

A portrait of Dr. Myles Munroe, a Black man with a goatee, smiling. He is wearing a light-colored dress shirt and a red striped tie. His hands are clasped in front of him. He is wearing a watch on his left wrist and a ring on his left hand.

DR. MYLES
MUNROE

DISCOVER THE LEADER YOU WERE MEANT TO BE!

BECOMING A
LEADER

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B E C O M I N G A
LEADER

D R. M Y L E S
MUNROE



WHITAKER
HOUSE

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Becoming a Leader

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Dedication

To my darling wife, Ruth, who is the essence of love, a personal source of encouragement and inspiration, and a cause for my passionate commitment to excellence in leadership.

To my daughter and son, Charisa and Chairó (Myles Jr.), who continually provide incentive for the exercise and development of my leadership potential.

To the leader in every follower. To the millions who have resolved that they will always be subjugated to the whims of others.

To all the individuals whom I have had the privilege and opportunity to inspire to strive to be all they were born to be.

To the millions of great men and women who presently occupy the wombs of their mothers, children destined to change the world and become the leaders of destiny.

And to the Third World peoples around the world whose potentials were, and, in some cases, still are, oppressed and suppressed by the opinions and judgments of others.

To all aspiring leaders for whom life holds such promise.

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This work is a synergistic product of many minds. I am forever grateful to the inspiration and wisdom of the many great men and women who, through their commitment and passion for releasing their potential, have left a legacy to motivate me and my generation.

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For the development and production of this book, I feel a deep sense of gratitude to:

My wonderful wife, Ruth, and our children for their patience, understanding, and support during my many travels and involvements outside the home. You make it easy to fulfill God's will.

My close circle of friends, pastors, and board members: Richard Pinder (my friend and in-law indeed), Henry Francis, Dave Burrows, Wesley Smith, and Jay Mullings (the gentle giant whose companionship on the road for many years of travel has contributed to the releasing of my potential). Your loyalty

and commitment to the vision can take credit for most of what God has done in my life.

The best friends in the ministry anyone could ever have: Turnel Nelson, Bertril Baird, Peter Morgan, Fuschia Pickett, Ezekiel Guti, Fred Price, Allen Langstaff, Jerry Horner, Kingsley Fletcher, and Richard Dementte.

And finally, to the Source and Supplier of all potential, the Omnipotent One, the Father and Lord of all creation; His Son, my elder Brother, Jesus Christ; and my personal Counselor, the Holy Spirit. Thanks for the privilege of serving You.

Preface

Good leadership is indispensable.

I believe that trapped inside you is an undiscovered leader of great value to your generation!

Are leaders born, made, developed, created, cultivated, or products of circumstances? Is leadership reserved only for an elite few, a specific gender, people of a particular social stratum, or those of advanced intelligence? Is leadership the prerogative of a rare breed; is it a by-product of the superior DNA of a super-race? Or can anyone from anywhere at any time emerge as a leader? In some form, these questions

have been around for thousands of years. This book is written to challenge the limitations of your conception of your own abilities and hopefully ignite in you the conviction that you were born to lead.

The world is filled with followers, supervisors, and managers but very few leaders.

History has produced a legacy of distinguished and outstanding leaders who have impacted the world and furthered the development of humanity. They were both men and women, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, trained and untrained. They came from every race, color, language, and culture of the

world. Many of them had no ambition to become great or renowned. In fact, most of the individuals who have greatly affected humanity have been simple people who were thrust into circumstances that demanded the hidden qualities of their characters, or they were driven by personal, passionate goals.

Leaders are ordinary people who accept or are placed under extraordinary circumstances that bring forth their latent potential, producing character that inspires the confidence and trust of others. Our world today is in desperate need of such individuals.

In his renowned play Julius Caesar,

William Shakespeare wrote, “There is a tide in the affairs of men.” With these words, he was expressing his observation that the waves of history have an influence on our lives. It’s as if we as individuals and nations are caught up in a tide of providential events. There have been eras in the history of the world in which multiple tide-like influences have impacted our civilizations and cultures at nearly the same time. These historical incidents are known as “crossroads of history.” I would suggest that we are now at a confluence of historic tides.

The twentieth century saw perhaps more distressing developments than any previous century, including devastating

wars, monstrous new weapons, countless natural disasters, and fatal diseases. It was also possibly the most unpredictable, politically interesting, and revolutionary of any century in history. In the last several decades, a relatively short span of time, the world has experienced many remarkable changes in the realms of science, technology, medicine, and space exploration, as well as hundreds of other so-called advancements. We must agree that our generation lives in a swirling tide of events, dreams, promises, threats, and changing ideas about the present and the future. The conditions of our world press the present generation to ask anew, "Why am I here? What is the purpose of

life? Why are life and reality the way they are?”

The leaders of our time are bewildered when they are called upon to explain why our world is the way it is or to suggest a direction for the future. Many people in positions of public trust confess that they are just trying to keep the lid on, and others have abandoned even that hope.

Added to this bleak environment is the painful reality that over the past few decades, a dramatic leadership vacuum seems to have developed throughout the world. In nearly every realm, there is an absence of quality, effective leadership. In the political, civic, economic, social,

and spiritual realms, recent events indicate that previous generations have produced weak leaders who fade in the presence of true leadership and leave our present generation in this same leadership vacuum.

The disgrace and fall of renowned Christian leaders, the exposure of corruption and unethical activities among political and business leaders, and the covert conspiracies of governments betraying their own people serve as evidence that this lack of quality leadership is affecting almost every sphere of our lives. We urgently need competent leaders.

Where do we look for such leaders?

While we often think of leaders as “out there,” we need to look within ourselves. Each one of us is a leader who can affect the people and institutions in our own spheres of influence. When we begin with ourselves, we will naturally have an effect on the lives of others.

It is in this environment that we, as stewards of this present age, must face the challenge of developing, training, releasing, and reproducing a generation of leaders who can secure the future for our children and their children. Becoming a Leader is designed to contribute a solution to this challenge. It is my hope that you will be inspired to respond to the call of destiny and

responsibility and to awaken and develop the potential leader within you.

A good leader not only knows where he is going, but he can inspire others to go with him.

Introduction

Great leaders do not desire to lead but to serve.

There is leadership potential in every person. Despite this universal latent ability, very few individuals realize this power, and fewer still have responded effectively to the call. As a result, our nations, societies, and communities are suffering from an astounding leadership void.

Where are the genuine leaders? Where are the individuals who are willing to take responsibility for the present situation and conditions in the world? Who is willing to accept the challenge, to face it head-on with

integrity, character, and a commitment to execute righteous judgment for a better world? Our homes are crying out for leadership. Our youth are begging for leaders. The church is suffering from an absence of leaders. Our governments are being undermined because of a lack of leaders. Our communities need positive role models, our children need fathers, and our world needs direction. From America to Australia, from Croatia to the Caribbean, and from Uganda to Uruguay, the world is in desperate need of true leaders.

