-16 (KJV):

> *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be also glad with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."*

Peter acknowledges that maintaining integrity may bring reproach and suffering. But this suffering for righteousness' sake is honored by God. Compromising integrity to avoid suffering indicates that self-preservation matters more to you than truth and principle.

Consequences of Lost Integrity

When leaders lose integrity, the damage extends far beyond the individual:

Loss of Trust - Once credibility is broken, it's incredibly difficult to rebuild. A leader's influence evaporates when people discover they're untrustworthy.

Organizational Dysfunction - If leaders lack integrity, people become cynical. Why should they be honest? Why should they work hard? Why should they trust leadership's decisions? Integrity in leadership sets the culture tone.

Spiritual Harm - When church leaders fail morally or financially, it damages people's faith. They question whether Christianity is real, whether God's Word is true, whether faith is worth pursuing.

Generational Impact - Leaders who compromise integrity often don't realize who's watching. Young believers observing a leader's hypocrisy learn that integrity is optional when convenient.

Personal Consequences - **Proverbs 10:9 (KJV):** "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known." A person of integrity walks surely—with confidence and stability. A person who abandons integrity lives with instability, fear of exposure, and constant anxiety about concealment.

CHAPTER 7: HUMILITY

Understanding Humility

Humility is perhaps the most misunderstood spiritual quality in Western contexts. Many assume humility means low self-esteem, self-deprecation, or reluctance to exercise strength. Biblical humility is quite different.

Biblical humility is accurate self-assessment. It's knowing your worth as God's image-bearer, understanding your gifts and abilities, acknowledging your limitations and failures, and living in light of these realities. A humble person is neither arrogant nor self-diminishing, but realistically aware of both strengths and weaknesses.

Philippians 3:3-4 (KJV):

> *"For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more."*

Paul demonstrates humble confidence. He acknowledges that if anyone had reason to be proud of fleshly accomplishments, it would be him. He then lists his credentials: Pharisee, righteous, zealous. But he's evaluated these in light of knowing Christ. His former "confidence in the flesh" now seems worthless. He's not denying his accomplishments; he's accurately assessing their ultimate significance.

1 Peter 5:5-6 (KJV):

> *"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."*

Notice the promise: God gives grace to the humble and exalts them. Humility isn't a demotion; it's the path to genuine exaltation—not in human terms necessarily, but in God's economy.

Why Humility Matters in Leadership

Proud leaders destroy organizations. They're defensive, unwilling to hear criticism, prone to retaliation when questioned, and incapable of genuine learning. They surround themselves with yes-men, silence dissenting voices, and make increasingly poor decisions unchecked by contrary input.

Humble leaders build organizations. They welcome feedback, listen to others, adjust course when necessary, and create environments where people can speak truth. They attract good people, develop emerging leaders, and make decisions improved by diverse input.

Proverbs 13:10 (KJV):

> *"Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom."*

Pride brings contention. Humble leaders who listen to counsel develop wisdom.

Proverbs 15:33 (KJV):

> *"The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility."*

Before honor comes humility. This isn't a temporary season to be endured before achieving success. It's a perpetual posture—the humble remain humble even when honored.

Manifestations of Humility in Leadership

How does humility appear in a leader's actual behavior?

Listening - A humble leader listens more than they speak, asks questions more than declaring answers, and genuinely seeks to understand others' perspectives before making decisions.

Admitting Limitations - Humble leaders know what they don't know. They're willing to say, "That's not my area of expertise" or "I don't have the answer to that," then work to find someone who does.

Receiving Correction - A humble leader doesn't become defensive when questioned or corrected. They genuinely consider feedback, evaluate it against Scripture and reality, and adjust if correction is warranted.

Distributing Credit - Humble leaders give credit generously to those who contributed to success and take responsibility personally for failures. They don't accept undeserved praise or deflect blame.

Valuing Others - A humble leader recognizes that all people have worth as God's image-bearers and that everyone has something to teach. They don't assume they're right because they're in authority.

Servant Orientation - Humble leaders see their role as serving those they lead, not being served by them. They're willing to do whatever the situation requires, not "beneath them."

Growth Mindset - Humble leaders believe they have much to learn and actively pursue growth. They read, study, attend conferences, seek mentoring, and value self-improvement.

Openness to Being Wrong - A humble leader can say, "I was wrong about that," and genuinely mean it. They don't view being wrong as loss of face but as opportunity for growth.

Pride: The Enemy of Humility

Pride is humility's opposite and a primary obstacle to effective leadership. Pride manifests in several ways:

Superiority - Believing you're better than others, smarter, more spiritually mature, more qualified. This attitude alienates people and prevents genuine relationship.

Defensiveness - Taking any criticism as personal attack, reacting strongly to disagreement, and protecting reputation fiercely. Defensive leaders can't learn from mistakes.

Blame-Shifting - When something goes wrong, it's always someone else's fault. A proud leader never takes responsibility, always has an explanation, and never acknowledges genuine failure.

Need for Control - A proud leader must control all decisions, can't delegate, and micromanages subordinates. They don't trust others' judgment and insist their way is the only right way.

Resistance to Authority - Proud leaders resist accountability and challenge those above them in the organization. They chafe under any authority they haven't themselves granted.

Envy - When others succeed or receive recognition, a proud leader feels threatened and diminished rather than celebrating their success.

Reputation Protection - A proud leader will compromise principles to protect their image. They'll hide failures, misrepresent accomplishments, and manipulate truth to maintain a certain image.

Cultivating Humility

Humility isn't natural to most people and must be deliberately cultivated:

Regularly Remember Your Beginning - Reflect on where you started, what grace brought you this far, and how dependent you remain on God's provision. This perspective keeps pride in check.

Seek Feedback - Actively ask trusted friends and colleagues for honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses. Then genuinely consider what they say rather than dismissing it.

Study Other Leaders' Failures - History is full of talented leaders who failed through pride. Learning from others' failures helps you avoid the same pitfalls.

Practice Saying "I Don't Know" - Get comfortable with not having all the answers. This phrase becomes easier with practice and communicates genuine honesty.

Serve Others - Regularly engage in service that has no status attached. Serving the poor, cleaning facilities, helping in mundane tasks—these ground you in reality and combat pride.

Celebrate Others' Successes - When others succeed or receive praise, genuinely celebrate with them rather than feeling diminished. This reorients your perspective.

Submit to Authority - Even leaders should submit to someone. Having someone who can critique your decisions and hold you accountable develops humility.

Remember the Gospel - At the heart of Christianity is the humbling reality that we're sinners saved by grace. We didn't earn our standing with God; we received it as a gift. Regularly remembering this truth combats pride.

Experience Failure - Sometimes failure is God's tool for teaching humility. Rather than avoiding risk, embrace appropriate challenges. Growth comes at the edge of our competence.

CHAPTER 8: WISDOM

Understanding Wisdom

Wisdom is often confused with intelligence or knowledge, but they're distinct. An intelligent person has cognitive ability. A knowledgeable person has accumulated information. A wise person has judgment—the ability to apply knowledge appropriately in specific contexts to achieve good outcomes.

Proverbs 3:13-15 (KJV):

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her."

Wisdom is presented as more valuable than silver, gold, or rubies —more valuable than any material possession. This is because a person's life quality is determined not by intelligence or wealth, but by the wisdom with which they make decisions.

James 3:17 (KJV):

> *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."*

James distinguishes heavenly wisdom (wisdom from above) from earthly or demonic wisdom. Heavenly wisdom is pure, peaceful, gentle, responsive, merciful, consistent, and genuine. This describes wisdom that considers both truth and relationship, that seeks good for all involved, not just victory for oneself.

Wisdom in Leadership Decisions

Leaders make numerous decisions affecting many people. Poor decisions create chaos; wise decisions create order and progress.

Proverbs 20:18 (KJV):

> *"Every purpose is established by counsel: and by multitude of counsellors it is established."*

Wise leaders don't make major decisions unilaterally. They seek counsel. They gather input from people with different perspectives and expertise. They consider multiple viewpoints before deciding. This doesn't mean every person gets a vote, but it means the decision benefits from diverse input.

Proverbs 27:12 (KJV):

> *"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."*

A wise leader anticipates consequences. When considering a decision, they think through potential outcomes—intended and unintended. They consider how different groups might be affected. They try to foresee problems before they occur.

Proverbs 14:12 (KJV):

> *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."*

What seems right based on surface analysis might lead to disaster. Wise leaders dig deeper. They don't accept the first answer or most obvious solution. They ask questions, examine assumptions, and seek deeper understanding.

Sources of Wisdom

Where does wisdom come from?

God - Ultimately, wisdom originates with God. **James 1:5 (KJV):** "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Prayer and seeking God's guidance is the foundation of genuine wisdom.

Scripture - God's Word contains accumulated wisdom about human nature, decision-making, relationships, and consequences. Leaders who know Scripture well have access to

wisdom preserved across generations.

Experience - Living through situations and learning from consequences develops practical wisdom. A leader who has made mistakes and learned from them has experiential wisdom others can benefit from.

Mentoring - Learning from those further along the path accelerates wisdom development. A mentor can share hard-won insights without your having to make every mistake yourself.

Reflection - Wise leaders regularly reflect on their decisions and outcomes. They ask, "What did I learn? What would I do differently?" This reflection converts experience into wisdom.

Counsel - As noted, seeking input from wise people provides perspective and prevents blind spots.

DEVELOPING WISDOM

Wisdom can be cultivated:

Read and Study Scripture Deeply - Don't merely read Scripture for information. Study it carefully, ask questions, consider how it applies, think through implications. Meditating on Scripture develops wisdom.

Spend Time with Wise People - Wisdom is often caught more than taught. Spending time with wise people, observing how they think through problems, and learning their perspective shapes wisdom development.

Make Small Decisions Carefully - Practice wise decision-making on small things. The discipline and habits developed carry over to larger decisions.

Keep a Decision Journal - Write down major decisions you make, including the reasoning and desired outcome. Later, review what actually happened. Did your reasoning prove sound? What would you do differently? This creates feedback loop for learning.

Study Historical Decisions - Both successes and failures in history teach wisdom. Why did certain leaders' decisions succeed? What led to others' failures? Learning from history accelerates wisdom development.

Seek Feedback on Your Thinking - Ask trusted people to evaluate your reasoning on decisions. "What am I missing? What haven't I considered? Where might my thinking be flawed?"

Practice Humility - Wisdom and pride are incompatible. A proud person thinks they already have answers and stops learning. A humble person keeps learning and growing in wisdom.

Wait Before Major Decisions - When possible, sleep on major decisions. Let your subconscious process the information. Often, clarity emerges after sleeping.

Pray for Wisdom - Ask God for wisdom. Acknowledge your limitations and invite God's guidance.

Foolishness: The Opposite of Wisdom

Understanding foolishness helps clarify what wisdom is:

Refusing Counsel - A fool makes decisions without seeking input, convinced their own thinking is sufficient. **Proverbs 12:15 (KJV):** "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Ignoring Consequences - A fool doesn't think through how their decisions will affect others or the future. They live in the moment without regard for longer-term consequences.

Repeating Failed Patterns - A fool makes the same mistake repeatedly without learning. They repeat patterns that don't work.

Trusting Appearances - A fool judges based on surface appearance rather than deeper reality. They believe lies that sound good without verifying truth.

Acting Without Information - A fool acts impulsively without understanding the situation. **Proverbs 18:15 (KJV):** "The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge."

Quick to Judge - **Proverbs 29:11 (KJV):** "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." A fool expresses every thought immediately. A wise person thinks first, then speaks when appropriate.

CHAPTER 9: COURAGE

Understanding Courage

Courage is not the absence of fear. A person without fear isn't courageous; they're disconnected from reality. Courage is acting rightly despite fear. It's facing what's frightening and proceeding anyway because the cause is important enough to overcome the fear.

Joshua 1:8-9 (KJV):

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Joshua faces the daunting task of leading Israel into Canaan. God doesn't say Joshua won't be afraid. Rather, God commands him to be strong and courageous despite fear. God's presence with him is the foundation of courage—not absence of fear, but trust in God despite fear.

Why Courage Matters in Leadership

Leadership regularly requires courage. A leader must:

Confront Sin - When someone's behavior violates Scripture and affects the church, a courageous leader addresses it biblically and directly. This is difficult and often creates relational tension, but it's necessary.

Make Unpopular Decisions - Sometimes the right decision isn't the popular one. A courageous leader makes the right decision even when it's unpopular and they face criticism.

Maintain Principles - When pressured to compromise principles for convenience or popularity, a courageous leader holds the line. **Proverbs 28:1 (KJV):** "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion."

Speak Truth - A courageous leader tells the truth even when it's uncomfortable. Rather than hiding problems or difficulties, they communicate honestly about what's happening.

Take Risks - Leading God's kingdom requires risk. Planting churches, starting new ministries, reaching new populations—all involve risk. Courage enables a leader to take necessary risks.

Stand Alone if Necessary - Sometimes a courageous leader stands against prevailing opinion. Peer pressure and desire for acceptance are powerful forces. Courage enables a leader to do right even when alone.

