

## The Leader in Each of Us

When we think of leaders, we think of those who are in charge. Spiritually, we think of Christ as our head, numerous Biblical examples and godly elders, preachers and teachers as leaders. This defines the term in its traditional way. But there is a sense in which all of us as Christians are called upon to be leaders. In this lesson, that is what I want to address.

### I. We are all to be leaders

- a. What is a leader? The AHD gives several definitions including: 1. One who leads or guides; 2. One who is in charge or in command of others; 4. One who has influence or power...; etc.
- b. What we typically associate with leadership is one who is entrusted with OR wields authority over others. We describe these as positional leaders. BUT at some level we are all to be leaders.
  - i. In the definition as Christians we are all: 1) To guide others by our influence; 2) We are in charge of our demeanor toward others; 4) We have influence.
  - ii. There are leadership qualities that we all need to possess as Christians. With influence we can be leading in an INDIRECT way. You may not be giving orders or in charge of someone else (and not qualified), but people are watching and learning from you. The decisions you make and the actions you take can influence others.
  - iii. Consider this quote: “*Leadership happens any time we influence the thinking, behavior or development of another person.*”<sup>1</sup> In that sense we are ALL leaders.
- c. As Christians, we are called to be different.
  - i. Romans 12:2 calls for us to NOT conform to this world, but to be transformed.
  - ii. 1 Peter 4:1-4 encourages us to follow the example of Jesus. He notes we have lived like the world long enough. He also notes that as we live righteously, they “*think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation.*”
  - iii. Being a faithful Christian will mean you are different from the world. We are the minority – Matthew 7:13-14 – the way to heaven is “narrow” and “difficult” and traveled by few. 2 Corinthians 6:17 calls for us to come out from the (influence of) world and be separate.
  - iv. By being different you will stand out. BUT that can have an influence on some for good – cf. Matthew 13:33 – the kingdom of heaven is like leaven.
- d. The word “minister” while used at times to describe leaders (Colossians 1:7, 23, 4:7, 1 Thessalonians 3:2, etc.), it applies to all of us. The primary Greek word means a servant. The word deacon is a derivative of the word. When we serve others (Hebrews 6:10, 1 Peter 4:10-11, Galatians 5:13 – different Greek word), we are being an influence.
- e. Spiritual leaders are also servants. Cf. 2 Timothy 2:24, “a servant of the Lord.” What qualifies them spiritually is that they do care about others. AND most of the qualities associated with spiritual leaders are to be part of every Christian’s life. And in that sense, we are doing what leaders do, just without the position.

### II. Ways we all lead

- a. By example – Matthew 5:13, 16, Philippians 2:15. We are reminded that people are always watching. Whether for good or bad, someone is watching and learning from you (AND you are learning from others). By your example, you have the opportunity to influence them.

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<sup>1</sup> Hamilton, Keith. Developing Principled Leaders. Truth Publications, Inc. Athens, AL © 2022. Pg. 9.

- b. With integrity – the Bible is clear that we are to be people of integrity. Integrity means that we will not fold under pressure (think of the “integrity” of an aircraft or ship).
- i. Proverbs 10:9, *He who walks with integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will become known.* Proverbs 11:3, *The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.*
  - ii. 2 Peter 1:5 – virtue (moral excellence – NASB, LSB) is a foundational quality upon which our faith is built.
  - iii. Our world desperately needs to see people of integrity.
  - iv. When we stand up for what is right – even (especially) when others are often emboldened or encouraged to stand with us. They may even change because of what they observe in you.
- c. By being grounded in God’s word – the more you know the greater impact your influence can have on others. 2 Timothy 2:15 – we are to rightly divide (handle accurately) the word of truth.
- i. By defending our faith/teaching – 1 Peter 3:15 calls for us to be ready to give a defense for the hope within us.
  - ii. When we are grounded, we are not easily swayed by error – Ephesians 4:12-15. And even when others follow error, you stand firm (cf. 2 Timothy 4:2-4).
  - iii. When we stand up for the truth, especially in a “hostile” environment.
- d. By doing what needs to be done – a good quality that is desperately needed is one who sees something that needs to be done and does it.
- i. Titus 3:14, *And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*
  - ii. Ephesians 4:16 notes that the body of Christ will grow when every part does its share.
  - iii. Far too many are content to let others do everything, or expect others to do it. The result is often things go undone.
  - iv. However, at times, when someone gets to work that can motivate others to get to work as well. IN encourage you to recall our recent study of Nehemiah as they together rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days (Neh. 6:15). Neh. 4:6 notes that the people “had a mind to work.” This came after they were motivated and saw others doing what needed to be done.
- e. By serving others – like many other actions, serving often motivates others to serve as well. It wins good will and respect, when done with proper motives.
- i. Jesus taught His apostles the importance of servant leadership. John 13:12-15 as He washed their feet, He was teaching them to serve others. Matthew 20:26-28 – Jesus taught the lesson and came to serve and there is no greater leader than Him.
  - ii. Through love serve one another – Galatians 5:13.
  - iii. 1 Peter 5:2-4 as the work of elders was described, they are not dictators but examples.
- f. By following others. No one living on earth is a supreme ruler. We ALL answer to someone. Even positional leaders have to answer to someone. A good Christian is ALWAYS willing to follow others and learn.
- i. Let us not forget that we are ALL disciples. Disciples are followers – John 8:31, cf. Matthew 28:19-20.
  - ii. We are to submit to “positional” leaders. Hebrews 13:7, 17 – elders.
  - iii. When we humbly submit to leaders, even if would prefer to do things another way, we are setting an example to others and can prevent many problems.

- iv. Ephesians 5:21, “*submitting to one another in the fear of God.*”
- g. By caring – the idea of Christian love is that we care. We ought to care about encouraging others, loving them, etc.
  - i. Philippians 2:3 – thinking about others, rather than just ourselves.
  - ii. 1 Thessalonians 5:14- warn, comfort, uphold, be patient.
  - iii. Hebrews 12:12-13 strengthen the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees...
  - iv. Galatians 6:1-2 – restore the overtaken and bear one another’s burdens.
  - v. When we care, we might keep someone else from giving up. We let them know they are of value. We might encourage them to do more or make correction for failings. We might open a door to teach them.
- h. By not giving up –
  - i. The Bible is clear that we must continue to endure.
  - ii. Galatians 6:9, *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*
  - iii. Hebrews 12:1-2 – we are to run with endurance the race set before us. 1 Corinthians 9:24- we run to win the prize.
  - iv. Hebrews 3:14, *For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,*
  - v. Often when we endure, we motivate others to endure. Furthermore, IF we give up ourselves, how will we be able to influence others.
  - vi. Effective leaders know that they may fail from time to time. It is not about the failure, but what you do AFTER you fail. You can choose to stay down and give up, or you choose to get up and move forward. Philippians 3:13-14 – forgetting those things behind and reaching forward, press toward the goal.

We could add other qualities to these. And I have not suggested anything new in this lesson. The bottom line is this: ***If we are living the Christian life to its fullest, we are going to be influencing others in many different ways.*** We will be “leading them” to Christ. We will set ourselves apart from most and hopefully we become an example worthy of imitation. And that opens many doors. What about you? How is your life impacting others for good? Think about it!