This is not the first time that a dearth of quality, effective leadership has been the norm throughout the world. Yet a quick glance at the historical record

shows that during periods when moral, social, economic, spiritual, and political chaos have gripped nations, the greatest leaders have surfaced. The answer to all our problems is qualified, just, and righteous leaders.

The biblical record reveals God's demand for quality leaders during times of human crisis. His search for effective leadership is expressed in numerous statements, such as these:

Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the

wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 16:18–20)

My people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good. (Jeremiah 4:22)

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2:1–2)

These and other passages of Scripture indicate that whenever a nation lacks quality, legitimate, and just leaders, nationwide deterioration occurs.

However, just as it is impossible for a bitter spring to bring forth sweet water (see James 3:11–18), it is impossible for an unrighteous world to produce righteous leaders or for an unjust system to produce just characteristics. God's remedy for this type of situation is the discovery and raising up of new, trained leaders committed to justice and righteousness. Quality leadership is the key to prosperous and peaceful lives and nations.

What makes an individual a leader? Who becomes a leader? When does one

become a leader?

The essence of leadership is the exercise of influence. The command given to the Christian church by Christ is, “Go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them the things I have taught you.” (See Matthew 28:19–20.) This is a direct mandate to provide leadership for nations, instructing them to live according to the principles of the kingdom of God.

This commission clearly places the responsibility for producing the quality leaders that the world needs upon the shoulders of the Christian church. Yet it is sad that even the church itself is in need of quality leadership. Perhaps part

of the reason for this is that the church and its theology have been preoccupied with heaven and preparing individuals to leave the planet, meanwhile forsaking the responsibility of producing quality leaders for the earth today. The responsibility to meet this need is the challenge of our generation for the sake of the generations to come.

By reading this book, you will be responsible for hearing the cry for leaders in your nation, your city, your community, your church, and your family. This book is designed to help you awaken and enhance the potential leader hidden within you so that you can develop and refine your leadership qualities and use them to benefit the

world.

A true leader is a model for his
followers.

Part 1

Discovering Yourself as Leader

Chapter One

Called to Lead

In June 2008, a devastating tornado ripped through a Boy Scout camp in Iowa, killing four boys and injuring dozens more. The storm was so sudden that the boys and their leaders were said to have had “no chance” to escape it. This might have been just a tragic story of heartbreaking loss, yet it became instead a testimony to the power of leadership in the lives of everyday people.

Young men no older than eighteen demonstrated leadership qualities that prevented a worse scenario and literally saved lives by quickly applying their

knowledge of first aid and other crisis response procedures. Not surprisingly, these boys were attending a leadership training camp. While the press hailed them as “heroes,” they called themselves “prepared.” The crisis revealed that their leadership training had become a part of them. Their story shows the impact of everyday leaders who are making a difference in their individual spheres of influence.

The Great Leadership Misconception

Not everyone would agree with the concept of everyday leaders. The great Greek philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates, considered and explored the dynamics of human

behavior and the nature of humanity. A significant portion of their investigation and contemplation focused on the art and dynamics of human social relationships in regard to governing. They addressed the subject of leadership and examined this complex issue in much detail.

One of their basic conclusions was that leadership is a product of natural endowment and personality traits. They postulated that one person is born to lead, while others are born to follow and be subordinate. For many years now, this concept of leadership has prevailed in numerous schools of thought and has gone unchallenged, for the most part. The results have produced a historical, global concept that the masses

are destined to be ruled by the significant, privileged few, sentenced by fate to their circumstances, to live life as dictated. However, time and again, history has presented us with cases that contradict the premise of this perception of leadership and, in many ways, defy the notion that leaders are “born.”

Unlikely Leaders

As I wrote in the preface, leaders are ordinary people who accept or are placed under extraordinary circumstances that bring forth their latent potential, producing character that inspires the confidence and trust of others. There are people who, based on the Greek philosophers’ theories, never

would have been accepted as leadership material. Yet they became some of the greatest leaders in history.

- Moses, a fugitive from Pharaoh's justice—a murderer and a man who presented every excuse for why he should not be considered for leadership—became the greatest lawgiver in history.
- Gideon, a coward, was threshing wheat for his father when the call came for him to rise and become the deliverer of his nation. His response to this challenge was, “My clan

is the weakest in Israel, my family is poor, and I am the least likely candidate in my family.” (See Judges 6:15.)

Yet Gideon became one of the greatest leaders and warriors of his generation.

- David, an insignificant shepherd boy who was considered the least in his family, has his place in history as the greatest king the nation of Israel has ever produced.
- Peter, a simple fisherman with an impulsive personality, was catapulted to the position

of the first major leader of the early Christian church.

- Abraham Lincoln had little formal education and an awkward style, yet he went on to become a national leader considered by many to be the greatest president of the United States.
- Helen Keller was a girl from a small Alabama town who, due to an illness, lost her sight and hearing before she was two years old. Yet she became an internationally known lecturer, an author of more than ten books, and a

powerful advocate for the rights of the physically disabled. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and her book *The Story of My Life* is still available in over fifty languages.

- Mother Teresa was an obscure teacher and nun from Macedonia who decided to devote her life to caring for the destitute in India. Yet, in her compassion and determination to help others, she became an international leader, served as an inspiration for millions, and

was awarded the Nobel
Peace Prize.

Everyone Can Lead

Perhaps, lying deep within you, buried by the misconception that only special people are called to the lofty position of leader, is one of the greatest leaders of our time. I believe there is a leader in everyone waiting to serve his or her generation. It is essential that you change your concept of leadership now and see yourself the way your Creator sees you. We are not all the same, but we are all leaders in our own unique ways.

Why should you become a leader?

Because it is the calling of every human being, regardless of age, gender, circumstance, or vocation. It is your calling.

The leader within you comes alive when you discover your purpose, your life's vision, and your potential, and when you set out to fulfill them without compromise. It is said of Helen Keller that she “became an exceptional leader, once she saw the potential in her own mind.”¹

Created to Lead

Let's consider just one of the signs that we all have the capacity for leadership. Do you remember the last

time you were ordered to do something? Can you recall the natural inclination deep within you to resist the demand, even though you may have cooperated? This natural desire to rebel against orders can be seen in the smallest child and stays with many people throughout their lives. As adults, we have developed sophisticated behavior mechanisms to regulate and control this urge. What is the source of this desire to resist the spirit of domination? Why do we resent being told what to do?

Of course, friendly and willing cooperation among members of families, organizations, companies, churches, and countries is good, healthy, and necessary for these entities to be able to function

and accomplish their goals. When I talk about a tendency to resist control, I am not referring to a person resisting collaboration and teamwork but to his or her frustration at being dominated. Those who do not understand their inherent value in the world essentially live their lives at the whims or mercy of others instead of pursuing the purpose and visions given to them by their Creator. This lack of understanding can lead to a perpetual sense of frustration, hopelessness, or apathy. Many people are frustrated and angry because they feel they have no involvement in the progress and well-being of their lives.