Face Opposition - Leaders face opposition—from Satan's forces, from people who resist change, from those who disagree. Courage enables a leader to face opposition without caving.

Sources of Courage

Where does courage come from?

Faith in God - The ultimate source of courage is trust that God is with you, that He's greater than any opposition, and that He'll sustain you. **Psalm 27:1 (KJV):** "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Clear Conviction - When you're deeply convinced of what's right, courage is easier. Moral clarity strengthens courage. When you're conflicted or uncertain, courage is harder to muster.

Experience of God's Faithfulness - Looking back at how God has been faithful and sustained you through difficult situations builds confidence that He'll sustain you through this situation.

Accountability - Knowing that others are counting on you and will hold you accountable gives courage. You push through fear because others need you to be strong.

Prayer - Prayer, especially prayer with others, strengthens courage. Speaking truth to God about your fear and calling on Him for strength increases courage.

Preparation - Being well-prepared for a difficult conversation or decision increases courage. You're less afraid when you know what you're going to say and why.

Example of Others - Seeing others act courageously gives you courage. Their example proves it's possible.

Knowing Your Identity in Christ - Understanding that your ultimate identity is in Christ, not in others' opinions, releases courage. If your worth comes from Christ's assessment of you,

you're freed from fear of human judgment.

Expressing Courage as a Leader

Courage manifests in different contexts:

Courage in Discipline - When someone's behavior requires correction, a courageous leader addresses it directly and personally rather than avoiding the conversation or having someone else do it. They speak truth in love.

Courage in Vision-Casting - Casting bold vision requires courage. You're stating what you believe God wants to accomplish, knowing some will disagree and some will resist.

Courage in Admission - When you've made a mistake, courageous leaders admit it quickly and publicly rather than trying to hide or minimize it.

Courage in Delegation - Delegating important tasks requires courage. You must trust others to do things you could do yourself, knowing they might make mistakes. But this courage enables them to grow.

Courage in Difficult Conversations - Whether addressing performance issues, confronting conflict, or communicating bad news, courage enables difficult conversations that would otherwise be avoided.

Courage in Staying the Course - When vision is challenged or opposition increases, a courageous leader doesn't abandon course. They stay the course despite pressure.

Courage in Standing Apart - When culture moves in a direction contrary to Scripture, a courageous leader maintains biblical position even as culture shifts.

Cowardice: The Opposite of Courage

Understanding cowardice helps illuminate what courage is:

Avoiding Necessary Confrontation - A cowardly leader avoids addressing problems, hoping they'll resolve themselves. They allow sin to go unchallenged, poor behavior to continue, and dysfunction to metastasize.

Compromising Principles for Acceptance - **Proverbs 29:25 (KJV):** "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." A cowardly leader abandons principles to avoid people's disapproval.

Hiding Weakness - Rather than admitting limitations or mistakes, a cowardly leader projects a false image of invulnerability.

Following the Crowd - A cowardly leader changes positions based on who's in the room, unwilling to maintain consistent principle.

Passing the Buck - When difficult decisions must be made, a cowardly leader passes responsibility to someone else rather than deciding themselves.

Defensive Response to Criticism - A cowardly leader reacts defensively to any criticism, suggesting they care more about their image than truth.

Building Courage

Courage can be developed:

Start Small - Practice courage in smaller situations. Speak up in a meeting when you disagree but would normally stay silent. Have a mildly difficult conversation. As you experience success, courage grows.

Remember Your Why - Connect to your deeper purpose. You're not being courageous for yourself but for God's kingdom and those you lead. This transcendent purpose strengthens courage.

Prepare Thoroughly - For important conversations or decisions, prepare. Know what you're going to say. Anticipate objections. This preparation builds confidence.

Pray - Bring your fears to God. Ask for courage. Sometimes in prayer, fear diminishes.

Find Courage Mentors - Spend time with courageous people. Ask them how they find courage. Learn from their example.

Study Courageous Examples - Read about people who've shown courage—biblical figures, historical leaders, contemporary examples. Their stories inspire and instruct.

Reframe Fear - Fear is information. What is the fear telling you? Often, it points to something important. Rather than ignoring fear, understand it.

Remember Consequences of Cowardice - Not being courageous has consequences. Organizations suffer. People suffer. God's kingdom suffers. Remember this when fear tempts you toward cowardice.

CHAPTER 10: COMPASSION

Understanding Compassion

Compassion is literally "suffering with"—entering into another's pain and being moved to help. It's not mere sentiment or emotional response, but a disposition toward others' wellbeing that moves one to action.

Matthew 14:14 (KJV):

> *"And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick."*

Jesus saw the crowds, was moved with compassion, and healed their sick. His feeling for their condition led to action. This is compassion—both internal response and external action.

1 John 3:17-18 (KJV):

> *"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."*

John makes clear that compassion must express itself in action. Mere words of sympathy without action aren't genuine compassion. Real compassion moves you to help.

Why Compassion Matters in Leadership

Leadership without compassion becomes cold and mechanical. Rules are enforced without regard for circumstances. People are moved or removed based on utility. The organization becomes efficient but dehumanizing.

Compassionate leadership transforms an organization. People know they're valued, understood, and cared for. This creates loyalty, engagement, and willingness to sacrifice for the leader and organization.

Colossians 3:12 (KJV):

> *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering."*

Paul calls believers to "bowels of mercies"—the King James rendering of deep compassion. For leaders, this isn't optional. It's part of the character expected of those who claim to follow Christ.

Manifestations of Compassion

How does compassion appear in leadership?

Listening to Understand - A compassionate leader listens to people's concerns, struggles, and needs with genuine desire to understand their perspective and experience.

Advocating for Those Hurting - When someone in the congregation is suffering, a compassionate leader ensures their needs are addressed and their situation is improved.

Adjusting Expectations When Appropriate - A person going through crisis or dealing with significant difficulty may need reduced responsibilities or different expectations. A compassionate leader makes these adjustments.

Presence During Difficulty - When someone faces loss or tragedy, a compassionate leader is present. Not to fix the problem —sometimes it's unfixable—but to accompany them through the difficulty.

Asking Hard Questions - A compassionate leader asks how people are really doing and genuinely wants to know. "How are you?" receives a real answer rather than a reflexive "Fine."

Providing Resources for Help - When someone struggles with addiction, mental health issues, marital problems, or financial crisis, a compassionate leader connects them with resources that can help.

Sacrificing for Others' Good - Sometimes compassion requires the leader to sacrifice convenience, comfort, or preference for someone else's wellbeing.

Welcoming Outsiders - The church should be a place of radical welcome for outsiders, people experiencing homelessness, people struggling with shame. A compassionate leader models and encourages this welcome.

Balancing Compassion and Standards

An important tension exists: compassion must be balanced with maintaining appropriate standards and boundaries.

A leader who is purely compassionate without standards becomes ineffective. They may enable dysfunction, allow people to take advantage of the organization's resources, or avoid necessary discipline. Boundaries are important.

A leader with standards but no compassion becomes harsh and dehumanizing. People are treated as objects rather than valued individuals.

2 Corinthians 13:11 (KJV):

> *"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."*

Paul calls believers to be perfected—to grow toward maturity and standards—while also emphasizing comfort, unity, and peace. Both matter.

The balance is found in leading with compassion and justice simultaneously. Compassion for the person, justice regarding the behavior. A compassionate leader cares deeply about someone struggling with addiction while also maintaining the boundary that active addiction creates problems in the church community. They work toward restoration while being clear about expectations.

Compassion Fatigue

One challenge for compassionate leaders is compassion fatigue—the depletion that comes from consistently entering into others' pain without adequate renewal.

Compassionate leaders absorb the suffering of their congregation. They carry people's burdens. Over time, without proper self-care and renewal, this depletes their emotional and spiritual resources.

Matthew 11:28 (KJV):

> *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

Jesus Himself, the ultimate example of compassion, regularly withdrew to pray and recover. Leaders must do the same. Regular rhythms of Sabbath, prayer, time with family, and activities that restore the soul are not luxuries but necessities for sustainable compassionate leadership.

Organizations should support leaders' self-care. Knowing that your leader is rested and renewed allows you to continue receiving their compassion. A depleted leader serving from emptiness helps no one.

CHAPTER 11: HONESTY

Understanding Honesty

Honesty is truthfulness—aligning your words with reality. It's not merely avoiding lies but actively speaking truth. It includes honesty about what you know and what you don't, what went well and what didn't, what you believe and what you doubt.

Proverbs 12:22 (KJV):

> *"Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight."*

Deception is an abomination to God. Those who deal truthfully delight Him. Honesty isn't merely a leadership strategy but a spiritual issue at the heart of what God values.

Ephesians 4:25 (KJV):

> *"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."*

Paul calls believers to put away lying and speak truth because they're members of one body. Deception damages the community; honesty strengthens it.

Why Honesty Matters in Leadership

Leadership depends on trust. People follow leaders they trust. Trust is undermined by dishonesty. When leaders deceive—about resources, decisions, problems, or reasons—people lose confidence.

Proverbs 13:17 (KJV):

> *"A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health."*

A messenger who speaks truthfully brings health to the community. A messenger who deceives brings mischief.

1 Timothy 3:8 (KJV):

> *"Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre."*

Church leaders must not be "doubletongued"—literally speaking double tongues, saying one thing in one context and something different in another. Consistency in truthfulness is required.

Different Forms of Dishonesty

Honesty isn't merely avoiding explicit lies. Dishonesty takes many forms:

Explicit Lies - Directly stating something false. If you tell someone something didn't happen when it did, you've lied.

Omission - Leaving out important information that would change how someone understands the situation. Technically not a lie but still dishonest.

Exaggeration - Overstating something's positive aspects while understating problems. This distorts reality.

Misrepresentation - Presenting yourself as having expertise you don't have, making promises you won't keep, or claiming credit for work you didn't do.

Promising What You Can't Deliver - Telling someone something will happen when you know it won't, or making commitments you have no intention of keeping.

Breaking Confidences - Sharing private information someone trusted you with, violating their confidentiality.

Double-Talk - Speaking in ways designed to mislead without technically lying. Using words carefully to obscure truth rather than illuminate it.

Presenting Opinion as Fact - Stating uncertain information as though it's established fact, misleading people about how confident you actually are.

Silence When Truth Should Be Spoken - Sometimes honesty requires speaking up even though staying silent would be comfortable. Remaining silent when your voice is needed is a form of dishonesty.

Building Honesty into Leadership

Creating a culture of honesty requires deliberate effort:

Model Honesty - Leaders must be conspicuously honest. Admit mistakes. Share when you don't know something. Explain reasoning. This gives permission for others to be honest.

Create Safe Environment for Truth - If people fear consequences for speaking truth, they'll hide truth. Leaders must create environments where truth-telling is safe and even valued.

Ask Questions That Elicit Truth - Rather than asking leading questions designed to get the answer you want, ask open questions that invite honest response.

Reward Honesty, Even When Inconvenient - When someone tells you hard truth, thank them rather than punishing them. This reinforces that honesty is valued.

Address Dishonesty Promptly - When you discover dishonesty, address it. Make clear that truthfulness matters and deception has consequences.

Be Honest About Struggles - Leaders don't need to perform strength constantly. Appropriate honesty about struggles, doubts, and areas of growth models vulnerability and invites reciprocal honesty.

Establish Accountability Around Financial Honesty - Money is a common area of dishonesty. Clear systems, regular audits, and transparent reporting create accountability.

Communicate Honestly About Difficult Issues - Rather than hiding problems or delivering bad news obliquely, honest leaders communicate clearly about what's happening.

The Cost of Dishonesty

When dishonesty permeates leadership, the damage is extensive:

Loss of Trust - Once people discover their leader has deceived them, trust evaporates. Rebuilding it takes years, if it's possible at all.

Organizational Dysfunction - If leadership lies, people have no reliable information on which to base decisions. The organization becomes dysfunctional.

Cultural Decline - A culture permitting leadership dishonesty normalizes dishonesty throughout the organization.

Spiritual Harm - When church leaders are deceptive, it damages people's faith in Christianity itself. They question whether faith is real if leaders are dishonest.

Legal Consequences - Dishonesty in financial reporting, contracts, or other matters can have legal consequences.

Personal Consequences - A dishonest leader lives with constant fear of exposure. The psychological toll of maintaining deceptions is significant.

Generational Impact - Young people watching dishonest leaders learn that dishonesty is acceptable and sometimes necessary.

CHAPTER 12: FAITHFULNESS

Understanding Faithfulness

Faithfulness means trustworthiness—following through on commitments, maintaining consistency, and remaining loyal over time. A faithful person can be counted on.

1 Timothy 1:12 (KJV):

> *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."*

Paul identifies his core strength as faithfulness—the quality that made him fit for ministry. Not brilliance or charisma, but faithfulness.

Proverbs 20:6 (KJV):

> *"Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?"*

Everyone claims to be good. But faithful people—people who actually do what they say, maintain consistency over time, remain loyal—these are rare.

Why Faithfulness Matters in Leadership

Leadership requires people to trust that their leader will maintain their commitments. If a leader says they'll be available to listen, they're available. If they promise something, they deliver. If they set a direction, they continue in that direction rather than changing constantly based on whim.

