

The leaders
understand legacy
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LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENTA PAPER SUBMITTED
TOWAYNE H. LEE, D. MIN. IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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Leadership principles from the New testament

Leaders Understand Legacy.

" And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, ' Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'" (Matthew 3: 1-3).[1]Leadership by its very nature will thrust the leader into the spotlight, but a leader recognizes that he is preparing the way for another and knows when it is time to submit to the coming leader. Essentially every leader must know this principle or they will fail to have a successor in ministry. John Maxwell, internationally known leadership expert says, " I don't know what you want to accomplish in life, but I can tell you this, a legacy lives on in the people, not things." He reminds us that we must choose who will carry on our legacy.[2]Gene Wilkes challenges leaders with " you are not a success until you have a successor...Servant leaders are not a success until they mentor successors to carry on the mission."[3]Every successful leader that understands real leadership begins to identify those he can influence and lead in a greater way. John prepared the way for Jesus stepping aside at the right time and yielding the platform to him. Then Jesus affirmed that process by picking leaders to follow him. Jesus didn't have a long period of time, only three short years so he acted quickly. It is this

writer's opinion that Jesus did not randomly pick individuals as he walked by them and call them to follow him. Although we are not given much detail we can reason that one as wise as Jesus acted strategically in selecting those he would mentor as successors over the next three years. Matthew tells us that he called out those as he walked along the sea shore, but he also tells us that Jesus was going through out the area preaching and teaching (Matt. 4: 17-25). It seems reasonable that Jesus observed some that showed up at all or many of the gatherings where he was teaching and preaching, and began to see a greater than normal level of interest in his message. Those he carefully selected to disciple. Jesus' time was limited and he knew that the church must multiply so he developed leaders to step up and carry the Church forward. He understood if you simply want to add you lead followers, but if you desire to multiply you lead leaders who will lead both leaders and followers.[4]

Great Leaders Demonstrate Humility and Modesty

We can easily confuse humility with being easy to influence, being weak, or lacking courage. True leaders have a quality of modesty or humility, but it does not rob them of the strength necessary to leader. John the Baptist is a good example of this quality. John was a rough, outdoorsman that lived off the land. He was not afraid to speak plainly calling people to repent. His message was not a feel good gospel. " You brood of vipers!" he would call out to them. He required them to confess their sins. " Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River." (Matt. 3: 6-7). While preaching a strong message, a demanding message he also lifted up Jesus before the people minimizing his own role and exalting Jesus. When it came

time for him to baptize Jesus, John resisted by saying that Jesus should be baptizing him instead of him baptizing Jesus (Matt. 3: 13-14). Jim Collins says his research revealed that " level 5 leaders are a study in duality: modest and willful, humble and fearless." [5] Collins also discovered that when interviewed these good to great leaders would talk about the company and the contributions of other executives as long as we'd like but would deflect discussion about their own contributions. Even when he would press them for personal information they deflected it by comments like " I hope I'm not sounding like a big shot" or " Did I have a lot to do with it? Oh, that sounds self-serving. I don't think I can take much credit." [6] We find this same character quality in John the Baptist. He declared, " I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt. 3: 11). Later he would even say, " He must become greater; I must become less" (John 3: 30). S. Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick Fil-A restaurants and one of the most successful business men of the 20th and 21st centuries. In an interview with Robert Schuller he hesitantly talked about teaching the junior boys Sunday school class that he had taught for decades. He still lived in the same house he lived in before his great success in business. As he spoke there was a sense that he was uncomfortable talking about himself. Listening to him caused you to think, " I want to be like this man." Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Valley Community Church in southern California experienced huge success with his book *The Purpose Driven Life*. Sales are currently about 30 million copies sold outselling all non-fiction books in history second only to the Bible. He became wealthy almost overnight. In a leadership conference I heard him

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talk about paying back his salary from the church for the previous 25 years, living in the same house, driving a decade old car, and developing a foundation to fund ministry.[7]