To recognize the difference between true leadership and domination, we must

go back to the beginning—the creation of humanity. The biblical record tells us that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and fashioned everything to sustain life. In the first book authored by Moses, we find these words:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule [“have dominion” nkjv] over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.(Genesis 1:26–27)

The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

In these statements lies the heart of the purpose of human beings' creation and the key to their leadership nature. To understand yourself, you must understand three truths established in these words.

1. God created us in His image and likeness. These words connote His authority, His character, and His moral and spiritual nature. Power and rulership are part of God's nature. He is the King and Ruler of the universe. Therefore, since man was made in God's image, deeply embedded in the nature of man is

the spirit of rulership and authority.

2. The Creator breathed His own life into human beings, further imparting His own nature to them.

3. God established man's role and function in relationship to the earth by stating, "Let them rule ["have dominion" nkjv] over...all the earth."

The above declaration confirms God's ordination of the following principles:

- God created man to rule, or to have dominion, over the earth.
- God gave dominion over the earth to both male and female.

- Male and female were created to dominate and not to be dominated.
- Human beings are meant to rule according to God's nature and Spirit.
- God never gave people the authority to dominate one another. (The male is not to dominate the female, and vice versa.)
- God specified what humans were to rule, or have dominion over: the earth and creation.

These principles are fundamental to our very nature and fulfillment. If we were created for the purpose of rule or dominion, then we were designed to fulfill this purpose and will not be personally satisfied until we do. We must also have a clear understanding of what it means to have dominion.

The idea of dominion has different shades of meaning, which include ruling, managing, controlling, dictating, subjecting, influencing, leading, keeping under control, governing, commanding, mastering, having power over, and having authority. As we will see, humanity's rulership over the earth also includes the concepts of cultivating and protecting it as its stewards. These

words all reflect the concept of leadership, which can be fulfilled in a variety of contexts and describes God's purpose for your life. God created all of us to rule, govern, control, and influence the earth in conjunction with all other human beings. He created all of us to lead. Therefore, there is a leader in everyone, waiting to be released.

Direct Leadership Responsibility

You were not created to be dominated. This is why, whenever a human being is subjugated by another human being, whether it is by a governing system or forced labor, he has an inevitable desire and will to throw off this unnatural restraint. In God's

original purpose and plan, He never intended for there to be some people who are always leaders and others who are always followers or “subordinates” among men, as we know them today. We were all intended to exercise His authority and dominion as a corporate entity on earth, displaying His power, wisdom, influence, and glory. We were designed to be subjected only to God’s Spirit, who would rule in our hearts and thus establish self-government within them.

This principle is seen in God’s assignment to the first man in the garden of Eden. His first instruction to the man was to “work” or “cultivate” (nasb). (See Genesis 2:15.) This assignment

was not accompanied by any supervisors, managers, or bosses to oversee the man's responsibilities. He was accountable only to God. His accountability for the task assigned him was directly to God and not to another man.

Some may say that Adam was directly accountable to God merely because he was the only man living on earth at the time. Yet this aspect of direct leadership responsibility was also implied twenty-five hundred years later in God's promise to deliver the people of Israel from Egyptian slavery and bring them into the Promised Land: "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know

that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians” (Exodus 6:7).

Yet, even though they were meant to live directly under God as His own people, and even after they were given their freedom from slavery, these Israelites seemed to feel the need for human domination over them in order to function. They eventually cried out for a human king, and God’s response to their request was a surprise. He attempted to discourage them from setting up a human ruler and declared His desire to be the direct authority in their lives. Tragically, they did not listen. “The Lord told [Samuel the prophet]: “...It is not you they have rejected, but they have

rejected me as their king” (1 Samuel 8:7).

After the Israelites’ insistence on having a human king, God granted them their request but strongly warned them of the dangerous consequences of having another man dominate their capacity for leadership. (See verses 9–18.) It is important to note that this does not imply, and should not be taken to mean, that God designed human beings to have a chaotic society without accountability to each other or without subjection to authority. On the contrary, God is a God of excellence, and He created everything to function in decency and order. (See 1 Corinthians 14:40 nkjv.)

Finally, the book of Revelation expresses the fact that leadership responsibility is the Creator's permanent purpose for humanity. Those who serve Him "will reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 22:5).

Each Person Is Meant to Fulfill a Unique Role

Each person is meant to fulfill his unique part in the whole, each being responsible for leadership in his sphere of assignment and accountable ultimately to God the Creator. In other words, each of us was created to be a leader led by the Spirit of God! No one is to lord it over others or prevent them from maximizing their potential.

However, man—both male and female (see Genesis 1:27)—rebelled against his direct accountability to God and disobeyed Him. The result was that the Spirit of God, who had been breathed into man at creation, could not remain with man's spirit. In rejecting God, man left himself at the mercy of his external environment. (See Genesis 3.) Over the centuries, although the Creator still worked in the lives of those who sought and responded to Him, this lack of protection eventually led to the establishment of external governments in order to restrain humanity from unchecked abuse of power and authority. Consequently, an unnatural relationship of leader and follower, ruler and ruled,

master and mastered, was established.

Evidence of this interruption in God's purpose and plan for each human being to exercise leadership is underscored in the pronouncements He made to the first man and woman after they disobeyed His word:

To the woman he said, "...Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "...Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you....By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food."

(Genesis 3:16–19, emphasis added)

Here we see the reversal of the order of dominion and authority. Instead of both male and female ruling and dominating the earth together, as God originally commanded, the subjection of man over man was introduced. Also, instead of man dominating the earth, as had been established in the beginning, the earth was now poised to dominate man. This relationship is not natural; it goes against our original nature, which was to rule rather than to be ruled. We are all born leaders, designed to lead in the image of our Creator through His Spirit.

Although humans interrupted God's plan (instituted for their good), He had a restoration plan for the human race. This

plan, effected by Jesus Christ, was to reconcile human beings to their Creator and enable them to receive His Holy Spirit again, thus reestablishing self-government within them so they could fulfill their God-given purposes.

Return to Your Purpose

To become a leader, therefore, you must return to your original purpose. I work with people all over the world in leadership development. Yet I have found that people in a variety of nations and cultures share the same obstacles to effective leadership: they don't know who they really are or what their full potential is. There are two ways to discover the leadership purpose that the

Creator has put inside you: (1) learn it and (2) experience it. This book will give you the opportunities to both learn about leadership and to experience it in your own life.

As you commit to the process of becoming a leader, you will be able to:

- discover your true self and bring meaning and fulfillment to your life.
- develop the gifts and talents you were meant to share with the world.
- leave a legacy that will be an influence for good even after

you are gone.

There is a leader in everyone,
waiting to be released. Will you
discover the leader within you?

Chapter Two

Defining Leaders and Leadership

Though we are called to be leaders, we cannot become leaders unless we know what a leader is and understand the nature of true leadership.

On one hand, it is virtually impossible to fully define the concept of leadership because of its complexity. Leadership consists of an array of diverse qualities, qualifications, components, skills, capabilities, and even unquantifiable elements. For this reason, leadership will always remain somewhat of a mystery. On the other hand, for more than two thousand years,

the study of leadership—what leadership is and what makes a person a leader—has produced a body of knowledge, information, and references. These findings are worth our consideration because they provide a framework through which we can identify qualities and principles that give leadership a measure of definition. They also make it possible for us to engage personally in the process of leadership development.