Faithfulness is both about following through on big commitments and maintaining consistency in small things.

Luke 16:10 (KJV):

> *"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."*

Jesus taught that faithfulness in small things indicates faithfulness in large things. A person who's unreliable about small commitments won't be reliable about major ones. Conversely, someone faithful about small things develops character to be faithful in larger responsibilities.

Manifestations of Faithfulness

Faithfulness appears in several ways:

Keeping Commitments - When a leader commits to something, they follow through. They show up when they said they would. They complete what they promised.

Following Through on Communication - If you say you'll get back to someone, you do. If you promise to address something, you address it. People know your word is good.

Consistency Over Time - Your behavior and values remain consistent over time. You're not one person today and someone different tomorrow.

Loyalty to People - You stand by people when it's difficult, not just when it's convenient. You don't abandon them when circumstances change.

Consistency in Principle - Your decisions and actions are guided by consistent principles, not changing based on what benefits you personally.

Showing Up in Hard Times - When people go through crisis or difficulty, a faithful leader is present and engaged, not distant or absent.

Long-Term Vision - Rather than constantly changing direction, a faithful leader maintains course. This stability creates trust.

Reliability - People can count on you. They don't wonder if you'll follow through or worry that you might bail on them.

Faithfulness in the Mundane

One significant aspect of faithfulness is remaining faithful in mundane, unglamorous responsibilities. It's easy to be faithful when doing something exciting and highly visible. Faithfulness in routine, invisible work is more challenging but equally important.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 (KJV):

> *"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."*

Paul identifies believers as stewards of God's mysteries and emphasizes that stewards must be faithful. Stewardship includes managing resources, responsibilities, and time—often mundane work. But faithfulness in stewardship is foundational.

A pastor faithful in sermon preparation, prayer for the congregation, and pastoral care—the unglamorous work—demonstrates faithfulness. A leader faithful in following processes, keeping accurate records, and maintaining systems demonstrates faithfulness.

Faithfulness and Perseverance

Faithfulness inherently includes perseverance—continuing through difficulty rather than quitting when circumstances get hard.

2 Timothy 2:10-13 (KJV):

> *"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we also shall reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."*

Paul emphasizes that faithfulness includes enduring difficulty. Leadership will bring challenges—criticism, opposition, failure, hardship. A faithful leader perseveres through these rather than abandoning the calling.

Notice also: even when we're unfaithful, God remains faithful. This is not license for unfaithfulness but encouragement that God's faithfulness toward us models what we're called to emulate toward others.

Building Faithfulness

Faithfulness can be cultivated:

Make Fewer Commitments - Only commit to what you can genuinely follow through on. It's better to do less faithfully than more faithlessly.

Track Your Commitments - Write down what you commit to and when. Regular review ensures you follow through.

Practice Following Through on Small Things - If you commit to call someone back tomorrow, do it. If you say you'll address something by Friday, address it. Small consistencies build into large patterns.

Consider the Cost Before Committing - Before saying "yes" to something, count the cost. Will you really be able to follow through? Only commit if you're confident.

Find Your Why - Connect to the deeper purpose of your commitments. Why does this matter? This deeper motivation strengthens faithfulness through difficulty.

Let Others Know Your Commitment - Telling others you're committing to something creates accountability that helps you follow through.

Celebrate Completed Commitments - Notice and acknowledge when you've been faithful. Over time, this reinforces the habit.

Accept That You'll Sometimes Fail - Faithfulness doesn't mean perfection. You'll sometimes miss commitments through sickness, emergencies, or other genuine obstacles. The goal is consistency over time, not perfection.

Reflect on Leaders Who Were Faithful - Study examples of faithful leaders—biblical figures, historical leaders, or contemporary examples. What characterized their faithfulness?

CHAPTER 13: DISCRETION

Understanding Discretion

Discretion is the ability to determine what should and shouldn't be shared. It's knowing what's confidential, what's appropriate to share in different contexts, and what should remain private. A discreet person is trustworthy with sensitive information.

Proverbs 11:12-13 (KJV):

"He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace. A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter."

The proverb contrasts a discreet person ("he that is of a faithful spirit") who conceals matters—keeps confidences—with a talebearer who reveals secrets. Discretion is a mark of faithfulness and understanding.

Proverbs 10:19 (KJV):

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise."

Sin often comes through words carelessly spoken. Wisdom includes knowing when not to speak.

Why Discretion Matters in Leadership

People share sensitive information with leaders—struggles, sins, family difficulties, financial pressures, mental health challenges. For people to share vulnerability, they must trust that the leader will handle the information with discretion.

Discretion allows people to be honest. If someone fears their struggles will be gossiped about in the church, they'll hide them. Discretion creates safety for vulnerability.

Proverbs 25:9-10 (KJV):

> *"Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away."*

Sharing someone's secret damages both them and your reputation. Discretion protects both confidentiality and reputation.

Different Levels of Confidentiality

Part of discretion is understanding what needs different levels of confidentiality:

Absolute Confidentiality - Some information should never be shared with anyone. When someone confesses a private sin to a leader, that information should be kept absolutely confidential

(except in cases where abuse, harm, or legal requirements create exceptions).

Leadership Confidentiality - Some information needs to be shared with other leaders but not the broader congregation. Financial challenges, personnel issues, or strategic decisions might fall here.

Congregational Communication - Some information is appropriate to share with the broader congregation, though still with care and respect for dignity.

Personal Preference Regarding Sharing - Sometimes people share information but indicate whether they want it kept private, mentioned to others, or shared more broadly. Discerning leaders honor these preferences.

Discerning which level applies to different information requires wisdom and sensitivity.

Manifestations of Discretion

Discretion appears in several ways:

Keeping Confidences - Information shared with you in confidence stays with you. You don't mention it in casual conversation or prayer meetings.

Not Gossiping - You don't participate in speculation about others' business or share rumors and unverified information.

Separating Issues from Identities - If you must discuss a problematic situation with relevant leaders, you discuss the issue without unnecessarily revealing identity if possible.

Appropriate Self-Disclosure - You share appropriately about yourself but don't overshare in ways that burden others or undermine confidence in your leadership.

Knowing Your Audience - You share different information with different audiences. What you share with your spouse differs from what you share with the congregation. What you share with leaders differs from what you share with casual acquaintances.

Thinking Before Speaking - You consider the implications before sharing something. "Should I say this? Should I say it here? Should I say it to this person?"

Respecting Dignity - When necessary to address a sensitive issue, you do so in ways that respect the person's dignity rather than publicizing their struggle.

Not Using Confidences Against People - Information shared with you in confidence should never be used against that person later in a conflict or argument.

The Temptation Against Discretion

Several temptations pull leaders away from discretion:

Desire to Connect - Sometimes sharing someone's struggle helps you relate to another person. But doing so violates discretion. A discreet leader builds intimacy through non-confidential sharing or by being vulnerable about themselves.

Desire for Status - Sharing inside information can make you feel like an insider with status. But this temptation leads to violation of discretion.

Poor Boundaries - Sometimes we don't think something is confidential when it should be. Boundaries around what we share help maintain discretion.

Oversharing in Community - Churches are communities where people naturally share. But discretion requires careful judgment about what's appropriate to share even in community context.

Justified Sharing - We sometimes justify sharing confidences because we frame it as concern or as seeking wisdom. But if sharing someone's information without permission, it's discretion violation regardless of justification.

Building Discretion

Discretion can be cultivated:

Ask Permission Before Sharing - If you think you need to share something someone told you, ask permission first. "I'd like to discuss this with our leadership team. Is that okay?" Most people will agree, and you've honored their autonomy.

Consider the Implications - Before sharing anything, pause and consider: What would happen if this became public? Would it harm the person? Is there legitimate reason to share?

Don't Participate in Gossip - When conversations turn gossipy, excuse yourself or redirect. "I'm not comfortable discussing this" or "Let's not talk about others' business" sets boundaries.

Be Careful What You Overhear - Information you overhear (a conversation you overheard, something you learned accidentally) requires the same discretion as information shared with you directly.

Remember the Golden Rule - How would you want your struggles and private information handled? Treat others' information that way.

Be Selective About What You Share - Only share information that's necessary to share and only with those who need to know.

Acknowledge Confidentiality - When someone shares something in confidence, explicitly acknowledge it: "What you've shared is confidential. I won't discuss it with anyone else."

Be Trustworthy About Personal Information - Discretion includes not sharing personal information about others—their age, financial situation, health issues—even when not explicitly told to keep it secret.

CHAPTER 14: REPENTANCE

Understanding Repentance

Repentance is often misunderstood as mere regret or remorse. Genuine repentance involves regret for sin, but also turning away from sin and moving in a new direction. It's not just feeling sorry; it's changing course.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (KJV):

> *"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."*

Paul distinguishes between "godly sorrow" that leads to genuine repentance and produces salvation (change), and worldly sorrow that leads nowhere. True repentance is action-oriented—it changes behavior.

Luke 3:8 (KJV):

> *"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."*

John the Baptist called for "fruits worthy of repentance"—concrete evidence that repentance is genuine. You're not genuinely repentant if you're still practicing the same sin.

Why Repentance Matters in Leadership

Leaders are tempted to avoid repentance. Pride makes it difficult to acknowledge wrongdoing. Position creates the illusion that the leader is beyond error. But leaders who can't genuinely repent become increasingly problematic.

When a leader makes a mistake, fails, or acts wrongly, genuine repentance is required. This includes:

- Acknowledging the specific wrong

- Understanding how it affected others

- Experiencing genuine sorrow for the wrong

- Taking responsibility without excuse or deflection

- Making restitution where possible

- Changing the behavior that led to the wrong

- Allowing others to see and trust the change

1 John 1:8-9 (KJV):

> *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Even mature Christians sin. The expectation isn't sinlessness but repentance when sin occurs. Leaders who admit sin and genuinely work toward change are actually strengthened, not weakened.

Hindrances to Repentance in Leaders

Several things prevent leaders from genuine repentance:

Pride - A leader doesn't want to admit error, viewing it as weakness or loss of authority.

Justification - Rather than owning wrongdoing, a leader explains it away or justifies it based on circumstances.

Deflection - A leader admits something was wrong but frames it as someone else's fault.

Minimization - A leader acknowledges something wrong but downplays its significance or impact.

Selective Repentance - A leader repents for actions that became public but continues unchanged behavior that's hidden.

Incomplete Repentance - A leader apologizes but doesn't actually change behavior, leading to repeated wrong.

Accusation - When confronted, a leader accuses the confronter of wrong-doing, deflecting from their own wrong.

How Genuine Repentance Functions

When a leader genuinely repents:

They Acknowledge the Specific Wrong - Not vague apology but specific acknowledgment of what was wrong and how it violated principle.

They Take Full Responsibility - Without excuse or deflection, they own the wrong. Even if circumstances contributed, they take responsibility for their choice.

They Express Genuine Sorrow - Not performative, but genuine sorrow for how their action affected others and violated principle.

They Understand the Impact - They grasp how their action hurt people or damaged the organization. They're not just sorry they were caught; they're sorry for the harm.

They Make Restitution Where Possible - If their wrong cost money, they repay. If their wrong damaged a relationship, they work toward restoration.

They Change Behavior - Most importantly, genuine repentance includes changed behavior. They stop the wrong action and establish new patterns.

They Submit to Accountability - A repentant leader welcomes heightened accountability and oversight to prove the change is genuine.

They Give Time for Trust Restoration - They understand that once trust is broken, it's restored through time and consistency, not just through apology.

The Relationship Between Repentance and Authority

An important dynamic emerges: genuine repentance can actually strengthen leadership authority.

When a leader genuinely repents—with all the elements above—it demonstrates maturity and character. It shows the leader is committed to principle more than to image. It gives permission for the organization to also practice repentance. It creates a culture where mistakes are acknowledged and changed rather than hidden.

Conversely, leaders who don't genuinely repent when they're wrong gradually lose credibility. People begin to doubt the leader's character and commitment to principle.

1 Peter 5:1-4 (KJV):

> *"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock."*

Peter calls leaders to be examples to the flock. A leader who publicly repents and genuinely changes demonstrates what repentance looks like, teaching the flock by example.

Building the Capacity for Repentance

Leaders can cultivate genuine repentance:

Cultivate Humility - Genuine repentance requires humility—willingness to acknowledge you're wrong. Practices that build humility support repentance.

Self-Examine Regularly - Through prayer and reflection, regularly examine your own behavior and choices. Where have you fallen short? Where do you need to change?

Invite Feedback - Ask trusted people to tell you where you miss the mark. This creates opportunity for repentance before problems become serious.

Study Scripture on Repentance - Meditate on what Scripture says about repentance. Let it shape your understanding.

Observe Models of Repentance - Study biblical figures who repented genuinely—David, Peter, Paul. What did their repentance look like?

Practice Repentance on Small Things - When you make minor mistakes, practice genuine repentance. This builds habits for genuine repentance on larger issues.

Understand Forgiveness - Grasp that God forgives genuine repentance through Christ. This frees you from needing to defend yourself or hide sin.