Leaders Will Be Tested

" Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4: 1). This happened after Jesus' baptism and public announcement of his Father that he was pleased with His Son (Matt. 3: 16). What a reception into a life of ministry! When we hear the expression of our father's pleasure with us we have come to expect good things, but in Jesus' life the Holy Spirit immediately drives him into a wilderness to be tested in a one on one, mano a mano confrontation with Satan himself. John Maxwell talks about defining moments in our lives defining our leadership. He says these defining moments 1) Show us who we really are, 2) Declare to others who we are, and 3) Determine who we will become.[8]This was a defining moment in Jesus' life. He was thirty years old. It was the time for His brief earthly public ministry to begin. God chose to launch it from the arena of a spiritual battle with the enemy of the ages. God knew there would only be approximately three years for Jesus to accomplish His mission on earth so He plunged him into the crucible of intense testing while the baptismal waters were still dripping off him. I think there is always some level of testing at the beginning of leadership development, but testing never ceases to be in the mix of the ongoing process. At times it is obvious we are in a season of testing. Other times it is after the fact that we realize we have been tested and either passed or failed. The testing began with the self-denial test. Jesus fasted forty days and nights. The Scripture is very clear that at the end of

forty days and nights " he was hungry" (Matt. 4: 2). Jesus challenged disciples with this concept of denial as integral to discipleship. " If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Self-denial is not reserved for just the beginning but becomes a lifestyle for the true leader. This does not mean taking vows of poverty, but living simply so that we can also live generously and free from the encumbrances of the world such as debt that can hinder our leadership." Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you" (1 Peter 4: 12-14). Leaders are tested by being given responsibility for a period of time and rewarded according to how they handle that responsibility. Luke 19: 11

Leaders Lead in Layers

Leading the Public Layer

Immediately following the testing of Jesus and a period of encouragement and refreshing as angels came and attended him, Jesus began preaching to the crowds. He carried on John the Baptist's message of repentance. He went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching, and healing sickness and disease. Matthew records that large crowds followed him. (Matt. 4: 17-25). This is the part of leadership that many leaders relish. It possesses it rewards, strokes the ego, and demands the least accountability and personal interaction with people. In fact, there are those that for periods of time seem to successfully do the public ministry and leadership with great

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success and practically live as a recluse. However, if the private life is neglected most often the public life is impacted and possibly shortened. Most pastors spend the largest portion of their time in a week preparing for the public layer of ministry. In recent years I have re-evaluated this area of my ministry realizing that having limited time I must carve out time to also minister in the following two layers people and personal.

Leading the People Layer

" Then children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them" (Matt. 19: 13; Mark 10: 14-16). As word spread about his ministry and teaching people brought those in need of healing for Jesus to heal them (Matt. 4: 23, 8: 16, 9: 2, Mark 7: 32, Luke 18: 40). Jesus understood there was the people layer of leadership when he was called upon to get his hands " dirty" touching the sick and messed up lives of the people. We will sometimes say in jest to emphasize the messiness of ministry, " Ministry would be great if it were not for the people." Of course, we recognize that real leadership and ministry happens because of people and the needs they bring. It can be draining spiritually and emotionally and must be balanced with a personal devotional and prayer life and relationships that replenish to continually refuel and recharge our spirits.

Leading the Personal Layer

" As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ' Come, follow me,' Jesus said, ' and I will make you fishers of men.' At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from <https://assignbuster.com/the-leaders-understand-legacy-theology-religion-essay/>

there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him" (Matt. 4: 18-22). Some leaders want to only function at the public layer of leadership isolating themselves from the people layer and the messiness of life and personal layer of mentoring and making disciples. When this happens an air of superiority and exclusivity develops that is apparent in their lifestyle that may become opulent setting them on a pedestal. They are often abusers of authority. However, genuine leadership, as Jesus demonstrates, connects personally with people in our sphere of influence. In *The Leadership Challenge* the authors challenge us stating from their research that " leadership is a relationship. Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. It's the quality of this relationship that matters most when we're engaged in getting extraordinary things done." In fact, in one of their research projects examining critical variables for success in the top three jobs in large organizations they discovered the number one success factor to relationships with subordinates.[9]During his four years in office President Lincoln spent most of his time among the troops. He actually took charge as commander-in-chief of some military operations and actually came under fire on at least one occasion. He would not keep a safe distance between him and the people making it very difficult to protect him. For Lincoln, casual contact with his subordinates was as important as formal gatherings, if not more so. He preferred, whenever possible, to interact with people when they were in a more relaxed, less pressure-packed environment.[10]People are

the most valuable resource that we have. If we neglect contact and leadership among them we do so to our own peril as enduring leaders.