Leadership versus the Leader

First, there is a difference between “leadership” and “the leader,” although the two are obviously interrelated.

- Leader can be defined in two ways: it is both a designated position and the individual who assumes that position, accepting the responsibility and accountability it entails.
- Leadership is the function of the designated position and the exercise of the responsibilities involved in that position.

There are many instances in which individuals who are designated as leaders and placed in leadership positions fail to function in a way that provides effective leadership. Have you experienced trying to work with or for

someone who could not lead? A title and position do not guarantee performance and productivity. Merely being a leader does not guarantee leadership. The following points further illustrate the difference between leadership and the leader:

- In executing the responsibilities of leadership, the leader exemplifies—through his words, actions, and overall life—the qualities and skills that result in a positive progression toward the fulfillment of the vision.
- The leader always serves (exercises leadership) to

benefit those whom he is leading. He can never demand the “right” to lead, but rather is given the opportunity by others to serve them in that capacity. The privilege of leading is earned through the cultivation of trust.

- The leader (the individual assuming the leadership role) is temporary, but the leadership role is permanent. The leader changes, but leadership is constant.

The above principles illustrate the fact that even though you may have a position of leadership, exercising

leadership is not automatic. Certain qualities, competencies, and skills are essential. Yet these principles also point to the fact that you can become a leader by understanding and developing these qualities, competencies, and skills.

Leadership versus Management

Second, a leader is not the same as a manager. Leaders today appear to be an endangered species; in many cases they are being replaced with managers. In any discussion about the nature of a leader and any attempt to define it, therefore, it is essential that we distinguish clearly the difference between a “manager” and a “leader.” There have been many situations in which managers have been

mistaken for leaders and placed in leadership positions but were unable to function in leadership. This practice has frustrated the purposes and objectives of their organizations.

The difference between managers and leaders can be expressed in the saying, “There are four types of people in the world: those who watch things happen, those who let things happen, those who ask what just happened, and those who make things happen.” Leaders are those who make things happen. Managers are in the other groups. Most leaders were managers on their way to leadership. It is often the natural path of progression. However, not all managers become leaders.

The greatest Leader, Jesus Christ, spoke of this difference in responsibility in a thought-provoking parable. He told the story of a manager who failed to fulfill his responsibility and was unable to account for his time and resources. Then, He stated a principle that highlights one of the major conditions one must meet to be able to transition from manager to leader: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much....And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” (Luke 16:10, 12). A manager is responsible for

someone else's vision and resources. A leader has his own vision (even when it is carried out within, or in conjunction with, someone else's vision) and uses his resources with integrity in order to accomplish it.

Business consultant, professor, and author Warren Bennis, who is also Founding Chairman of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California, recorded the differences he has identified between managers and leaders. Here are a number of them:

- The manager administers; the leader innovates.
- The manager is a copy; the

leader is an original.

- The manager maintains; the leader develops.
- The manager relies on control; the leader inspires trust.
- The manager has a short-range view; the leader has a long-range perspective.
- The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why.
- The manager imitates; the leader originates.

- The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it.
- The manager does things right; the leader does the right thing.²

A Working Definition of Leadership

While leadership encompasses many elements, let's establish a working definition to help us understand leadership and how it functions.

After more than thirty-five years of researching and studying leadership, as well as training thousands of individuals who have aspired to leadership, I have

distilled a definition that I believe incorporates a comprehensive appreciation of the major components of effective leadership:

Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration, generated by a passion, motivated by a vision, birthed from a conviction, produced by a purpose.

Leadership is the ability to direct others by influence. It may take the form of the influence of one friend on another, one spouse on another, a parent on a child, a teacher on students, a pastor on a congregation, a supervisor on employees, a community leader on volunteers, and so on.

Leadership can also be seen simply as responding to responsibility. If you have ever been given any measure of responsibility, whether it was to run an errand for your parents, restore order to the kitchen after a family meal, rearrange your bedroom, make a presentation before a class, clean the restrooms in a church, organize an event, or plan a project, in each case you were exercising some measure of leadership skills.

I know you may not have considered some of these activities as relating to leadership, which is often perceived to be a technical subject reserved for those who are heads of nations, corporations, or organizations. Yet it is perhaps your

very concept of leadership that prevents you from becoming the leader you were born to be. Furthermore, although skills are valuable, you will learn throughout this book that leadership does not depend on what you do. Leadership is fundamentally a matter of becoming who you are.

Leadership Is a Process

Note that my working definition presents leadership as a product of a process and not as a specific objective to pursue. This is an important distinction. In fact, the above definition can be fully understood only if it is inverted. In other words, for one to become a leader, the process must begin

at the foundation—with the discovery of a personal sense of purpose. That is the heart of leadership.

This purpose will lead to a deep conviction about one's obligation to humanity and life. That conviction will emerge as a conceptual view of a preferred future, which is called a vision. This vision, when fully possessed and matured, explodes in a passion that creates an internal drive in the individual and inspires all who come into his or her presence. It is this capacity of the individual's passion to inspire that produces the most important component of leadership, which is influence. What I have just described, then, is the sequence of both leadership

development and influence:

Purpose
Conviction
Vision
Passion
Inspiration
Influence

Influence through Inspiration

Leadership is measured by the degree to which one can influence others.

Leadership is what people give to you after you have influenced them by your passion to the point where you have inspired them. John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States, said, “If your actions inspire others to dream

more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”³

In his book *Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Sanders quoted British field marshal Bernard Montgomery, who said, “Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and the character which inspires confidence.”⁴ Leadership is the ability to influence the priorities of many people toward a common cause that is nobler than the private pursuits of the individuals involved. It is coordinating the diverse gifts and talents of individuals for a corporate goal. Leadership is also the organizing and coordinating of resources, energies, and relationships in a productive context to

achieve an intended result. Moreover, leadership derives its power from strong values, deep convictions, and firm principles. Having a vision and values leads to inspiring and motivating others to work together with a common purpose. The leadership function inspires people to maximize their own potential and that of the resources they administer.

A general concept of leadership, therefore, includes the capacity to influence, inspire, direct, encourage, motivate, induce, move, mobilize, and activate others to pursue a common purpose, interest, or goal while maintaining commitment, momentum, confidence, and courage.

Inspiration Follows Purpose and Vision

The purest form of leadership is influence through inspiration. The greatest and most important aspect of leadership is inspiration. Inspiration is the opposite of intimidation and is absent of manipulation. There are many so-called leadership situations in which the motivator is fear rather than a commitment based on a response to an inspired life.

Note that inspiration can come only after one has discovered purpose and vision. By its very nature, leadership incorporates an individual purpose and vision that provide the fuel for

inspiration, motivation, and mobilization.

Leadership is impossible without a purpose and vision that generate a passion for accomplishment. Purpose and vision are the sources from which leadership derives its magnetic field to activate the commitment, cooperation, and confidence of others.