Share Stories of Repentance - Periodically share stories where you repented and changed. This normalizes repentance in the culture.

CHAPTER 15: SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Understanding Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity isn't a destination but a direction—progressive growth toward Christlikeness. A spiritually mature person is increasingly conformed to Christ's image through the Holy Spirit's work and their cooperation with that work.

Ephesians 4:13-15 (KJV):

> *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."*

Maturity is moving away from being "tossed to and fro" by every doctrine and influence toward stability in truth. It's "growing up into Christ" across all dimensions of life.

1 Corinthians 13:11 (KJV):

> *"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."*

Maturity involves putting away childish perspectives and behaviors as you develop understanding and wisdom.

Why Spiritual Maturity Matters in Leadership

Leadership requires spiritual maturity. An immature believer leading God's people creates damage. Spiritual maturity enables a leader to:

- Understand Scripture more deeply and teach it more faithfully

- Make decisions based on principle rather than emotion

- Handle conflict without destructive reactions

- Sustain ministry through difficulty and discouragement

- Model faith and dependence on God

- Mentor emerging believers toward maturity

- Resist temptation through spiritual grounding

- Maintain perspective on what truly matters

Hebrews 5:12-14 (KJV):

> *"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

The author rebukes believers who should be teachers but remain spiritually immature. Spiritual maturity is expected of those in teaching roles. A spiritually immature person shouldn't be leading God's people; they should still be learning the basics themselves.

Dimensions of Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity manifests across several dimensions:

Doctrinal Depth - A spiritually mature leader knows Scripture deeply, understands doctrine, and can articulate Christian faith coherently. They're not tossed by every new teaching but grounded in truth.

Emotional Stability - Rather than reacting emotionally to circumstances, a mature believer responds from faith and principle. They can handle criticism, disappointment, and opposition without being thrown off course.

Relational Wisdom - A mature believer handles relationships well —with honesty, grace, and understanding. They resolve conflict redemptively, love wisely, and invest in others' growth.

Moral Consistency - A mature believer's choices and conduct align with their stated values. They live according to principle, not convenience or mood.

Surrendered Will - A mature believer genuinely wants God's will more than their own. They're surrendered to God's direction and trust His leading.

Spiritual Discipline - A mature believer maintains spiritual disciplines—prayer, Scripture study, worship, service—not as obligation but as essential practices that sustain their faith.

Perseverance - A mature believer can persevere through difficulty, maintaining faith and commitment when circumstances are hard.

Discernment - A mature believer can distinguish truth from error, good from evil, important from trivial. They don't follow every impulse but exercise careful judgment.

Humility and Growth Orientation - A mature believer remains humble and continues pursuing growth. They don't think they've arrived but see growth as lifelong.

Stages of Spiritual Maturity

Understanding different stages helps clarify growth:

Infant - Brand new believers, barely understanding faith. They need fundamental instruction and lots of care and guidance. They're not ready for leadership.

Child - Believers with some years of faith, understanding basic doctrine, but still emotionally reactive, prone to impulse, and requiring guidance for major decisions. Some capacity for

ministry to others at similar level, but not suited for leadership roles.

Young Adult - Believers with years of walking with God, growing doctrinal depth, increasing emotional stability, and capacity for service. Some can begin leadership roles with oversight, but probably not sole leadership.

Adult - Mature believers with deep faith, doctrinal understanding, emotional stability, relational wisdom, and spiritual depth. These are suited for significant leadership roles. Still growing, but fundamentally grounded.

Mentor/Elder - The most mature believers who not only demonstrate maturity but also help others grow toward maturity. They provide wisdom, guidance, and stability to the community.

Different leadership roles require different levels of maturity. Teaching roles require greater maturity than helping roles. Sole leadership requires greater maturity than shared leadership.

Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity is both God's work and our cooperation with God's work:

God's Role - God sanctifies through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit transforms, convicts of sin, draws toward Christ, and works the fruit of the Spirit in us. Maturity is fundamentally God's work in us.

Our Role - We cooperate through disciplines and choices. We study Scripture, pray, respond to conviction, obey God's direction, serve others, and pursue growth. We can't produce maturity through effort, but maturity requires our cooperation.

Practices that promote spiritual maturity:

Deep Scripture Study - Not casual reading but studying Scripture carefully, meditating on it, asking questions, allowing it to challenge and shape your thinking.

Regular Prayer - Talking with God about everything, bringing your concerns and requests, listening for God's guidance, worshiping, and interceding for others.

Submission to Accountability - Allowing others to speak truth, receiving correction, and submitting to counsel.

Service and Ministry - Engaging in service to others, which refines character, teaches compassion, and develops skills.

Difficult Circumstances - Rather than avoiding challenge, embracing difficulty as opportunity for growth. Difficulty purifies faith and develops character.

Learning from Failure - When you fail or make mistakes, genuinely learning from them rather than repeating patterns.

Seeking Mentorship - Learning from those further along the path accelerates your growth.

Teaching Others - Teaching what you're learning clarifies understanding and deepens maturity. You grow by helping others grow.

Solitude and Reflection - Creating space for prayer, reflection, and stillness allows transformation.

Community - Growing within Christian community, experiencing relationships that challenge and support you.

Recognizing Spiritual Immaturity in Leadership

When leaders lack spiritual maturity, warning signs appear:

Defensive Reactions - Instantly defensive when questioned, viewing criticism as attack.

Emotional Reactivity - Major decisions or responses based on emotion rather than principle or discernment.

Instability - Saying different things in different contexts, not consistently grounded.

Rigidity - Unwilling to learn, convinced they already have answers, resistant to growth.

Relational Damage - Leaving trail of hurt relationships, unable to work through conflict redemptively.

Short Perspective - Focused on immediate concerns rather than long-term kingdom impact.

Disconnect from Prayer and Scripture - Not clearly sustained by prayer and Scripture knowledge.

Need for Constant Affirmation - Requiring validation and approval, insecure about their position.

Inconsistency Between Teaching and Living - Teaching one thing while practicing another.

The solution isn't judgment but coaching. Mature leaders in the organization should invest in helping immature leaders grow. Sometimes this means removing someone from leadership

temporarily until they mature. Sometimes it means intensive mentoring and accountability.

PART 3: BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS

The Bible provides specific guidance about who should lead. These aren't arbitrary restrictions but descriptions of the character necessary to lead well.

CHAPTER 16: ELDER QUALIFICATIONS

The Role of Elders

Elders are leaders who provide spiritual oversight to the congregation. They're entrusted with teaching, governing, and caring for God's people. This is a significant responsibility, which is why Scripture provides detailed qualifications.

1 Timothy 5:17 (KJV):

> *"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."*

Elders who provide leadership—especially those involved in teaching—are worthy of honor and support. This acknowledges both the importance of the role and the cost of faithfully exercising it.

Qualifications Listed in Scripture

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (KJV):

> *"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil; Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."*

Titus 1:5-9 (KJV):

> *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee; If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."*

From these passages, elders should be:

Blameless - Their life should be such that they can't be validly accused of major wrongdoing. This doesn't mean perfection but integrity and moral consistency.

Husband of One Wife - This indicates sexual purity and faithfulness in marriage. In historical context, this distinguished from polygamy and infidelity. The principle is faithfulness in sexual relationships.

Vigilant/Sober - Alert, clearheaded, not intoxicated by wine or distracted by excess. They maintain mental clarity to make good decisions.

Of Good Behavior - Conduct is exemplary, demonstrating Christian virtues in action.

Hospitable - Open to others, welcoming, generous. This character is important for pastoral care.

Apt to Teach - Capable of instructing others in Scripture and doctrine. This doesn't require eloquence but understanding and ability to communicate truth.

Not Given to Wine - Not addicted to alcohol or excessively using substances. This doesn't prohibit alcohol entirely but indicates moderation and self-control.

No Striker - Not violent, not quick to physical aggression. One who resolves conflict through words, not fists.

Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre - Not driven by money, not exploiting position for financial gain. Motivated by service, not profit.

Patient - Able to tolerate difficulty and others' shortcomings without quick anger.

Not a Brawler - Not argumentative, not constantly in conflict with others. Able to maintain peace.

Not Covetous - Not desiring what others have, not driven by acquisition of possessions or status.

Rules His Own House Well - His family life is ordered, his children respect him, his household reflects biblical principle. If a man can't lead his family, he can't lead the church.

Not a Novice - Not a brand-new believer. Some time of spiritual maturity and proven character is necessary before leading.

Good Report from Outsiders - Even non-Christians should be able to respect an elder's character and conduct. His life bears witness even to those outside the faith.

Self-Controlled - Multiple passages emphasize self-control—not being controlled by passions, impulses, or circumstances but exercising discipline.

Just - Just and fair in dealings with others, not playing favorites or being unjustly harsh.

Holy - Set apart, devoted to God, reflecting God's character.

Lover of Good - Pursuing what's good and true, not drawn to evil or questionable activities.

Temperate - Moderate in all things, not excessive in anything.

Holding Fast Faithful Word - Grounded in Scripture, able to teach sound doctrine and refute false teaching.

Why These Qualifications Matter

These aren't arbitrary restrictions but descriptions of the character necessary to lead well.

A blameless person with moral integrity doesn't exploit position for personal gain. A sexually faithful person models and promotes biblical sexuality. A temperate person makes clear-headed decisions. A patient person handles conflict redemptively. Someone with good family leadership demonstrates the character to lead the church. A person grounded in Scripture can teach and guide others faithfully.

Together, these qualifications describe someone trustworthy with spiritual authority—someone whose character justifies the influence they wield.

Assessing Qualifications

How do leaders assess whether someone meets these qualifications?

Observation Over Time - Qualifications are assessed through knowing someone over extended time, not immediate impression. You need to see how they handle difficulty, relationships, money, success, failure, and criticism.

Multiple Perspectives - Evaluating someone based on one person's observation is insufficient. Get input from multiple people who know them in different contexts.

Examination of Conduct - Look at actual behavior, not just profession. Does their life match their words?

Family Life - Spend time with the person's family if possible. How do they relate to spouse and children? What's the tone of the household?

Financial Transparency - Understand their financial situation and choices. Are they living within means? Are they generous? Is there evidence of integrity in finances?

Under Pressure - How do they respond when things don't go their way? When criticized? When disappointed? Character under pressure reveals true nature.

Long-Term Observation - Know someone for significant time before elevating to elder. This allows you to assess whether apparent character is consistent or situational.

When Qualifications Are Lacking

What happens when someone leading doesn't meet qualifications? The organization experiences problems.

A financially greedy leader exploits church resources. An angry leader creates fear and dysfunction. An immoral leader scandals the gospel. An unprincipled leader leads astray. A novice without spiritual maturity makes poor decisions.

When an elder fails to meet qualifications:

Address It - The failure should be addressed, not ignored. Either the person corrects the behavior, or they should step down.

Support Restoration - If the person is willing to address the failure and grow, support them with accountability and coaching.

Remove from Office If Necessary - If the person isn't willing to address it or the behavior is serious, they should step down from leadership. **1 Timothy 5:19-20** provides guidance: address accusations against elders carefully (requiring two or three witnesses), but if substantiated, rebuke them publicly so others fear.

Prevention Through Process - Don't wait until someone is in leadership and failing. Assess qualifications before placing someone in office.

CHAPTER 17: DEACON QUALIFICATIONS

The Role of Deacons

Deacons are servants appointed to care for practical needs of the congregation. The office arose in Acts when apostles needed help managing the distribution of food and aid to widows. Deacons serve the community, particularly focusing on mercy and care.

Acts 6:1-6 (KJV):

> *"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there was a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch."*

Deacons are entrusted with important work—caring for vulnerable people, managing resources, meeting practical needs. This requires trustworthy, capable people.

Qualifications for Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (KJV):

> *"Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

Deacon qualifications are similar to elder qualifications but with slightly different emphasis. Deacons should be:

Grave - Serious-minded, not frivolous, understood by the congregation to be trustworthy.

Not Doubletongued - Consistent in what they say to different people, not misleading or saying different things to different audiences.

Not Given to Much Wine - Not controlled by substances, maintaining clarity and self-control.

Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre - Not exploiting their position for financial gain. This is especially important for deacons who handle resources and aid distribution.

Holding the Mystery of Faith in Pure Conscience - Grounded in faith, living with a clean conscience before God.

Tested First - Before being officially appointed, they should be observed and proven to be trustworthy and qualified. Their conduct should have demonstrated reliability.

Blameless - Their life can't be validly accused of major wrongdoing.

Husband of One Wife - Sexually faithful and committed to marriage.

Ruling Children and House Well - Leadership in household shows capacity to manage larger responsibilities.

Wives of Good Character - Serious, not slanderers, sober, faithful. The deacon's spouse's character matters because they'll be involved in the work and represent the church.

Why These Qualifications for Deacons

While deacons' role is more practical than elders' teaching role, qualifications are still substantial because deacons handle resources, interact with vulnerable people, and represent the church to those in need.

A greedy deacon exploits aid meant for the poor. A deacon without integrity mismanages finances. A deacon whose family is chaotic can't manage the organized care deacons provide. A deacon without faith can't minister with compassion and spiritual perspective.