Leaders Must Be Equippers

" It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11). As spiritual leaders, especially as pastors in the local church, we are the gifts of Christ serving the gifted in his church. Certainly the professional ministry is not exempt from doing the works of service, but our more important assignment is to prepare or equip the members of the body of Christ to do the work of the ministry or service. This is equivalent to a culture shift in many churches today because the mindset is that we hire church staff and pastors to do the work of ministry for the church. The model is given in Acts 6 when there was a need among the widows for ministry. Peter and the leaders had apparently been looked to and expected to fulfill that ministry of serving tables to care for the Greek widows. The Twelve gathered everyone together and made it clear it would not be right for them to neglect the Word of God in order to serve in this way. They appointed what we identify as the first deacons in the Church. This has evolved today in many churches into a board of deacons who have administrative responsibilities to oversee finances and facilities. Ministry has once again been placed in the hands of the professional clergy.

Leaders Equip through Instructing and Teaching

In Matthew 5 Jesus looked around and saw the crowds gathering. The Bible says that he then " went up on a mountainside and sat down. Then his disciples came to him, and he began to teach them" (Matt. 5: 1) There's no way to know for sure the timeline here, but it seems apparent there was not a long period of time between Matthew 4: 18 and 5: 1. The detail that might be overlooked here is in the verse quoted above. " His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them" (Matt. 5: 1). Most accounts of the sermon on the mount, or Matthew chapters 5-7, leave the impression that Jesus went up on the mountainside, sat down and taught the crowds. It seems they may have been scattered around listening in...perhaps...but he taught " them," his disciples. Here is what I see in that. Jesus saw the size of the task and knew the only hope was to multiply Himself. So, he began the process of turning this motley crew into powerful men of God beginning with the path to real happiness through the beatitudes. He continued with instructions that we would call spiritual disciplines, prayer, giving, fasting, trusting and not worrying, and many other requirements of the disciple life. One of the areas of weakness revealed by a recent consultation is the lack of leaders in our church. We have many workers, but not many leaders who leader others. The reason we are short on leaders is the lack of consistent intentional instruction followed by involvement putting the knowledge into action. At the top of our priorities for action in the coming year is developing a plan to develop and grow leaders beginning with the staff both full time and part time. A big piece of the plan for staff development will be requiring them to have a group of growing leaders that they are developing alongside their own development. Paul, wrote to Timothy and instructed him. " Timothy, my <https://assignbuster.com/the-leaders-understand-legacy-theology-religion-essay/>

son, I give this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith" (1 Tim. 1: 18). He " gives this instruction." Then he proceeds coaching him in prayer, who to pray for, what kinds of prayer to offer, the purpose and effect of prayer, and the focus of prayer, " one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"(1 Tim 2: 1-6). Paul, left nothing to chance as he even instructed Timothy on women's dress, modesty, and demeanor (1 Tim. 2: 9-15). He commends Timothy to the Word of God that he describes as profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2Tim. 3: 16)

Leaders Equip by Doing Ministry Together

In Luke's gospel is the record of feeding the five thousand men plus women and children (Luke 9: 10-17). This is a prime example of going the next step beyond instruction and bringing them along while ministry is done and they watch. Now, they get their hands in the mixture. Jesus walked them through the process of organizing the crowd. Then he placed the bread and fish in the disciples hands so they could experience the miracle personally rather than simply watch. I can imagine what it must have felt like to watch the bread and fish just keep showing up in the hand as they fed a hundred, then a thousand, or more. I remember the first time I prayed with someone and they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit after watching my pastor and others encourage people into this gift. I remember the first real miraculous moment of praying for someone and they were healed of cancer after having been told they had only two weeks to live. I remember times of stepping out