If you desire to be an effective leader, your principal question should be, “Do I have a purpose and vision that justify my efforts?” Laurence J. Peter, the well-known educator and writer, said, “If you don’t know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else.”⁵ King Solomon, the

wisest man who ever lived, declared, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18 kjv).

Leadership is discovering a sense of significance to one’s generation and making a commitment to deliver that significance as an obligation. This is why all true leaders are willing to die for their life’s purpose. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “I submit to you that if a man hasn’t discovered something he will die for, he isn’t fit to live.”⁶ Leaders not only have something to live for, but they also have found something to die for. Until you are willing to die for what you are living for, you cannot become a true leader. Leadership is knowing that you were created, designed, equipped, and

destined to make a difference in your environment through a personal dedication to improving the conditions and quality of life of all within that environment.

Chapter Three

The Making of a Leader

I believe everyone would like to be a leader. Some people have a great longing to be in leadership, while others have only a small desire. Regardless of our occupations or the degree of our desire for leadership, the yearning to feel that we are masters of our situations and in control of our environments resides in each of us. There is a hidden leader in all of us who is crying out to be free.

Our desire for leadership is good. However, some of us do not understand what is involved in leadership development, others do not know how to

take advantage of opportunities to become leaders, and still others do not realize their potential as leaders.

What Is Your Sphere of Influence?

We will learn many things about the criteria necessary for those who aspire to leadership and are moving toward it. Yet keep in mind this truth: whoever you are and wherever you are, you can be a leader. I want to reemphasize that a leader is simply a person who has a sphere of influence. Men and women can be leaders in their homes. Young people can be leaders among their groups of friends. Businesspeople, lawyers, doctors, electricians, clerks, and teachers can be leaders in their

workplaces. The custodian of a company is as necessary a leader as the CEO is. If he doesn't do his job well, you have an uncomfortable atmosphere that will affect the entire organization. If you are given any responsibility, no matter how small, then you are in the position of a leader, and there are certain qualifications you must meet to lead effectively. However, the scope of your sphere of influence and the demands it makes on your potential determine the magnitude of your leadership.

Ten Essentials in the Development of a Leader

Based on what we have discussed so far, let us explore ten essential aspects

of leadership development. If you are going to be an effective leader, you must prepare yourself. You have no other option. All of the following elements are inherent in the process of true leadership. Aside from discovering your true self and capturing your vision, the aspects of leadership development on this list are not necessarily listed in sequential order. Some of them may be developed simultaneously. Yet each is indispensable in the process. We will look at an overview of these essentials and then look more closely at each area in subsequent chapters.

1. Discover Yourself

All leaders uncover a sense of

meaning and purpose for their lives that produces an awareness of their true identities. This identity provides the basis for personal value and worth, as well as a positive self-concept from which a spirit of confidence emerges. This spirit of confidence is energized by a belief in their potential and capacity to fulfill their discovered purposes. Confidence, combined with a conviction of their ability to achieve their purposes, establishes a sense of destiny. The integration of all these elements cultivates the dormant gifts and talents deposited by the Creator within the leaders for their generational assignments. When all these parts become one, leadership emerges. This is

leadership without limitations, in the sense that the leaders believe they can do anything necessary to fulfill their purposes. Once that process occurs, a leader becomes unstoppable.

To become a leader, you need to discover your true self by uncovering a meaning and purpose for your life that gives you an understanding of your unique identity as a person. This understanding of your true self will give birth to your vision.

2. Capture Your Vision

Leadership is conceived when a person's mental photograph of a future that incorporates his purpose becomes

more vivid and important to him than the experience of the present. This mental picture is called vision. When an individual captures his vision, his leadership function begins to stir. Leadership is impossible without a vision because leadership exists to fulfill a vision. Without a vision, leadership is invalid and unnecessary. Vision validates leadership; it explains the existence of leadership.

We have seen that without a vision, people perish, or have no meaning for their lives or hope of accomplishing their purposes. Yet when vision is lost, a leader “dies.” Leadership, therefore, depends on capturing, refining, planning, simplifying, documenting,

communicating, living, and maintaining a noble vision.

To become a leader, you must catch hold of a vision of a future that reflects the fulfillment of your life's purpose.

3. Share Your Inspiration

One meaning of inspire is “to inflate.” This concept is derived from an idea the Greeks captured in the expression “god-breathed.” It is also evident throughout the biblical text, which reveals that men and women throughout the ages have been inspired by God's Spirit, who lifted them from the mundane existence of their life conditions to see an alternative worth

risking everything for. For example, when Moses, the great Hebrew deliverer, lived in a remote desert as a shepherd, he was divinely inspired to embrace a vision of a land filled with freedom and prosperity. He was inspired from the desert! He was lifted up higher than his environment.

To become a leader, you must be inspired so that you can inspire others. It is the power of inspiration that becomes contagious and moves others to reorder their priorities; it motivates the human spirit to submit personal vision to a corporate dream. The greatest component of leadership is inspiration because if a leader cannot inspire people, he may be tempted to manipulate

them. And where there is manipulation, there is dictatorship and control but not genuine leadership. True leaders never manipulate; they inspire.

4. Commit to Your Principles and Values

A leader commits to spiritual and moral truths that form his character and enable him to carry out his vision. Vision has inherent principles and values that need to be adhered to for the vision to be fulfilled. True leadership, therefore, always includes a personal code of ethics, moral standards, and values that safeguard the character necessary for the leader to pursue and fulfill his purpose and vision. For

example, vision cannot be carried out without self-sacrifice. Leadership requires the willingness to sacrifice pleasure for the protection of purpose. Leadership necessitates a dedication to principles more than to profit and popularity; it places convictions above convenience; it is more concerned about excellence than about expediency. True leadership is always sensitive to spiritual accountability and aware of its obligation to divine authority.

Leadership is ultimately measured by what it values. True leadership values human life, human dignity, human equality, human rights, and human security.

To become a leader, you must commit to principles and values for the development of your character and the fulfillment of your vision.

5. Express Your Passion

True leadership is impossible without passion. Passion is a result of inspiration and thus provides the catalyst for leadership. One definition of catalyst is “an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action.”⁷ Passion is a desire that is stronger than death and greater than opposition.

Passion is the root of self-motivation and the energy that fuels persistence, consistency, and resilience. Passion is

the secret source of a leader's drive. It is the force that directs the management of the leader's time, energy, resources, and priorities. Passion is also the leader's life vest for times of failure. When true leaders fail, they always rebound because their passion leads them back.

It was passion for God that brought Moses back to face Pharaoh, time after time, to tell him to let the Israelites go. It was passion that drove David to face and defeat the giant Goliath. It was passion that preserved Daniel the prophet after he was thrown into the lions' den. And it was passion that led Jesus Christ from Gethsemane to the cross, to the tomb, and on to

resurrection.

It is passion that makes leadership effective. To become a leader, you need to have a passion for your purpose—a passion you express in the way you live your life.