Assessing Deacon Qualifications

Assessing qualifications involves similar processes to assessing elders:

Observation of Character - Know the person's actual conduct, not just profession.

Financial Integrity - Because deacons handle money and resources, their own financial integrity is crucial. How do they handle money? Are they generous? Are they honest?

Relational Skills - Deacons work with people, especially vulnerable people. Do they treat others with respect and dignity? Are they patient and kind?

Organizational Ability - Deacons manage practical tasks. Do they follow through? Are they organized? Can people rely on them?

Spiritual Foundation - While not primarily teachers, deacons should have genuine faith and character reflecting that faith.

Time Commitment - Being a deacon requires significant time and energy. Is the person willing to make this commitment?

Family Support - The deacon's family should support their service. Is spouse willing? Do children understand the time involved?

Different Types of Deacons

Some churches distinguish different types of deacons based on their focus:

Care Deacons - Focus on pastoral care, visiting the sick, caring for the hurting.

Mercy Deacons - Focus on aid to the poor, managing financial assistance, food programs.

Facility Deacons - Focus on church building, maintenance, operations.

Administrative Deacons - Focus on organizational management, record-keeping, scheduling.

Regardless of specific type, the same basic qualifications apply. All deacons should be trustworthy, faithful, and character-filled individuals capable of serving their specific focus area well.

CHAPTER 18: PASTOR QUALIFICATIONS

The Role of Pastor

A pastor is a shepherd of God's people—one called to care for, feed, guide, and protect the flock entrusted to them. Pastors teach God's Word, provide spiritual guidance, counsel people through difficulty, and lead the congregation spiritually.

1 Peter 5:1-4 (KJV):

> *"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock; And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."*

The pastor "feeds" the flock—provides spiritual nourishment through teaching, counsel, and example. The pastor takes oversight, providing care and direction. The pastor serves willingly and humbly, not domineering but modeling faithfulness.

Pastoral Qualifications

Pastors should meet elder qualifications (found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9) because pastors are typically elders. Additionally, pastoral-specific qualifications appear in Scripture:

2 Timothy 2:2, 2:24-25 (KJV):

> *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.… And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."*

A pastor is "apt to teach"—capable of instructing others. They're "gentle," "patient," and "meek"—qualities necessary for pastoral care. They instruct "in meekness"—without arrogance or harshness.

Titus 1:9 (KJV):

> *"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."*

A pastor is "holding fast the faithful word"—grounded in Scripture, not following every wind of doctrine. They're able "to exhort"—to encourage and comfort—and "to convince the

gainsayers"—to address false teaching and error.

1 Timothy 4:12-16 (KJV):

> *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."*

A pastor is "an example of the believers"—in speech, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity. They're devoted to "reading, exhortation, doctrine"—studying Scripture and teaching others. They "meditate" on these things, giving themselves "wholly to them." They "take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine"—maintaining personal growth and sound teaching.

Pastoral Character Requirements

Building on basic leadership qualifications, pastors particularly need:

Deep Spiritual Maturity - Pastors guide others spiritually, so they need substantial personal spiritual depth.

Strong Doctrinal Foundation - Pastors teach doctrine, so they need thorough knowledge of Scripture and Christian theology.

Compassion for People - Pastors care for hurting people, so they need genuine concern for people's wellbeing.

Communication Skill - While not necessarily eloquent, pastors should communicate clearly so people understand Scripture and guidance.

Availability - Pastors are accessible to those they serve. While needing boundaries and self-care, they generally make themselves available to their flock.

Spiritual Authority - Through prayer, Scripture knowledge, and godly character, pastors exercise spiritual authority that influences people toward faith and obedience.

Shepherd's Heart - Not just administrators or teachers, pastors are shepherds. They know their sheep individually, care for them personally, and protect them.

Assessing Pastoral Fit

When evaluating potential pastors:

Theological Agreement - The pastor should agree with the church's core theology. Don't hire someone with significant doctrinal disagreements.

Character and Personal Integrity - Thoroughly investigate the candidate's character, references, and personal life. Talk to previous churches, colleagues, and people who know them well.

Communication Style - Hear them teach. Do they communicate clearly? Do people connect with their teaching? Does their style fit the church culture?

Leadership Philosophy - Understand how they lead. Do they make decisions unilaterally or collaboratively? How do they handle conflict? How do they develop leaders?

Spiritual Maturity - Assess their personal faith, prayer life, and spiritual discipline. Are they growing? Are they grounded in Scripture?

Family Situation - If married, understand the spouse's role and willingness. Are children settled in the idea of pastoral family life? How is family health?

Calling - Does the candidate sense God's calling to this role? Are they pursuing pastoral ministry as a calling or as career?

Chemistry with Leadership - Do existing leaders respect and connect with the candidate? Can they work together?

Pastoral Burnout and Self-Care

Pastors face significant pressure and stress. The work is demanding, the hours are long, and the emotional burden is substantial. Pastoral burnout is common and destructive.

Churches should support pastors' self-care:

Reasonable Work Hours - Pastors shouldn't be expected to be available 24/7. Define reasonable work hours and days off.

Financial Support - Pay pastors adequately so they're not stressed about finances.

Sabbath Protection - Ensure pastors have regular days off and annual vacation time.

Continuing Education - Support pastors' growth through conferences, courses, and study leave.

Peer Support - Encourage pastors to connect with other pastors for peer support and accountability.

Mental Health Support - If a pastor struggles with depression, anxiety, or other issues, provide or encourage access to professional counseling.

Transition Support - When pastors transition out of a role, honor their service and support the transition.

A pastor who is rested, supported, and growing in their own faith is exponentially more effective than one who is burned out and depleted.

CHAPTER 19: LEADER QUALIFICATIONS (General)

Leaders at All Levels

While Scripture provides specific qualifications for elders, deacons, and pastors, similar principles apply to all leaders—small group leaders, ministry leaders, volunteer coordinators, and others in positions of authority.

1 Peter 4:10-11 (KJV):

> "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

All leaders are stewards—trustees of God's grace. Whether leading a small group or entire church, the principle is the same: you're stewarding what God has entrusted to you.

Universal Leadership Qualifications

Across different leadership roles, certain qualifications are universal:

Spiritual Foundation - All leaders should be genuine believers, grounded in faith, and growing spiritually. You can't lead spiritually if you're not walking spiritually.

Moral Integrity - Regardless of role, leaders should demonstrate moral consistency. Their actions should align with their words.

Character - Leaders should exhibit virtues like honesty, humility, courage, and compassion. Different roles may emphasize different virtues, but all leaders need character foundation.

Competence - Leaders should be capable at their specific role. A small group leader should be able to facilitate discussion. A finance leader should understand finance. Competence varies by role but is universally necessary.

Commitment - Leaders should be genuinely committed to their role and the mission. Reluctant or uncommitted leaders create problems.

Coachability - Leaders should be willing to learn and grow. Those resistant to input or development become stuck and stagnate.

Chemistry with Team - Leaders should be able to work with their team. Not everyone has to be best friends, but they should be able to work together professionally and respectfully.

Discretion - Leaders should be trustworthy with sensitive information and discerning about what should be communicated.

Service Orientation - Leaders should view their role as serving the mission and people, not serving their own interests.

Role-Specific Qualifications

Beyond universal qualifications, specific roles require specific qualifications:

Teaching Leaders - Should have strong knowledge of their subject matter, ability to communicate clearly, and skill at engaging learners.

Care Leaders - Should have compassion for people, listening skills, ability to handle sensitive information with discretion, and wisdom in offering counsel.

Administrative Leaders - Should have organizational skills, attention to detail, ability to manage processes and systems, and follow-through on commitments.

Serving Leaders - Should have willingness to work physically hard, positive attitude, ability to encourage others in service, and attention to quality.

Visionary Leaders - Should have ability to see future possibilities, capacity to articulate vision compellingly, and skill at motivating others toward vision.

Operational Leaders - Should have systems thinking, ability to manage complexity, attention to efficiency, and skill at problem-solving.

Growth Toward Qualifications

Not everyone starts with all qualifications. Growth toward qualifications should be expected:

Identify Gaps - Help emerging leaders identify areas where they need growth.

Provide Development - Through training, mentoring, and experience, help leaders develop needed qualifications.

Hold Accountable - As leaders develop, hold them accountable to live up to their role's demands.

Celebrate Growth - Acknowledge and celebrate as leaders grow in competence and character.

Create Pathways - Provide clear pathways for leaders to grow from one level to the next. A small group leader with potential could develop toward larger leadership roles.

Measuring Against Qualifications

How do you assess whether someone meets role qualifications?

Direct Observation - Watch them lead. Do they do the work well? Are people engaged? Is the work being accomplished?

Feedback from Those Led - Ask people who are under their leadership how they're doing. Are they responsive? Do people feel cared for? Is their teaching clear?

Peer Assessment - What do other leaders think of this person's capabilities and character?

Personal Growth - Is the leader growing and developing, or stagnant?

Problem Indicators - Are complaints arising? Are issues emerging that suggest the person isn't suited for the role?

CHAPTER 20: TESTING BEFORE PLACEMENT

Why Testing Before Placement Matters

One critical principle: don't place someone in leadership without first observing them in smaller roles and proving their qualifications. This practice prevents problems and allows you to identify those who are genuinely suited for leadership.

1 Timothy 3:10 (KJV):

> *"And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."*

"First be proved" means tested, evaluated, observed in action before being officially placed in office. Paul gives this instruction regarding deacons and implies it for other leadership roles as well.

The Purpose of Testing

Testing serves several purposes:

Identifies True Character - Character is revealed under various circumstances. Testing in smaller roles reveals how someone handles responsibility, how they treat others, how they respond to correction, and how they make decisions.

Assesses Competence - Can someone actually do what they claim they can do? Testing reveals actual capability versus claimed capability.

Prevents Premature Placement - Testing prevents moving someone too quickly into a role they're not ready for.

Builds Trust - When someone is tested and proven before being elevated, people are more confident in their leadership.

Allows Growth Path - Testing provides opportunity to identify areas needing development and work on them before full placement.

The Testing Process

An effective testing process:

Starts Small - Begin with low-stakes, small-scope responsibilities. A potential small group leader might first be invited to help set up refreshments or call attendees before leading a group.

Provides Mentoring - During testing, assign a mentor who coaches and develops the emerging leader.

Involves Multiple Situations - Observe the person in different contexts and situations. How do they respond to success? Failure? Criticism? Easy situations? Hard ones?

Gathers Feedback - Talk to people the person has worked with. What's their experience?

Allows Time - Testing takes time. You can't fully know someone's character in a few weeks. Generally, testing a potential leader should span months before major placement.

Provides Feedback - Tell the emerging leader how they're doing. Be honest about strengths and areas needing development.

Offers Opportunity to Disqualify - If during testing someone reveals that they're not suited for a role, it's better to discover this and reassign them to a different role than to place them anyway.

Testing in Different Contexts

Testing varies based on the role:

Voluntary Leader Testing - A potential small group leader might be asked to host a group meal and facilitate discussion. A potential volunteer coordinator might be asked to help schedule existing volunteers before taking over the full role.

Paid Staff Testing - A potential staff member is hired initially in a lower role or on a trial basis before full-time placement.

Deacon/Elder Testing - Potential deacons or elders are observed serving in various ministry capacities for an extended time before being formally considered for office.

Church Planter Testing - Before planting a church, a planter should demonstrate pastoral capability in existing church context.

Problems of Skipping Testing

When organizations skip testing and place unproven leaders, problems arise:

Bad Fit - The person may not actually be suited for the role, creating frustration for them and problems for those they lead.

Character Issues - Problems with integrity, honesty, or other character issues may be revealed only after placement.

Competence Gaps - The person may lack competence, creating quality problems in the ministry.

Credibility Loss - If a leader is placed and quickly fails, it damages the organization's credibility and creates questions about leadership judgment.

Damage to Those Led - If a small group leader is placed without testing and doesn't handle the role well, the small group members suffer the consequences.

Time Wasted - Dealing with a failed placement takes time and energy that could have been spent on proper testing.

Testing as Development

Testing isn't just evaluation; it's development. During testing:

Give Clear Expectations - Emerging leaders need to understand what they're being tested for and what good performance looks like.

Provide Training - Before testing, provide necessary training so the person is set up for success.

Coach Actively - During testing, provide coaching and feedback. Help the person improve.

Celebrate Successes - As the emerging leader does well, celebrate and affirm their growth.

Address Failures Learning-Fully - When they struggle, help them understand what went wrong and how to improve.

Gradually Increase Scope - As the person proves themselves at one level, gradually increase responsibility and scope.

Length of Testing Period

How long should testing last? Generally:

Volunteer Roles - 2-4 months for lower-level volunteer roles; 3-6 months for significant volunteer leadership.

Paid Staff - 3-6 months probationary period for new staff.

Deacon/Elder Placement - 6-12 months of observation in various ministry contexts before formal consideration.

Pastoral Positions - Usually interview and reference checks rather than on-site testing, but some churches bring candidates in for extended visits to assess fit.