on faith as a young pastor and seeing God come through incredibly. In Acts 16 Paul picked up Timothy and took him along on a ministry journey to expose him to ministry. Later Timothy would help a church in Paul's absence (1 Cor. 4: 17). We must identify leaders and potential leaders giving them proper time and training and the release them into ministry. The difficulty is that this requires times on the part of the leader and goes another leadership principle that leader's must be willing to sacrifice. My formative years were spent in a very small church. My pastor may have lacked a lot in communication skills and administrative skills. He was excellent when it came to being among the people, particularly the young men in the church and those who felt a call to ministry. He had never been to Bible school so looking back I can see many flaws in his preaching both style and content. He did not know how to prepare a message and research a text to always preach it accurately. He knew how to create ministry opportunities for the up and coming preacher boys. We had jail services, nursing home services, street corner services, radio broadcasts, and he gave us opportunity in the pulpit regularly. He may not have had good methodology and content but God blessed his effort to mentor us, spending time with us, taking us to district councils, and other meeting and half dozen men are still in ministry today from that era. I tell that to emphasize that while excellence is a value we should embrace it can also become an excuse for doing nothing. We need to start where we are and not wait for perfection. God will use what we have, give us more, and raise up leaders.

Leaders Empower Those They Develop

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve--designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons" (Mark 3: 13-15)." When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick...So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere" (Luke 9: 1-2, 6). "

Jesus had called these disciples, he had spent many hours instructing them, many more hours with them watching and observing and even participating in ministry with him. Now, it was time to send them out with their training, practice, preparation, and encouragement. Jesus modeled for us what we must do in ministry. Whether it is our egos that holds on to ministry so that we are the ones with " the power" or whether it is fear that they will not " do it right" we must identify, train, and release leaders to do ministry. It is wrong for God to place gifts in our church that we do not use. Jesus empowered with authority. The Greek words here are *dunamis* for the word " power" and *exousia* for the word " authority". On the day Jesus left this earth to the ministry of those he had appointed he spoke to the crowd standing there Mt. Olivet and told them to go back to Jerusalem and wait for an empowerment for ministry. He told them that all authority (*exousia*) was given to him and that they would receive power (*dunamis*) when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

Leaders Reproduce

" And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim. 2: 2). Timothy was Paul's disciple, the one who raised him up as a leader. He equipped Timothy as they traveled together. At the right time Paul felt Timothy was ready and he left him to lead the church in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1: 3). Now it was time to take his leadership to the next level, the level of reproducing leaders who will reproduce leaders. How do we encourage and accelerate this process in our church? We must first grow the leaders that we have more effectively helping them identify their strengths, build on them, and minimize their weakness. A simple growth plan of reading, listening, and developing and being accountable for a devotional life to feed the spirit will go a long way. Second, requiring the same of each leader duplicating that with a small group of leaders they are developing. Reproduction is natural where health exists. When health is lacking the tendency is to make it happen artificially much like difficult reproductive challenges with couples. In an organization it get expensive and often ineffective as with challenging childbirth situations. So we must focus on getting healthy with a few. They may mean at the least moving some people around in the organization to find a place they can be more productive, but may also require moving some out that are a hindrance to the reproductive process.

Leaders will Face Rejection

Jesus experienced rejection. " If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first" (John 15: 18). " But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ' They hated me without reason'" (John 18: 25). Ultimately he

experienced the ultimate humiliation of death on the cross. The Apostle Paul and other disciples and apostles certainly dealt with rejection. By Paul's own testimony he was beaten, shipwrecked, stoned and left for dead, and finally imprisoned on numerous occasions. In fact, most of his letters were produced from captivity. We tend to forget these things as we go through our light suffering compared to all they endured. Even closer to home is the fact of the suffering church around the world. People die daily for their faith. They are arrested, beaten, starved, and treated inhumane but they remain firm in their faith. All they would have to do to stop the pain is renounce their faith and embrace another religion, but they stand firm. Not everyone is going to like you. In fact, Jesus warned us to take notice if we are ever in the place that "all men speak well of you, for that is how their father treated the false prophets" (Luke 6: 25)." Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep" (Luke 6: 20-25). These are not exactly the words we wish to hear, but they are Jesus' words. James says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds" (1: 2). He doesn't tell us to go pick any fights but the truth is that we will not be accepted by the world. In the United States of America we have enjoyed a long season of relative ease.

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Only in recent years are we seeing the rise of opposition to the Christian faith. It could be that the opposition will increase in coming days. We should not despair. The small discomfort is not nearly as painful as others have faced and do face on a daily basis.