6. Empower Others

Leadership never exists for itself. It exists for the purpose of guiding others to a better future, enabling them to develop in greater ways, helping them to improve themselves, and inspiring them to believe that anything is possible. Leadership sets standards for people and influences them positively, giving them hope and deep conviction about their

own abilities to achieve greatness.
Leadership empowers.

True leadership is, therefore, a commitment to people. It recognizes the value of people, and this recognition cultivates the leader's attitude toward them. Leadership invests time, resources, energy, and experience in the empowerment of others. True leaders act with integrity toward others, modeling what they expect of them and demonstrating what they demand. In essence, leaders lead through character.

Leadership considers success a corporate issue and is therefore lavish in its appreciation of everyone. It never takes credit; it always distributes it. It

knows what people need—empathy, respect, love, recognition, appreciation, encouragement, integrity, trust, and faith—and is dedicated to meeting these needs. Leadership builds people to build a vision to build a future.

To become a leader, you must be committed to empowering others.

7. Discipline Yourself for Your Purpose

True leadership possesses a deep dedication to personal discipline. Personal discipline incorporates self-imposed standards for the sake of achieving noble goals and aspirations that are more important than personal

pleasure. Leadership focuses on self-sacrifice for the sake of service rather than on personal comfort and indulgence. It defers present gratification for future goals. Leadership shuns mediocrity for the pursuit of excellence. It imposes restrictions on itself in order to achieve a greater alternative.

Leadership involves molding oneself in order to obtain what is best. Leaders make decisions cognizant of the consequences and their impact on desired goals. In essence, leadership disciplines its decisions based on its dedication to a determined destiny. Leaders control their decisions. That's high discipline. Why did Corrie ten Boom, after reaching the age of fifty,

decide to risk her life to protect persecuted Jews in her native Holland during World War II when she could have lived a quiet life? It was self-discipline based on her integrity not to compromise the value of life.

Again, leadership never compromises vision for the sake of gaining popularity. Those who practice leadership are willing to walk alone until the crowd catches up. To become a leader, you must learn to discipline your life according to the goals and objectives of your purpose.

8. Coordinate Your Resources

In his administrative and coordinative

duties, a leader must always closely monitor the “big three”: personnel, finances, and planning.

True leadership builds effective managerial teams and organizes people’s diverse gifts and talents to maximize their contribution to the whole. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of others and use wisdom when assigning them to particular teams.

Effective leaders are also good stewards of the physical and financial resources for which they are responsible. They know how to use them in the best interests of the vision and can make them productive so that they yield good returns.

Over both the above areas is the necessity of planning your resources, both short-term and long-term. What is needed now for furthering the vision? What will be needed next year and in years to come?

To become a leader, you must be able to know what resources you have, what resources you still need, and how to use them most effectively.

9. Manage Your Priorities

As I stated earlier, leadership is controlled by vision and disciplined by a sense of destiny. Purpose and vision dictate priorities and determine the plan for fulfilling purpose. It is imperative for

leadership not just to identify and establish the vision, but also to design and disseminate the plan required to take the organization to that destination.

In effect, planning is the sequential establishment of priorities. Priorities are stated goals that are necessary for progressing toward purpose. In order to protect priorities, leadership must always distinguish between what seems to be urgently calling for attention and what is truly important to purpose. Leadership must also distinguish between what is good, which may be a variety of things, and what is right—good things that are specifically suited to purpose. Leadership always has a narrow agenda and a concentrated to-do

list.

Leadership must never get bogged down in details but should always allow the priorities of the vision to set the agenda. The greatest Leader of all time, Jesus Christ, spoke about the importance of priorities, saying, “Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matthew 7:13–14). If you want to experience maximum living, it is important to narrow your life’s priorities to a few.

To become a leader, you must develop a plan for fulfilling your vision

by setting priorities and using them to guide your pursuits.

10. Mentor Your Successors

Leadership is committed to the priority of preparing those who will fill the designated position of leader in the future and carry on the work of leadership. True leaders know that their success is measured, to a large degree, by their successors. They mentor future leaders by sharing their knowledge, experience, skills, expertise, and resources with them.

Leadership is never given to just one generation. It is transgenerational. Leadership that serves only its present

generation is destined to fail. Leaders know that if their visions die with them, they have failed. The ultimate goal is not to maintain followers but to produce leaders. Therefore, true leaders make themselves increasingly unnecessary. Secure and mature leaders are not threatened by the successful development of those whom they are leading. They rejoice when their followers develop into leaders and become greater and more effective than they were.

The greatest expression of this leadership principle of succession is found in Jesus' statement to the leaders that He developed: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to

me. Therefore go and make disciples [students] of all nations” (Matthew 28:18–19). With these words, He defined the purpose of authority, which is to transfer and release the authority of others. Mentoring is a nonnegotiable function of successful leadership. Again, a true leader knows that his most significant contribution to the future is his successor. Unfortunately, few people seem to realize, and few organizations seem to practice, this crucial element of leadership.

To become a leader, you must understand the importance of mentoring your successors and actively preparing others to become leaders who will carry on the vision.

Express Yourself

Speaking of the leadership development process, Warren Bennis asserted, “Becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself. It’s that simple and that difficult....Leaders are people who are able to express themselves fully.”⁸ He also stated, “We are our own raw material.”⁹ Everyone has the capacity, potential, and “raw material” to become a leader by the design of the Creator. However, it is a tragedy that most of the people on this planet will bury the leader trapped within them in the grave of a follower. In fact, many people die without ever knowing who they really were.

God created you with the capacity to lead. Though you were born to lead, you must become a leader, just as one may be born a male but must become a man. To become the leader you were born to be, you must discover who you are, know your purpose in life, and understand God's design for your existence. It is difficult and perhaps impossible to become something you do not know or cannot define.

Leaders “express themselves fully.” As Bennis wrote, “No leader sets out to be a leader....The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely—all your skills, gifts, and energies—in order to make your vision manifest.”¹⁰ This full expression brings glory to God. It is

in this light that everyone can become a leader, and it is important that you strive to know who you are and to discover God's purpose for your life. We have a personal responsibility to cultivate and become ourselves. Therefore, in the chapters that follow, we are going to look at what a leader is, how you can continue your journey to becoming an effective leader, and how to refine and enhance your leadership capacity.

God created you as someone special and original. Discover yourself and become a leader.

Part 2

Ten Essentials for Leadership Development

Chapter Four

Discover Yourself

Becoming a leader involves understanding who the Creator made you to be and the qualities and skills He put within you in order to fulfill it. You have tremendous potential for leadership, but perhaps no one has ever encouraged you to discover and express it. As a matter of fact, many people are told that they are nothing. They eventually believe it, only to waste their potential. Leaders take the self that the Creator has given them and tap the vast resources that are hidden within. Leadership is the discovery and marriage of purpose, personality, and potential.

Your Life's Meaning and Purpose

The first step in becoming a leader, therefore, is to discover your true self. This begins with gaining a sense of meaning and purpose. A lack of purpose and unfulfilled potential are tragically widespread in our world. You must have an understanding of purpose that gives you an awareness of your identity as a person and a knowledge of what you are meant to do in life. Who am I? Why am I here? These are two age-old but essential questions each person needs to answer. In chapter one, I described how human beings were made in the image of the Creator, held directly accountable to Him, and given rule over the earth. Let's look at the significance of each of these

areas of human design and relationship in understanding your purpose.