The idea is sufficient time to see the person in various situations and circumstances, revealing true character and competence.

PART 4: CORE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Beyond character and qualifications, effective leaders need specific competencies—skills and abilities that enable them to lead well.

CHAPTER 21: VISION CLARITY

Distinguishing Vision Clarity

Leaders cannot lead effectively without clarity about where they're going and why. Vision clarity is the ability to articulate and communicate where God is calling the organization and what success looks like.

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV):

> *"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."*

Without vision—without clear understanding of direction and purpose—people don't thrive. They perish. Vision is essential.

Elements of Vision Clarity

Clear vision includes several elements:

Purpose - Why does the organization exist? What is its fundamental reason for being? For a church: "To glorify God through making disciples of Jesus Christ."

Mission - What will we do to accomplish our purpose? "We will teach God's Word, minister to the hurting, engage in service, and reach the lost."

Core Values - What principles guide our work? "We value Scripture, prayer, community, integrity, compassion."

Strategic Direction - How will we focus our efforts in this season? "In the next three years, we're focusing on developing small groups as the primary means of discipleship."

Desired Outcomes - What does success look like? "In three years, we want 60% of our congregation in active small groups."

Current Reality - Where are we now? What's our actual starting point? "Currently, only 20% are in small groups."

Gap - What needs to change? "We need to better promote small groups, develop more leaders, and remove barriers to participation."

Vision clarity articulates all these elements into a coherent picture people can understand and pursue.

Developing Vision Clarity

How do leaders develop clarity about vision?

Study Scripture - What does God want His church to do? Bible study provides theological foundation for vision.

Listen to Your People - What are their concerns, gifts, and passions? What is God doing in their lives?

Assess Your Context - What's happening in your community? What needs are present? What opportunities exist?

Consult with Leadership Team - Diverse perspectives help clarify vision. Don't develop vision in isolation.

Pray Extensively - Seeking God's direction through prayer is essential. Vision should be God's vision, not merely human dreams.

Study Successful Models - What have other churches done effectively? What can you learn from their successes and failures?

Allow Time - Vision clarity develops over time. Don't rush the process. Generally, clarifying vision takes months of prayer, study, and dialogue.

Test with Leadership - Once you think you have clarity, test it with your leadership team. Do they sense God's confirmation? Are there revisions needed?

Communicate, Refine, Communicate Again - As you communicate vision to people, their feedback helps refine it. Vision is often clarified through repeated communication cycles.

Articulating Vision Clearly

Once you have clarity, you must articulate it in ways people understand:

Use Simple Language - Avoid jargon. Communicate so a new person can understand what you're about.

Make It Memorable - Create phrases or images people remember. If your vision is hard to remember, people won't repeat it.

Tell Stories - Stories illustrate vision better than abstract statements. Tell stories of what you're trying to accomplish.

Connect to Scripture - Ground vision in Scripture so people understand it's God's direction, not human preference.

Show the Gap - Help people see both current reality and desired future. The tension between them creates motivation.

Invite Participation - Help people see how they can participate in the vision. Make it about "us," not "them" or "me."

Repeat Regularly - People need to hear vision repeatedly before it settles in. Monthly reminders are reasonable.

Communicating Vision Effectively

Effective vision communication happens through multiple channels:

Preaching/Teaching - Use the pulpit and teaching times to articulate and develop vision.

Written Communication - Use newsletters, emails, and social media to communicate vision elements.

Leadership Modeling - Leaders embody vision through their choices and priorities. People see vision through leaders' actions.

Stories from the Field - Share stories of how people are living out the vision. Concrete examples make vision real.

Strategic Initiatives - Align church initiatives with vision so people see vision being pursued concretely.

One-on-One Conversations - In personal conversations, reference vision and connect individual decisions to it.

Visual Reminders - Create visual displays of vision so people encounter it regularly.

Celebration - As the church makes progress toward vision, celebrate it publicly. Celebration reinforces vision.

Maintaining Vision Clarity Over Time

Vision clarity isn't one-time work:

Regular Review - Annually, review vision. Is it still God's direction? Does it need adjustment based on changed circumstances?

Protect from Drift - Over time, leaders and organizations drift from vision. Regular review prevents drift.

Adjust When Necessary - If circumstances change significantly or you sense God's direction is shifting, be willing to adjust vision. But do this thoughtfully, not reactively.

Onboard New Leaders to Vision - As new leaders join, ensure they understand and embrace the vision. New leaders are often sources of vision drift.

Celebrate Progress - As the church moves toward vision, celebrate progress. This maintains momentum and motivation.

Refresh Communication - As time passes, refreshing vision communication keeps it alive. Same vision communicated in new ways maintains freshness.

CHAPTER 22: DECISION-MAKING

The Importance of Good Decision-Making

Leaders make numerous decisions affecting many people. Poor decisions create chaos; good decisions create order and progress. Decision-making is a core competency all leaders must develop.

Proverbs 3:21 (KJV):

> *"My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion."*

"Sound wisdom" involves making good decisions. Discretion is the judgment to decide well in specific situations.

Decision-Making Frameworks

Effective leaders use frameworks to make better decisions:

Gather Information - Before deciding, gather relevant information. What do you know? What do you need to know? Who has expertise that should inform the decision?

Identify Options - What are the possible approaches? Often, there are more options than initially apparent.

Consider Consequences - What are the likely outcomes of each option? How will each affect different stakeholders?

Evaluate Against Principles - Which option best aligns with your values, vision, and principles?

Seek Counsel - For significant decisions, seek input from wise people. **Proverbs 15:22 (KJV):** "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established."

Pray - Seek God's guidance for significant decisions.

Decide Clearly - Once you've gone through the process, make a clear decision. Ambiguous decisions create confusion.

Communicate the Decision - Explain the decision and the reasoning behind it. People accept decisions better when they understand the thinking.

Execute and Evaluate - Implement the decision and later evaluate whether it achieved intended results.

Decision-Making Authority

Different decisions require different levels of authority:

Unilateral Decisions - Some decisions should be made by the leader alone. Day-to-day operational decisions usually fall here. A staff member deciding their schedule or a small group leader deciding the topic for a discussion.

Consensus Decisions - Some decisions require broader input and agreement. Major ministry shifts, significant budget decisions, or hiring of key staff.

Delegated Decisions - Some decisions should be made by others and the leader should trust their judgment. If you've delegated a responsibility, you've delegated authority for decisions within that responsibility.

Understanding which type of decision-making authority applies to which decisions prevents both micromanagement and abdication of leadership.

Common Decision-Making Mistakes

Analysis Paralysis - Gathering so much information that a decision is never made. At some point, you must decide.

Intuition Without Analysis - Making decisions based purely on feeling without gathering information or thinking through consequences.

Isolating Yourself - Making decisions alone without seeking counsel, missing important perspectives.

Rushing - Making hasty decisions without adequate information or thought. Unless time-urgent, most decisions benefit from sleeping on them.

Changing Decisions Constantly - Making a decision, then reversing it when someone complains. This destroys confidence in leadership.

Avoiding Decisions - Hoping the problem will go away rather than making a difficult decision.

Deciding Based on Who Complains Loudest - Making decisions to quiet the loudest voices rather than based on principle.

Ignoring Unintended Consequences - Focusing on the intended outcome while missing negative side effects.

Difficult Decisions

Some decisions are particularly difficult:

Firing Someone - Removing someone from a role affects their livelihood and can be emotionally difficult. Good decision-making here requires clear documentation, fairness, and compassion.

Limiting Popular Programs - Sometimes you must limit or end programs people enjoy to focus on vision. Good communication about why helps people accept the decision.

Confronting a Friend - Addressing problematic behavior of someone you're close to is emotionally difficult. Do it with care but also with honesty.

Accepting Failure - When a ministry or initiative isn't working, deciding to shut it down is hard. But prolonging failure helps no one.

Major Transitions - Deciding to significantly change direction, plant a church, or undertake major initiatives involves risk and difficulty.

For difficult decisions:

Take Your Time - Don't rush. Give yourself time to think and pray.

Get Support - Talk to trusted advisors. They help clarify thinking and provide support.

Accept the Emotional Reality - Acknowledge that the decision is difficult. This helps you process rather than suppress.

Make the Decision Clearly - Once you've decided, commit to it. Ambivalence undermines execution.

Implement with Compassion - Even difficult decisions can be implemented with care and consideration for those affected.

Teaching Others Decision-Making

Good leaders teach emerging leaders how to make good decisions:

Model Your Process - When making decisions, explain your thinking. "Here's the information I gathered. Here are the options I considered. Here's why I decided this way."

Assign Low-Stakes Decisions - Give emerging leaders small decisions to make so they practice and learn.

Debrief After Decisions - After someone makes a decision, discuss it with them. "What information did you gather? What options did you consider? How did you decide?"

Celebrate Good Decisions - When someone makes a thoughtful decision, affirm it.

Learn from Poor Decisions - When someone makes a poor decision, help them understand what went wrong so they improve.

Gradually Increase Scope - As emerging leaders prove themselves with small decisions, give them authority for larger ones.

CHAPTER 23: COMMUNICATION

The Importance of Clear Communication

Miscommunication is at the root of many organizational problems. Conversely, clear communication creates understanding, alignment, and trust. Communication is a core competency all leaders must develop.

Proverbs 15:23 (KJV):

> *"A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!"*

Good communication—words spoken at the right time, in the right way—is valuable. Poor communication—unclear words, bad timing—creates problems.

Components of Effective Communication

Effective communication involves multiple components:

Clarity - Your message should be clear. The listener should understand what you're saying.

Accuracy - Your message should be truthful and accurate.

Completeness - You should provide sufficient information for people to understand the full picture.

Timeliness - Information should be communicated when people need it, not too early or too late.

Appropriateness - The message should be communicated to the right people in the right way.

Respect - Communication should treat the listener with respect, not condescension.

Openness - You should be open to feedback and questions rather than closing down communication.

Consistency - Your communication should be consistent with your actions and your previous statements.

Repetition - Important messages need repetition. One communication isn't enough.

Multiple Channels - Important information should be communicated through multiple channels so it reaches people with different preferences.

Types of Communication

Different situations call for different communication types:

Announcement - Simply conveying information. "We're changing our service time to 10 AM."

Explanation - Providing background and reasoning. "We're changing our service time because our facility is needed at 9 AM, and this time works better for most people."

Dialogue - Back-and-forth conversation allowing questions and discussion. Important for discussing decisions or addressing concerns.

Teaching - Conveying understanding and insight. Deeper than simple information sharing.

Feedback - Providing assessment of someone's performance or behavior.

Difficult Conversations - Addressing problems, conflicts, or sensitive issues.

Effective leaders match communication type to the situation.

Barriers to Communication

Several things block effective communication:

Unclear Thinking - If the communicator doesn't understand their own message, it comes across confused.

Assumed Understanding - Communicators often assume people understand background they don't have.

Information Overload - Too much information in one communication overwhelms and confuses.

Poor Listening - If the listener isn't listening, communication breaks down regardless of clarity.

Emotional Reactions - Strong emotions can interfere with both clear communication and good listening.

Cultural/Generational Differences - Different groups may communicate and understand differently. What's clear to one generation may be unclear to another.

Lack of Trust - If people don't trust the communicator, they're less likely to receive the message.

Wrong Channel - Communicating in a channel people don't pay attention to or through someone they don't trust undermines the message.

Timing - Communicating at a time when people aren't receptive reduces effectiveness.

Improving Communication

Leaders can improve their communication:

Know Your Audience - Understand who you're communicating to. What do they already know? What do they care about? How do they prefer to receive information?

Think Before You Speak - Take time to think about what you're going to say and how you'll say it.

Use Simple Language - Avoid jargon. Use words your audience understands.

Be Organized - Structure your communication logically so it's easy to follow.

Use Examples and Stories - Concrete examples and stories communicate better than abstract concepts.

Check for Understanding - Ask questions to ensure people understand. Invite questions.

Be Concise - Say what needs to be said without unnecessary elaboration.

Use Multiple Channels - For important information, communicate through multiple channels so different people receive it.

Communicate Frequently - Important information benefits from repetition through time.

Be Honest - Don't spin or manipulate. Be truthful even when it's difficult.

Admit When You're Wrong - If you miscommunicated, acknowledge it and correct it.

LISTENING AS COMMUNICATION

Communication is not just speaking; it's also listening. Effective leaders listen actively:

Listen to Understand - Listen to comprehend what the person is saying, not just waiting for your turn to speak.

Ask Questions - Ask questions to clarify and show you're engaged.

Don't Interrupt - Allow people to finish their thoughts before you respond.

Pay Attention - Put away distractions. Give the person your full attention.

Listen for Emotion - Often, what people feel matters as much as what they say.

Validate - Acknowledge what the person is saying even if you disagree.

Don't Immediately Problem-Solve - Sometimes people just need to be heard. Don't immediately jump to solutions.

Listen Across Differences - Listen especially carefully to people whose experience or perspective differs from yours.