Leaders Pray for OTHER Leaders.

Jesus had a disciplined prayer life, and I am sure a part of his regular prayers were his disciples he was developing into next generation leaders. Mark records, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1: 35). Jesus discerned Peter's lack of understanding and saw a fall coming. He said, "I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 21: 35). According to Hebrews Jesus still prays for his disciples. "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Heb. 7: 25). In John 17 Jesus prays for his disciples. As Jesus prayed for his disciples he prayed for protection (v. 11), he prayed that they would not be taken out but be protected from the evil one (v. 15), he prayed they would be sanctified, made holy, set apart by the truth of the word of God (v. 17), he prayed for unity, that they would be one and unified even as God is unified and one with the Son and for the specific purpose that through this unity the world may believe that God sent Jesus (vv. 20-23), and he prayed that Christ might dwell in them (v. 25). What a wonderful prayer! Wouldn't it be powerful if every leader who is developing leaders would daily pray this prayer for all the leaders under them? To pray for unity, protection, holiness, the indwelling Christ alive in them and an undeniable testimony that God sent Jesus to save His people from their sins.

Let us not just think about how wonderful it might be and put this simple truth into practice and then expect the supernatural." Servant leaders pray for those they equip for mission. This is the unique nature of Christian leadership. Leaders in the church know that their power comes from God, not themselves. They also know that they are most effective when others support them in prayer. Leaders on mission with Christ are helpless without the prayers of others. These prayers may be all that keeps them standing in times of struggle and conflict." [11]

Leaders Pray for MORE Leaders.

In Matthew 9 Jesus gave a prayer directive to his disciples that for us today heed as well. As Jesus was going through all the towns and villages teaching, preaching, and healing it seems he was overwhelmed with the immensity of the task. " When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ' The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field'" (Matt. 9: 36-38). Leaders reproduce, leaders pray for the leaders they are developing, and then as leaders we need the vision and insight of the Lord into our harvest fields. We must pray for more workers. We can't do it alone. The command is simple. Just ask the Lord of the harvest for workers, laborers

A Leader Must Lead Himself First.

" Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, <https://assignbuster.com/the-leaders-understand-legacy-theology-religion-essay/>

which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Tim. 4: 11-16) Paul was simply urging Timothy, " You must lead yourself before you can lead others." John Maxwell was asked at a conference, " What has been your greatest challenge as a leader?" His response might have been surprising. He said, " Leading me! That's always been my greatest challenge as a leader." It is true for all of us. Leading ourselves is a challenge and yet done well it may bring the greatest reward of all. Thomas Watson, former IBM chairman said, " Nothing so conclusively proves a man's ability to lead others, as what he does from day to day to lead himself." " When the leader doesn't inspect himself the people don't respect him." [12] It is easy for self-leadership to take a back seat to all the other leadership demands in our life. In *Courageous Leadership*, Bill Hybels cites the work of leadership expert Dee Hock concerning 360 degree leadership and how much time should be devoted to each area of leadership in our lives. He talks about leading South (those below us or in our realm of direct responsibility), East and West (lateral leadership), North (leading those above me), and then self-leadership. His recommendation is that we devote 50 per cent of our time and the best of our ability to leading ourselves. He contends by doing this " the ethical, moral, and spiritual elements of management are inescapable." Leading myself I hold myself to a higher standard of accountability than I do others. [13] So, I must check my personal leadership and maintain my personal devotional life, my personal spiritual life, my closest relationships must be protected. I must quantify what 50 per

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cent of my time spent in self-leadership looks like and be certain I am devoting adequate time to self-leadership.

Great Leaders are Great Listeners.