In the Creator's Image

Your purpose is reflected in the purpose of the Creator because every human being was created in His image and likeness. His nature and our nature, and His purpose and our purposes, are meant to be intimately tied together. We were made to be like Him and to act and function as He does. God's nature includes His characteristics. He is love. He is just. He is holy. He is kind. He is patient. He is also purposeful: "The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations" (Psalm 33:11). His

purposes are reflected in some of His titles, such as King of the universe and Father to His people.

To capture your meaning and purpose in life, you must understand the nature and purposes of God and then apply them as you lead in His image on earth. Our purpose isn't about us—it's about our Creator. It is about what He wants us to be and do to reflect His nature and fulfill His plans for the world. His purpose was established well before we had any plans for our lives. We were meant to consult God to find out His purposes for us so we can make the right plans.

Created for Relationship and Rule

We have seen that human beings were not meant to be dominated but were made by the Creator to be accountable directly to Him. This accountability refers not only to leadership authority, but also to a respectful and loving relationship with Him. Recall God's manner of creating the first man: "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7). God gave man a physical body and a human spirit. Yet He also breathed His own Spirit into man so God and man could be in relationship. The Scriptures say, "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John

4:24).

The essence of human beings is not their physical bodies nor even their souls (comprising mind, will, and emotions) but rather the spirit within them. “The lamp of the Lord searches the spirit of a man; it searches out his inmost being” (Proverbs 20:27). The human spirit, through God’s Spirit, is meant to have a direct relationship with God. God describes Himself not only as King, but also as Father to humanity. The Scriptures say, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children” (Ephesians 5:1). As the Creator’s children, we are to reflect His nature and purposes, which we learn by being in relationship with Him.

The problem, as we have seen, is that humanity as a whole lost its direct relationship with the Creator when the first man and woman turned their backs on Him and instead tried to pursue their own purposes. This is why many people today do not understand who they are and fail to fulfill their potential. They don't recognize their true purpose because they have not yet been restored to a relationship with the Creator. They are pursuing a false purpose or a purpose far below what they were meant to. Their own ways can never truly fulfill them, however, because hidden within their makeup as human beings are God's purposes for them.

One example of self-discovery from

the biblical record is the life of pioneer and theologian Paul of Tarsus. We find his story in the second book written by the physician Luke (see Acts 9; 22), as well as in Paul's own writings (see Galatians 1:11–24; Philippians 3:4–7). Paul (then called Saul) thought he was fulfilling his purpose in life, but in hunting down and killing those who had been reconciled to the Creator, he was filled with rage and anger. He was tearing down rather than building up. Yet, when the Creator intervened to stop him, Saul's reconciliation with Him involved the revelation of his unique life purpose. (See Acts 9:15–16.) The natural qualities he possessed—passion, energy, and perseverance—were then

put to use in the positive purpose for which he had been called by God. “God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles” (Galatians 1:15–16). In a remarkable turnaround, Saul, whose name was changed to Paul to reflect his newfound purpose, became an instrument of reconciliation rather than an instrument of destruction. His wholehearted relationship with the Creator and his keen intellect led to his becoming the greatest theologian the world has ever known. His Spirit-inspired writings comprise approximately one-third of the New Testament.

Because God the Father is committed to His purpose and our purposes, and because He desires to reestablish our relationship with Him, He provided restoration through His Son Jesus Christ to recover His will and purpose in our lives. One of the keys to this restoration is that when we are reconciled with God, we receive His Holy Spirit within us once more. Having His Spirit connects us to Him and enables us to better understand the purposes He has placed within us.

When we understand who we really are, we gain a deep conviction about our obligations to humanity and to the life the Creator has given us. We can exercise dominion effectively only if we

are continually in relationship with the Creator and know His character, will, and desires for human beings in ruling the earth.

Given a Unique Identity to Express

In conjunction with His purposeful nature, God created everything to fulfill a unique purpose in life. Like all creators and manufacturers do, He designed His “product” with the inherent components, abilities, and potential to fulfill its purpose. Since every product is built with unique elements to fulfill its purpose, and since humanity was created for the purpose of leadership, each one of us possesses natural qualities that are designed to enhance this function.

To enable each human being to have dominion in his or her own sphere of influence, therefore, the Creator has given every one of us a unique makeup and identity. Each of us is distinct in our physical qualities, our temperaments, our perspectives, our likes and interests, and our gifts and abilities. These all coincide with His purposes for us, which He redeemed for us through the work of Christ. “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10, emphasis added). God planned in advance all that you were born to be and accomplish. When you return to Him and seek His purposes, you will begin to

discover the “good works” that you were born to do.

Each person is a leader in regard to his or her own purpose. One individual’s purpose might lead to a calling in teaching, while another’s purpose might be fulfilled in aerospace engineering or artistic endeavors. The possibilities are endless. Moreover, purposes are not always realized in conventional careers or pursuits, but in a wide variety of endeavors, and in personal character traits that impact the lives of others for good, such as the influence of parents on a child. A person’s purpose may be fulfilled in a number of ways in various spheres of influence.

God has given you a special purpose to fulfill. Do you know what it is? My own purpose is the transformation of followers into leaders and leaders into agents of change, as well as the maximization of individual potential. The endeavors I am involved in—writing books, teaching, mentoring, training, consulting, broadcasting—all relate to, and are an expression of, that specific purpose.

Leaders dare to be themselves. Leaders are individuals who have declared independence from the expectations of others and have determined to be true to their direct accountability to their Creator and the purpose He has given them. If you are to

become the leader God intended you to be, then it may be necessary to disregard the opinions of others and defy the social straightjacket that tries to stifle the untapped leader within.

Discovering Your Purpose and Leadership Identity

King Solomon wrote, “I have seen the burden God has laid on men” (Ecclesiastes 3:10). The word “burden” in the Hebrew could actually be translated as “a heavy responsibility,” “occupation,” or “task.” It could also be described as a “responsible urge.” Every human being comes to earth with a purpose or responsibility that, in a sense, weighs on him throughout his life.

He has a continual need or urge to fulfill it.

Because of His purpose for you, the Creator has placed a “responsible urge” in your heart. Solomon continued, “He has also set eternity in the hearts of men” (v. 11). God has put something into your heart that can translate the unseen into the seen. Imagine—His eternal purposes intersect with time and the physical world in your life and heart! The very essence of life is for you to find God’s purpose and fulfill it. Will you respond to His call from eternity?

Warren Bennis wrote,

Leaders are people who are able to

express themselves fully. By this I mean that they know who they are, what their strengths and weaknesses are, and how to fully deploy their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses. They also know what they want, why they want it, and how to communicate what they want to others, in order to gain their cooperation and support. Finally, they know how to achieve their goals. 11

Are you expressing what God has placed within you as your purpose? Are you moved by the responsible urge in your heart? Or have you been ignoring it?