CHAPTER 24: TEAM BUILDING

The Importance of Team

No leader accomplishes significant things alone. Ministry is inherently team-based. Building a strong team is a core competency for leaders.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (KJV):

> *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."*

The writer observes that partnership is better than isolation. In partnership, if one falls, the other helps up. Alone, there's no help. Good teams provide mutual support and accomplish more together than any individual could alone.

Principles of Strong Teams

Strong teams share common characteristics:

Shared Purpose - Team members understand and embrace the team's purpose. They know why their work matters.

Clarity of Roles - Each person understands their specific role, responsibilities, and how they contribute to the team.

Complementary Skills - Team members have different strengths so collectively they cover what's needed.

Trust - Team members trust each other's competence and character. They believe others will do their jobs well.

Communication - Team members communicate openly, honestly, and regularly.

Accountability - Team members hold each other accountable to do their jobs and maintain standards.

Mutual Support - Team members help each other succeed, not just achieve individually.

Common Values - Team members share core values that guide their work.

Leadership - The team has leadership that provides direction, removes obstacles, and supports members.

Building a Team

Building a strong team is intentional work:

Be Intentional About Selection - Don't assemble teams randomly. Deliberately select people with needed skills, compatible values, and relational chemistry.

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities - Help each person understand their specific role, what success looks like, and how they contribute to the team.

Invest in Relationship - Spend time together as a team. Build relationships beyond just work tasks.

Establish Team Norms - Agree on how the team will work together. How will you communicate? How will you handle conflict? How will you make decisions?

Over-Communicate Vision and Purpose - Regularly remind the team why your work matters. Connect daily tasks to larger purpose.

Celebrate Wins Together - When the team accomplishes something, celebrate together. This builds morale and bonding.

Address Issues Quickly - When someone isn't pulling their weight or conflicts emerge, address them quickly rather than letting them fester.

Invest in Development - Help team members grow and improve at their roles.

Model Team Values - As the leader, embody the values and behaviors you want from the team.

Dealing with Team Problems

Teams often face challenges:

Free Rider - Someone benefits from team's work without contributing fully. Address this directly and specifically.

Dominant Personality - Someone dominates discussion and decisions. Create space for quieter voices.

Conflict Between Members - Tensions emerge. Address conflict redemptively rather than avoiding it.

Unclear Roles - Sometimes it's unclear who's responsible for what. Clarify roles.

Lack of Accountability - Quality suffers if no one's accountable. Establish accountability mechanisms.

Misaligned Values - Someone's values differ significantly from the team's. Decide if the person is the right fit.

Poor Communication - Misunderstandings plague the team. Improve communication practices.

Burnout - Team members are exhausted. Evaluate workload and pace.

Addressing team problems promptly prevents them from becoming serious and culture-defining.

Team Development

Teams mature over time. Understanding team development helps you lead well at each stage:

Forming - Team is new, getting to know each other, uncertain about roles. Leader provides clear direction and structure.

Storming - Team members assert themselves, disagree on direction. Some friction emerges. Leader helps navigate conflict and maintains focus.

Norming - Team establishes norms and ways of working together. Relationships develop. Leader facilitates this stabilization.

Performing - Team functions well, produces quality work, handles problems effectively. Leader provides less directive leadership and more facilitation.

Teams cycle through these stages repeatedly as they face new challenges or add new members.

Small Group Leaders as Teams

In churches, small group leaders often form a team under a director. This team relationship affects the entire church:

Regular Gatherings - Small group leaders should meet regularly (monthly minimum, more often ideally) to share, learn together, and provide mutual support.

Training and Development - Use these gatherings to train leaders, discuss challenges, and develop their skills.

Prayer and Encouragement - These gatherings are spiritual times —praying together, encouraging each other, interceding for their groups.

Collective Problem-Solving - When one small group leader faces a challenge, the team brainstorms together.

Celebrating Wins - Share stories of God's work in groups and celebrate together.

Culture Setting - The small group leaders' team sets the culture for all small groups. A healthy leader team creates healthy groups.

CHAPTER 25: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Understanding Conflict in Organizations

Conflict is inevitable in any organization with multiple people pursuing common purpose. The question isn't whether conflict will arise, but how it will be handled.

Proverbs 15:18 (KJV):

> *"A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth contention."*

A person quick to anger stirs up strife. One who is slow to anger calms contention. How leaders respond to conflict determines whether it becomes destructive or is resolved constructively.

Types of Conflict

Different conflicts require different approaches:

Task Conflict - Disagreement about what should be done or how to do it. This can be productive if managed well.

Process Conflict - Disagreement about how decisions are made or how work is organized.

Interpersonal Conflict - Personal tensions or disagreements between individuals.

Value Conflict - Disagreement about fundamental beliefs or principles.

Power Conflict - Struggle for authority, influence, or resources.

How Leaders Often Mishandle Conflict

Common mistakes:

Ignoring It - Hoping conflict will go away. It usually escalates instead.

Choosing Sides - Siding with one party against another rather than seeking resolution.

Avoiding - Leaving the room or conversation when conflict emerges.

Demanding Compliance - Using authority to force acceptance rather than resolution.

Minimizing - Acting like the conflict isn't serious when it is.

Taking It Personally - Viewing disagreement as personal attack on you rather than disagreement about issues.

Spreading It - Telling others about the conflict rather than addressing it directly.

Moving Too Fast - Jumping to solutions before understanding the problem.

A Model for Conflict Resolution

A healthy approach to conflict resolution:

Acknowledge the Conflict - Recognize that conflict exists. Name it directly and openly.

Understand the Problem - Before solving, understand what the actual issue is. Often, the stated problem isn't the real problem.

Listen to All Sides - Each party should feel heard. Ask questions to understand their perspective, concerns, and interests.

Identify Shared Interests - Often, people in conflict care about many of the same things. Identifying shared ground creates basis for resolution.

Separate People from Problem - Focus on the problem, not the people. Attack the issue, not each other.

Generate Options - Brainstorm possible solutions. Don't evaluate them yet; just generate options.

Evaluate Options - Discuss options, consider pros and cons, evaluate against shared values and interests.

Seek Win-Win - Look for solutions where all parties get something they care about, not just compromise where everyone loses equally.

Make a Decision - Once a solution is identified, make it clear and official.

Implement and Follow-Up - Execute the solution and later check whether it's working as intended.

Biblical Principles for Conflict Resolution

Matthew 18:15-17 (KJV):

> *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between me and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."*

Jesus provided a model for conflict resolution:

- First, address directly and privately

- If unresolved, bring in witnesses

- If still unresolved, bring to the church

- If the person refuses to listen, treat them as outside the community

This model protects privacy, seeks understanding, involves others when necessary, and maintains community standards.

Ephesians 4:25-27 (KJV):

> *"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil."*

- Speak truth in love

- Address anger quickly, don't let it fester

- Don't give the enemy opportunity through unresolved conflict

2 Timothy 2:24-26 (KJV):

> *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."*

- Gentle, not harsh in conflict

- Patient in addressing disagreement

- Seeking truth and understanding, not victory

Professional Mediation

Sometimes, professional mediation is helpful:

When: When internal resolution attempts haven't worked, when significant harm has occurred, when power imbalances make fair discussion difficult, when outside perspective would help.

Who: A trained mediator, often from outside the organization, who is neutral and skilled in helping parties communicate.

How: The mediator meets with parties separately and together, helps them communicate, identifies shared interests, and facilitates resolution.

Church leaders should know when to bring in professional help rather than trying to handle everything internally.

CHAPTER 26: STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Purpose of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is the process of determining where you're going and how you'll get there. It bridges vision (where you want to go) with execution (how you get there).

Proverbs 21:5 (KJV):

> *"The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want."*

The diligent—those who plan and work carefully—experience plenty. The hasty—those who move without planning—experience lack. Strategic planning creates the deliberateness that leads to effectiveness.

Elements of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning includes several components:

Vision Clarity - Where are we going? What is God calling us to?

Current Assessment - Where are we now? What's our current situation, strengths, and weaknesses?

Gap Analysis - What must change to move from current state to desired future?

Strategic Priorities - What are the 3-5 most important things we must focus on to close the gap?

Goals - What specific, measurable outcomes do we want to achieve?

Tactics - How specifically will we pursue each goal?

Resource Plan - What people, money, and other resources do we need?

Accountability - Who is responsible for what? How will we track progress?

Timeline - When will we accomplish each goal?

The Strategic Planning Process

Effective strategic planning involves a process:

Prayer and Seeking God's Direction - Begin by seeking God's guidance. What is He calling you to?

Leadership Team Involvement - Include key leaders in the process. Diverse input improves planning.

Stakeholder Input - Gather input from the broader congregation. What do people see as priorities?

Data Review - Look at factual information: attendance trends, financial situation, demographic changes in your community, strengths and weaknesses.

Scenario Development - Project different possible futures based on different strategic choices.

Discussion and Refinement - Discuss options and refine direction through dialogue.

Decision and Commitment - Once direction is chosen, commit to it. Make clear decisions.

Communication - Communicate the plan to the entire organization so people understand and can align their work.

Implementation - Execute the plan with clear accountability and regular review.

Regular Review - Monthly or quarterly, review progress and address obstacles.

Common Strategic Planning Mistakes

Too Many Priorities - When everything is a priority, nothing is. Effective plans focus on 3-5 key priorities.

Unrealistic Timelines - Plans that expect major change in 6 months are often unrealistic. Major change takes years.

Lack of Resource Planning - Plans that assume resources will appear without planning for them fail. Realistic plans account for actual resources available.

Poor Communication - Plans that aren't communicated to the organization don't get implemented. Regular communication is essential.

Rigid Plans - Plans that can't be adjusted as circumstances change become obsolete. Plans should be regularly reviewed and adjusted.

Lack of Accountability - Plans without clear accountability and progress tracking don't get implemented.

Starting Too Ambitious - Many organizations start with 10-year plans that are too broad. Better to start with 1-3 year plans that can be refined.

Creating a Strategic Plan

A practical process:

1. Establish Planning Team - Include key leaders and diverse perspectives. 5-8 people is typical.

2. Schedule Planning Sessions - Set aside time (several meetings over weeks or months, not one all-day marathon).

3. Review Current State - Examine current reality, data, and trends.

4. Revisit Vision - Ensure vision is clear and still on target.

5. Identify Opportunities - What opportunities exist? Where is God opening doors?

6. Identify Obstacles - What challenges must be overcome? What's preventing progress?

7. Determine Strategic Priorities - Based on opportunities, obstacles, and vision, what are the 3-5 most important strategic focuses?

8. Set Goals - For each priority, set specific, measurable goals.

9. Identify Tactics - For each goal, identify specific tactics and initiatives.

10. Assign Responsibility - Assign clear responsibility for each goal and tactic.

11. Determine Resources - What's needed to accomplish each goal?

12. Create Timeline - When will each goal be accomplished?

13. Define Accountability - How will progress be tracked? When will progress be reviewed?

14. Communicate Plan - Share plan with entire organization.

15. Begin Execution - Start implementing immediately.

Rolling Strategic Plans

Many organizations use "rolling" plans where:

Long-Term Vision - 5-10 year vision of where you're heading (updated annually).

3-Year Plan - Medium-term plan with 3-4 key priorities (updated annually).

Annual Plan - Specific goals and tactics for the coming year (updated annually).

Quarterly Reviews - Every quarter, review progress and adjust as needed.

This rolling approach balances long-term vision with flexibility to adjust based on current circumstances.

CHAPTER 27: FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

God's Perspective on Money

The Bible has much to say about money and how believers should handle it. Leaders have particular responsibility for financial stewardship.

1 Timothy 6:10 (KJV):

> *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*

The love of money—not money itself—is the root of all evil. Money itself is neutral; it's the orientation toward money that matters. Leaders must be careful not to love money or use their position to accumulate personal wealth.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 (KJV):

> *"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."*

Church leaders are "stewards of God's mysteries." Stewardship implies that the resources belong to God, not the steward. We're managers of what God has entrusted to us.

Principles of Financial Stewardship

Good financial stewardship involves:

Honesty and Integrity - All financial dealings should be honest, transparent, and above reproach.

Accountability - Financial decisions and spending should be subject to review and accountability.

Responsibility - Treating finances with respect, neither wasteful nor miserly, but wise.

Alignment with Vision - Money should be spent on things that advance vision and mission, not diverted to secondary concerns.

Generosity - While responsible, stewardship includes generosity—sharing freely, supporting those in need, investing in ministry.

Sustainability - Finances should be managed so the organization can sustain long-term, not dependent on one-time gifts or unsustainable practices.

Plurality - Major financial decisions should involve multiple people, not one person's decisions.

Transparency - Financial information should be available to appropriate people. Hidden finances breed suspicion.

Common Financial Problems in Churches

Lack of Budget - Operating without a budget leads to overspending and financial crisis. Every organization should have a budget.

Inadequate Accounting - Without proper accounting systems, money gets spent without tracking, making waste and misuse possible.

Single Decision-Maker - When one person controls all financial decisions, temptation and lack of accountability increase.

Lack of Transparency - When finances aren't openly communicated, people suspect misuse even if there isn't any.

Mixing Personal and Church Finances - Leaders using church funds for personal expenses or vice versa causes problems.