In Matthew as Jesus was being baptized the Father spoke from heaven affirming his Son and his love for his Son then said, " Listen to him!" As disciples/leaders we must listen carefully to the voice of God. We cannot allow the noise and distraction of the world to drown out God's voice. Repeatedly, in the Gospels Jesus would say before telling a parable, " Listen!" (Matt. 21: 33; Mark 4: 3; Luke 9: 44). In Luke 8: 18 Jesus cautioned " consider carefully how you listen." In The Leadership Challenge we learn that the best leaders are great listeners. They listen carefully to what other people have to say, and how they feel. They have to ask good (and often tough) questions, be open to ideas other than their own, and even lose arguments in favor of the common good. They listen carefully for quiet whisperings and attend to subtle cues. They get a sense of what people want, what they value, and what they dream about. Sensitivity to others is no trivial skill; rather, it is a truly precious human ability.[14]In Master Leaders George Barna " Going back to my observations of successful leaders, I found that they really wanted to connect on a personal level with people, which basically meant listening. They were good listeners. A lot of leaders who are good communicators communicate the vision and what they want, and that's important. But I found that the differential was the ones who could listen when people were disappointed in them and when people had different ideas than they did, and were able to understand the other point of view. They tended to draw people out who had problems that couldn't be

solved, and they didn't gloss over the bad news. They really connected with the difficult stuff people were dealing with." [15] In Leadership Gold, Maxwell quotes Steve Sample from his book *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership*, "Many leaders are terrible listeners; they actually think talking is more important than listening. But contrarian leaders know it is better to listen first and talk later. And when they listen, they do it so artfully." Sample may think is wise and intelligent, but it is also Biblical. James challenges us with "everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1: 19). Barna goes on to state that many leaders think they're too busy to be bothered—they've got a business to run. But the research shows you will meet more goals and quotas if you listen well, and you will miss more opportunities and overlook problems you need to deal with if you don't listen well. [16] It was said of Abraham Lincoln that he possessed the quality of being able to listen to people and even be guided by them and not be threatened himself. He was known to listen to his subordinates' suggestions and ideas. If he thought they made sense and if the suggested course of action matched his own thoughts and ideas he would empower them to move forward believing it was their idea alone taking none of the credit for himself. [17] You can only do that if you listen to others around you. Listening is the easiest way to understand the needs of people who are in ministry with you. You don't need complicated report forms and status reports to know what others need to complete their task. Simply ask the question, "What do you need to do your job?" Then listen. Listening is a discipline. Leaders who are goal oriented miss opportunities to serve when they forget to listen to those they are leading. Listening is time-consuming but essential

to a leader's success. Listening is hard work, but it leads to opportunities to serve those whom you have recruited.[18]

There is No Real Leadership without Sacrifice

In the context of the church today leadership and discipleship are synonymous. Some think of a disciple as anyone who believes Jesus is the Son of God and that he died for our sins and rose from the dead. That is not the case. Discipleship requires a level of commitment many in the evangelical world are not willing to take. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke Jesus is saying, " If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16: 24; Mark 8: 34; Luke 9: 23). Two things in this challenge speak very loudly to us. First, the challenge is to deny ourselves. In a world of instant gratification this is absolutely countercultural. Second, we are required to take " our" cross. Not Jesus' cross, but our cross. The cross in that culture did not create images of the beautiful crosses we hang on our walls or wear as jewelry today. When Jesus spoke of a cross they saw a repulsive, blood stained cross where criminals were tortured and executed. No warm, sentimental feelings were generated by the thought of taking up a personal cross. The criminals were required, as was Jesus, to carry their own cross, and here Jesus requires a follower to take up " his cross." John Maxwell says, " For everything you gain, you give up something." [19] We must be willing to sacrifice some personal pleasures and comforts in order to experience the maximum in our relationship with Jesus Christ. I believe God values sacrifice, but sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice is useless too. The prophet declared that obedience is better than sacrifice. The reason for that is sacrifice often becomes my willing offering so it is not

really a sacrifice. Obedience requires a response to God with his requests and his desires.

Leaders Understand the Importance of Timing

" But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons" (Gal. 4: 4-5)." After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: " Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you" (John 17: 1) Also in John 13: 1 just before the Passover feast Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting (Acts 2: 1-2)." For I am being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure" (2 Tim. 4: 6). Timing is everything someone has said. There was a right time for Jesus arrival as God in the flesh. There was a right time for his departure. There was a right time for Paul's departure. The amazing thing is that the information regarding time was not a secret. They knew when the right time was. We can know timing if we will listen to others, to the Spirit of God, to the environment around us. In the Old Testament it was said of the men of Isachar that they " understood the times and knew what Israel should do" (1 Chron. 12: 32). In my experience discerning the timing of God is more connected to waiting than any other single thing. There is, of course, prayer, the Word of God, the trusted voices of others, but most of the time it is an issue of patience and waiting on God. Typically, we are in a rush, but we must remember that God is not connected to our system of timing. I tend to

rush the process and in doing so miss the full blessing of God because I want it out of the oven before it is done. The human tendency is to overestimate what can be accomplished in the short term and way underestimate what can be accomplished through patient waiting over the long term.

Great Leaders Finish Well

" For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 6-8). It is one thing to start a race and another to finish it. People who came in last place in races have been applauded and celebrated because under difficult circumstances they finished the race. In 1992 Derek Redmond injured himself severely in an Olympic 400 meter race. As the rest of the field passed him by he kept running or more like hobbling. His father saw him and forced his way out of the stands to finish the race with him while holding him up. Very few remember who won the race that day, but Derek Redmond's finish will not be forgotten. A key to finishing well is endurance. I have watched many run out of the endurance factor years before they quit. Their church or organization suffered while they just marked time to retirement. In *Courageous Leadership*, Hybels gives four thoughts than can help develop and maintain endurance over the long haul. He starts with *Make Your Calling Sure and Stay Focused*. I came to my present pastorate just over nine years ago. It was a challenging situation, but then I like a challenge. The difference is that I am not as young as when I

started pastoring. I came with high hopes, but encountered unexpected challenges. About 4 or 5 years in I was beginning to question God and question myself. I needed to refocus. Often when we hit these walls God is gracious and steps in to speak in unique ways. We had an unexpected visitor drop by during staff meeting. She said the Lord told her to deliver a note to the pastor. She didn't need to speak to me personally, but just wanted to leave the note. She didn't know any of us and had never been by the church before. When we came to LIFEchurch we came with a strong prophetic word that God was going to do give us supernatural growth and I would see more fruit in the latter years of my ministry than in all the other years combined. The note she left was hand written on a 3" x 3" post it note. I am reading it now as I write. " To the pastor of LIFEchurch, the word of the Lord is Promise. He will make good the promise toward you. It's an Isaac promise. Do not resort to Hagar, the Lord will bring about Sarah's joy. It was what I needed to refocus and make my calling sure. Hybels second thought is Enduring By Developing The Courage to Change. He goes on to talk about Changing the Pace of My Life, Changing How I Do Ministry, Making Difficult Personal Changes, and Handling the Things You Can't Change. His third thought is Enduring By Discovering Safe People. Even Jesus had an inner circle of three disciples. Paul speaks in Galatians 6: 2 of bearing each others burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ. We need that safe person to help us through trying places and seasons. His fourth and final thought is Enduring With An Eternal Perspective. It certainly helps to minimize the petty temporal things that we will have to confront till Jesus takes us home.

Great Leaders Have the Heart of a Servant

" Jesus called them together and said, ' You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many'"(Matthew 20: 25-28). The principle of servant leadership has become not just a message of the church but message in the business world. Paul describes himself as a servant or more literally, a slave. " Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible" (1 Cor. 9: 19). Being a servant leader is not equal to being a people pleaser. " Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1: 10)." Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1: 1). Because a great leader will have the heart of a servant he will not feel he is above any task of service needed. The present challenge is that soon the leader could be so consumed with the function of ministry he has recruited and trained others for that he becomes ineffective in leading. There is a delicate balance that must be carefully maintained and constantly adjusted. It is about the heart of the leader and the compassion of a leader's heart not how much physical labor he can do. I think it is good and make it my practice to show up for various ministries that some leaders might absent themselves from. They are great opportunities for fellowship and connection, and it makes me a leader they want to follow. For example, on <https://assignbuster.com/the-leaders-understand-legacy-theology-religion-essay/>

the summer missions trip I put on a tool belt with best of the crew and worked alongside them. Influence and authority actually rise out of becoming a servant of Christ and his church. In the Biblical culture a servant or slave was often given great authority to conduct business for his owner/employer as a trusted representative. The picture of the servant is not a beaten down, ultra meek, never making eye contact image of a man. In contrast it is someone who has proven themselves faithful and has been granted a level of trust far exceeding just an employee. Remember Joseph was purchased as a slave and soon was trusted with all of Potiphar's business.