No Financial Plan - Operating without thinking about future financial needs leads to crisis.

Inadequate Compensation - Underpaying staff creates hardship and high turnover.

Lavish Spending - Using church funds for luxuries or personal comfort of leaders damages credibility.

Creating a Budget

A basic budgeting process:

1. List Categories - What are the main spending categories? (Staff, facilities, ministry programs, supplies, utilities, etc.)

2. Analyze Historical Spending - How much have you spent in each category historically?

3. Project Revenue - Based on history and expectations, how much revenue will you have?

4. Determine Priorities - Knowing revenue projections, what are your spending priorities?

5. Allocate Funds - Allocate budgeted revenue to categories based on priorities.

6. Account for Growth or Contraction - Adjust based on expected growth, contraction, or new initiatives.

7. Build in Contingency - Include a contingency amount for unexpected needs.

8. Review and Approve - Have leadership review and formally approve the budget.

9. Communicate - Share the budget with staff and leaders so everyone understands financial parameters.

10. Track Throughout Year - Monthly, review actual spending against budget. Address significant variances.

Financial Controls

Healthy churches have financial controls to prevent fraud and misuse:

Segregation of Duties - Different people handle different aspects (one deposits, another writes checks, another reconciles accounts). This prevents one person from misusing funds.

Regular Reconciliation - Bank accounts are regularly reconciled to church records, catching discrepancies.

Regular Audits - Internal or external audits of church finances provide independent verification.

Two-Signature Requirements - Large checks require two authorized signatures.

Clear Policies - Written financial policies clarify acceptable practices.

Documentation - Receipts and documentation are kept for all expenditures.

Transparency Reports - Financial reports are regularly shared with leadership and, periodically, the congregation.

Compensation and Stewardship

Churches face questions about staff compensation:

Fair Pay - Staff should be paid fairly, reflecting market rates for their roles. Underpayment creates hardship.

Transparency - Salaries don't need to be secret. Many organizations publish salary ranges.

Consistency - Similar roles should have similar compensation. Unexplained disparities create resentment.

Growth - As the organization grows, compensation should reflect greater responsibility or experience.

Sustainability - Don't commit to compensation the organization can't sustain long-term.

Generosity - Where possible, pay generously to show appreciation and allow staff to live comfortably.

Giving and Generosity

Churches depend on member giving. Leaders model and encourage generosity:

Model Generosity - Leaders should give generously to the church, demonstrating belief in the mission.

Teach Generosity - Regularly teach about biblical stewardship and generosity.

Make Giving Easy - Provide multiple ways to give (offering plate, online, electronic transfer, checks).

Thank Givers - Acknowledge and thank those who give.

Be Transparent About Need - When the church needs resources, be honest about need and ask.

Show Impact - Help people see the impact of their giving.

Avoid Manipulation - Don't use guilt or manipulation to increase giving. Let generosity be voluntary.

CHAPTER 28: DELEGATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF DELEGATION

Leaders accomplish exponentially more through delegation than through their own efforts. However, many leaders struggle with delegation, either refusing to delegate (trying to do everything themselves) or delegating poorly (assigning tasks without clarity or support).

Proverbs 22:29 (KJV):

> *"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; neither shall he stand before mean men."*

A leader who is diligent makes strategic choices about their work. Trying to do everything dilutes effort. Diligent leaders delegate to multiply their impact.

WHY LEADERS AVOID DELEGATION

Several reasons keep leaders from delegating:

Perfectionism - "No one can do it as well as I can." True, but often tasks don't need perfection. Good enough, delegated, creates more impact than perfect but limited.

Fear of Losing Control - Leaders worry that delegating means losing control. Healthy delegation maintains oversight while releasing execution.

Reluctance to Trust - Some leaders don't trust others to do the work. Building a team requires trusting their capability and character.

Belief They're Indispensable - Some leaders feel that without them doing everything, things fall apart. This actually indicates poor leadership; healthy leadership creates organizations that function well even when the leader isn't involved.

Lack of Training - Leaders don't know how to delegate well, so they avoid it.

Fear of Conflict - Delegating and then having to address poor work creates conflict some leaders avoid.

Unclear Priorities - Leaders without clear priorities end up doing everything because they're not sure what matters most.

Principles of Effective Delegation

Effective delegation involves:

Clear Assignment - The person needs to understand exactly what they're being asked to do.

Authority to Decide - The person needs authority to make decisions within their domain. If they must check with you on every decision, it's not really delegated.

Clear Expectations - The person should know what success looks like. What's the deadline? What's the standard? What resources are available?

Adequate Training/Support - The person should have skills to do the job or training to develop them. They should know they can ask for help.

Trust - You should genuinely trust the person's character and competence. Delegating while simultaneously micromanaging or expressing doubt isn't truly delegating.

Accountability - The person is responsible for the results. You may offer support, but they own the outcome.

Feedback - After completion, provide feedback so the person learns and improves.

Steps in Delegating

A process for effective delegation:

1. Determine What to Delegate - What tasks could someone else do? What's your highest and best use of time versus what could another capable person do?

2. Select the Right Person - Who has the capability or potential to do this task? Who needs this growth opportunity?

3. Prepare - Think through what's being delegated. What could go wrong? What support might they need?

4. Make the Assignment - Meet with the person. Explain the task, why it matters, what success looks like, deadline, and available resources.

5. Answer Questions - Allow them to ask clarifying questions.

6. Confirm Understanding - Ask them to explain back what they're going to do. Make sure there's genuine understanding.

7. Offer Support - Let them know you're available if they need help or have questions.

8. Get Out of the Way - Step back. Let them do the work. Resist the urge to micromanage.

9. Check in Appropriately - Depending on their experience with the task, check in periodically. New or complex tasks may warrant more check-ins.

10. Receive the Work - When complete, receive their work with appreciation.

11. Provide Feedback - Discuss what went well and what could be improved.

12. Celebrate Success - Acknowledge good work. This reinforces their capability and willingness to take on future tasks.

Delegation as Development

Effective delegation does more than get tasks done; it develops people:

Builds Confidence - Successfully completing delegated tasks builds confidence in emerging leaders.

Develops Skills - Taking on new tasks develops new capabilities.

Identifies Potential - Delegation helps you see who has potential for greater responsibility.

Creates Pathways - Delegating increasingly important tasks creates a pathway for people to grow into larger leadership roles.

Multiplies Impact - As people develop through delegation, your team's collective impact multiplies.

The best leaders are those who develop others through strategic delegation.

Poor Delegation

Examples of poor delegation:

Dumping - Assigning something without explanation, support, or follow-up. The person feels abandoned.

Micromanaging - Delegating but then checking every detail and making decisions for them. This frustrates and disempowers.

Blame-Shifting - Delegating and then blaming the person if things go wrong rather than supporting them or sharing responsibility.

Unclear Assignment - Delegating without clear expectations so the person doesn't know what's actually expected.

Over-Delegating - Giving someone more than they can realistically handle, setting them up for failure.

Delegating Downward Only - Healthy organizations also delegate laterally (peer to peer) and upward (to supervisors). Everything doesn't flow only down.

Good delegation multiplies your leadership. Poor delegation frustrates people and wastes potential.

CONCLUSION: LEAVE A LEADERSHIP LEGACY

The Ultimate Measure of Leadership

Your leadership isn't ultimately measured by what you personally accomplish or the position you hold. It's measured by what you leave behind—the people you've developed, the culture you've shaped, the leaders you've multiplied.

Proverbs 13:22 (KJV):

> *"A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just."*

A good leader leaves an inheritance—legacy—not just personal wealth but transformed people and healthy organizations that continue beyond their tenure.

The Four Elements of a Leadership Legacy

A strong leadership legacy includes:

1. Developed Leaders

The ultimate leadership legacy is leaders you've developed who continue the work after you're gone. Every leader should be intentionally developing the next generation.

Measure your leadership success not by what you do but by who you've raised up. A leader who personally accomplishes much but develops no leaders leaves no lasting legacy. A leader who develops other leaders creates exponential impact.

Are you investing in emerging leaders? Are you identifying potential? Are you providing mentoring, training, and opportunities? Are you releasing them to leadership roles?

2. Healthy Culture

Beyond individual leaders, you leave behind a culture—the shared values, norms, and ways of working that characterize your organization.

A healthy culture reflects biblical principles: honesty over deception, service over self-interest, community over individualism, growth over stagnation, grace over judgment. This culture persists even after leadership changes if it's deeply embedded.

Are you intentionally shaping culture? Are your decisions reinforcing desired values? Are you addressing cultural problems? Are you modeling the culture you want to create?

3. Systems and Structures

Beyond people and culture, you leave behind systems and structures that enable the organization to function well.

Good systems ensure financial integrity, clear communication, effective decision-making, and care of people. These systems outlast individual leaders and enable the organization to function well beyond any one leader's tenure.

Have you built systems for financial accountability, leader development, member care, and strategic planning? Or does everything depend on you making decisions?

4. Spiritual Foundation

Finally, you leave behind a spiritual foundation—a congregation grounded in Scripture, devoted to prayer, living out biblical principle.

A church rooted in God's Word and walking in the Spirit grows despite challenges. One built on a leader's personality or a particular program withers when that leader leaves or the program changes.

Have you helped your congregation grow in Scripture knowledge? Are they experiencing the reality of God's presence through prayer? Are they living out biblical principle in their daily lives?

Living with Legacy in Mind

Leaders who think about legacy make different choices:

Develop Rather Than Do - They spend time developing others rather than personally doing all the ministry.

Build Systems Rather Than Depend on People - They create systems that function even when key people leave.

Invest in Young Leaders - They notice emerging leaders and deliberately invest in developing them.

Keep Decision-Making Broad - Rather than centralizing all decisions, they distribute decision-making so the organization doesn't depend on them.

Prioritize Culture - They're intentional about shaping culture, knowing it persists after they leave.

Prepare for Transition - Rather than waiting until they leave, they prepare the organization for eventual leadership transition.

Mentor a Successor - If possible, they intentionally mentor someone to eventually take their place.

Document Systems - They document how things work so knowledge isn't trapped in their head.

Teach Values and Principles - They teach the values and principles underlying decisions so others can make good decisions using the same framework.

Your Next Step

If you're leading God's people, you're not alone. The God who called you equips you. The Holy Spirit empowers you. The body of Christ supports you.

Your work as a leader matters. Your character influences people. Your decisions shape organizations. Your legacy will outlive you.

But remember: you're a steward, not an owner. The church belongs to God, not to you. Your role is to faithfully care for what He's entrusted to you and prepare it for the future leaders He'll raise up.

1 Peter 5:4 (KJV):

> *"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."*

Your faithfulness as a leader will be rewarded when Christ returns. Eternity will judge what matters. But your earthly leadership matters too—it shapes God's people and advances His kingdom.

Lead well. Love the people you lead. Develop the next generation. Shape healthy culture. Leave a legacy that honors God.

APPENDIX A: LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT TOOL

Use this tool to assess your current leadership:

Character:

- ☐ I demonstrate integrity in all areas of life

- ☐ I exhibit humility and am willing to learn

- ☐ I pursue wisdom through prayer and counsel

- ☐ I face challenges with courage

- ☐ I show genuine compassion for those I lead

- ☐ I am honest in all dealings

- ☐ I follow through on commitments faithfully

- ☐ I exercise discretion with confidential information

- ☐ I genuinely repent when I fail

- ☐ I am growing spiritually

Competencies:

- ☐ I have clarity about vision and communicate it well

- ☐ I make good decisions through careful process

- ☐ I communicate clearly and listen well

- ☐ I build and develop strong teams

- ☐ I resolve conflicts redemptively

- ☐ I engage in strategic planning

- ☐ I steward finances responsibly

- ☐ I delegate effectively

- ☐ I develop emerging leaders

Relationships:

- ☐ People trust me

- ☐ I build strong relationships with my team

- ☐ I invest time in people

- ☐ People feel valued and cared for

Results:

- ☐ The organization is moving toward vision

- ☐ People are growing spiritually

- ☐ Emerging leaders are being developed

- ☐ The culture is healthy

Rate yourself on each item: 1 = not true, 5 = very true.

Focus development efforts on areas where you rated yourself 3 or below.

APPENDIX B: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Books on Leadership

- "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership" by John Maxwell

- "Good to Great" by Jim Collins

- "Leaders Eat Last" by Simon Sinek

- "The Emotionally Healthy Leader" by Peter Scazzero

Books on Biblical Leadership

- "The Master Plan of Evangelism" by Robert Coleman

- "A Call to Spiritual Reformation" by D.A. Carson

- "The Shepherd Leader" by Timothy Z. Witmer

Books on Character Development

- "The Pursuit of Holiness" by Jerry Bridges

- "The Practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence

- "Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life" by Donald S. Whitney

Organizations Supporting Leader Development

- The Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA)

- Acts 29 (Church Planting Network)

- The Gospel Coalition

- Desiring God

END OF PUBLICATION

Word Count: 35,000+ words

All Scripture: King James Version (KJV)

This comprehensive resource is provided for emerging and established church leaders at all levels. Study carefully, apply prayerfully, and develop others intentionally.