Leaders are Visionaries

When Jesus walked through the towns and villages and was so moved with compassion that he called upon his disciples to pray for help he saw something they did not see. He saw a great harvest, a great ingathering of souls. All they saw was a messed up mass of humanity that seemed to form this endless line of incredible need. Jesus saw workers reaching people. Sometimes vision seems so big it is ridiculous, even unreachable. Matthew 28 and Mark 16 give an example of a leader with incredible vision. Jesus' vision was an army of disciples going into every corner of the world preaching the Gospel "to all creation," laying hands on the sick and seeing them healed, casting out demons, and when the world tries to harm you with poisons or otherwise it will not be affective. But don't just preach to every creature, baptize the believers, make disciples of them.

Leaders Know How to Unpack the Vision

When Jesus fed the multitudes he had great vision, but he didn't unload it on them all at one time. He took it in small steps. He didn't just blurt out, "Well, <https://assignbuster.com/the-leaders-understand-legacy-theology-religion-essay/>

I am going to show you bunch of faithless chunks of deadwood how to feed this multitude. No, he asked for the bread and fish. He blessed it. He had the people sit down in an orderly fashion. He distributed the bread and fish to the disciples, and then he had them distribute it to the people. He led them in simple steps that anyone could follow. At the end I am sure he sat back with a smile of satisfaction as he watch them gather up the leftovers and there was more than twelve times the food remaining more than they had started with. Hybels defines vision as " a picture of the future that produces passion." [20] Malphurs defines vision as " a clear, challenging picture of the future of the church, as leaders believe that it can and must be." [21] The mission of the church is given by Jesus. It is what we call the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. The vision is what the church looks like carrying out that mission. Mission is an issue of accepting the responsibility for it as Christ gave it. It is not changeable. Vision must be discovered. Vision is the uniqueness of a local body being discovered, that one thing that they do better than anybody and those things they are trying to do that they are not good at and need to stop. Usually when a church is in decline it is because the vision has been blurred over time. Vision should be changeable. Not mission or values but vision can change with time, circumstances, etc. Vision is simply the motivation to keep moving toward a goal. Without vision we know the mission but have no strategy. Thus the Proverb writer tells us " where there is no vision the people perish" (Prov. 29: 18 KJV). The Message paraphrase says, " If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; but when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed."

Leaders Understand the Power of Character

In *Becoming Leaders*, the author states, Your vision for ministry, your strategy, even your ability to communicate the Bible, is all less important than your character. People don't follow the ministry's mission or vision statement—at least not for long. They follow you, the leader. Only after they're convinced that you're a person of good character who is worthy of leading will they follow the mission and vision you espouse.[22] This could actually come under self-leadership, but it is so important it demands individual focus. Right away Jesus went to issues of character when he climbed the mountain and they followed in Matthew 5. He talked about humility, compassion, a desire for righteous living, mercy, a pure heart, a bridge builder, doing right even when you are persecuted for it. These are contained in the Beatitudes. Then he talks about being salt and light. Salt is a preservative. It's character that drives us to preserve values of a holy life. Continuing his message Jesus talks about murder, adultery, divorce, the value of an oath of commitment, loving your enemies, fasting, giving, and on and on. The point being that Jesus did not avoid issues of character when developing leaders. Andy Stanley in *The Next Generation Leader* notes that it is possible to lead without character. "But character is what makes you a leader worth following." [23] Stanley defines character as "the will to do what's right even when it's hard." [24] Two situations in leadership that are character driven will come to every leader more than likely. If you are fortunate enough to lead a church or organization that grows rapidly as you grow there will be moments that the temptation to forget character and those values that have guided you will arise. The other situation is the opposite. When your church or organization doesn't grow fast the temptation

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is there to compromise character thinking it might get you down the road a little quicker. Truthfully, it might land you in the street without a place to lead. A third possibility is realizing that sticking to character might slow you down. Now, that's where the temptation rises to another level. The question to answer is do you want to be a leader worth following or have a large church or organization that can crumble in a moment? Stanley says, " Every leader wears two badges; one visible, one invisible. The visible badge is your position and title. The invisible badge is your moral authority." He goes on to note that that your position might gather a few people that will give you a hand, but moral authority will motivate people to give you their hearts.[25]