Results of Discovering Purpose

Discovering who you were created to be starts a chain reaction toward fulfilling your leadership purpose. When you uncover a sense of meaning and purpose for your life, you become aware of your unique identity as a human being created in God's image. This identity provides the basis for your sense of personal value and worth as an individual. It contributes to a positive self-concept that gives you a spirit of confidence to move forward with your unique purpose, especially when you see your potential and begin to believe in your capacity to fulfill your purpose. When confidence becomes conviction in your ability to achieve your purpose, you gain a sense of destiny.

These elements combine to motivate you to cultivate the gifts and talents the Creator has placed within you—including some that have been lying dormant inside you, waiting for you to understand your purpose and recognize the gifts. Again, God has deposited these gifts and talents within you so you can become a leader in fulfilling your assignment on earth for your generation. As I wrote earlier, it is at this point that a leader becomes unstoppable. You have such a sense of your calling and assignment that you move ahead with it despite obstacles, criticism, and setbacks.

Your Unique Gifts and Skills

God created each person with a distinct design. It is essential to realize that He created us with unique and inherent gifts, abilities, and talents that increase our leadership effectiveness. Once we have been restored to the Creator and are asking Him to reveal His purposes and plans for us, we need to look inside ourselves to see what He has placed within us as indications of, and resources for, fulfilling our purposes. For example, do you have persistent thoughts about accomplishing something in particular? What is your dream? What do you imagine yourself doing? What problem do you want to solve? What need do you feel compelled to address? Are you doing what you

really want to do with your life? Answering questions such as these is vital for fulfilling your God-given purpose. Once you know your purpose, you can better evaluate your natural gifts and abilities to see how they will help you to fulfill it.

We have seen that we must receive inspiration from God in order to discover His purpose and vision for our lives. We also need to realize that when He comes to live within us, He gives us additional gifts as a restoration of our purposes. These gifts are spiritual or supernatural. The word supernatural simply means “outside” or “above” the natural; it is spiritual rather than physical. The supernatural world is

above our natural world. Paul wrote about what is invisible or unseen:

Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.(Romans 1:20)

In my book *The Most Important Person on Earth*, I compared the work of God's Spirit to the governor of a colony who guides and facilitates the citizens in fulfilling the will of the king. I described the supernatural gifts of the Spirit as the delegation and distribution of powers by the Governor (Holy Spirit) to kingdom citizens (all who have been reconciled to their Creator and Father), in order to

execute government business (the Creator's purposes) in the colony (earth). They are for the purpose of impacting the environment. When God's Son Jesus was on earth, he healed people, cast out demons, and did other miracles. These miracles were practical works on earth that solved people's problems and pointed them toward restoration with their Creator. Likewise, the special gifts the Spirit gives to you are not for your private enjoyment but for the accomplishment of God's purposes on earth through you. They are for the "common good." (See 1 Corinthians 12:1–11.) This is in keeping with God's nature and will. Even though the execution of your purpose and the

exercise of your natural and spiritual gifts will bring personal fulfillment, they are ultimately for the wider and corporate purpose of sustaining and building up your fellow human beings on earth. “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body” (1 Corinthians 12:12).

Purpose Leads to Vision

Purpose can be defined as original intent, or the reason for the creation or existence of something. Your purpose is the original intent of the Creator for your life. A leader is someone who has a sense of personal purpose that gives him a reason and meaning for living, a strong

sense of destiny and significance, and a deep love for life. These qualities engender persistence and perseverance, even in the face of seeming setbacks or failures. Jesus Christ and Paul, the man He called as a leader in the first-century church, had these qualities, and they served as guiding forces in their actions. Their strong senses of destiny are reflected in their statements. Jesus said, “For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth” (John 18:37), and “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Paul declared, “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and

reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13–14 kjv).

Winston Churchill became prime minister of England during World War II, and he said, “I felt as if I was walking with destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial.”¹² Discovering yourself is the key to capturing your vision, which, as we will see in the next chapter, gives you a specific focus in carrying out your leadership purpose. Have you found a deep cause or reason to live? Is there a dream in your heart that gives life to your motivation? When you are able to see your purpose, your vision will come

to life.

Chapter Five

Capture Your Vision

A vision is an idea inspired by God. It is what God wants you to contribute to the world. While no human being can know all the ramifications of his or her life, you should have a good idea of the purpose and vision the Creator has given you to accomplish.

A vision is a picture of where you want to end up. It is like a blueprint of a finished product that you are about to produce. Leaders keep their hands on the process but their eyes on the end result.

How does one progress from discovering purpose to having a vision?

Let's look at the distinction between purpose and vision:

- Having a sense of purpose means knowing and understanding what you were born to accomplish.
- Having a vision means seeing the outworking of that purpose in your mind by faith and beginning to imagine it as reality.

A visionary can see what's down the road and what it's going to take to get there. Visionaries are not satisfied with what's happening; they're interested in what's going to happen and how they can

make it happen. Some people “go with the flow,” but visionaries create their own flow. A leader’s vision is more real and important to him than the experience of the present.

As I wrote earlier, your awareness of your purpose will lead to a deep conviction about your obligations to humanity and to the life God has given you. That conviction will emerge as a conceptual view of a preferred future, which is your vision. This vision, when fully possessed and matured, explodes in a passion that creates an internal drive that inspires all who come into your presence. As we have seen, it is this capacity of a person’s passion to inspire that produces the most important

component of leadership, which is influence.

Waiting for Significance

Earlier, we noted Solomon's observation that when people have no vision, they perish. (See Proverbs 29:18 kjv.) While some people seem to grasp and pursue a vision early in life, many people appear to have been taught that you grow up, go to school, get married, pursue a career, and wait until your "name is called" before you step out and really do something with your life. For years, these people sit around, waiting to hear their names called.

Are you waiting around for someone

to “discover” you, recognize your gifts, offer you a position, or promote you? If so, you are wasting your time, and there’s no time to waste. There’s work to do. You have a vision to express. Untold numbers of people need you to fulfill your purpose. Some people will need your direct help or inspiration. Others will need your indirect assistance and encouragement. The world needs your invention, your social policy, your artwork, your archeological discovery, your medical breakthrough, your athletic achievement, your nurturing, or your unwavering honesty, perseverance, and faith. We have many different tools and resources at our disposal with which to accomplish our purposes, but many of us

are just sitting around because we have no vision.

Do you know what you really want in life? Some people are interested in only living a comfortable lifestyle or in promoting solely themselves. Others think life begins at retirement, and they waste most of their years by not doing what they are really called to do. Avoid falling into any of these categories. Leaders exist to fulfill a vision. Don't delay pursuing yours.

You Must Conceptualize Your Vision

Because God has placed your purpose inside you, you are the only one who can imagine, nurture, and fulfill

your vision. You must have a vision for the fulfillment of your leadership on earth. Again, to discover your purpose and vision, you need to ask yourself questions such as these:

- What have I always wanted to do?
- What is my heart's desire?
- What thoughts, ideas, plans, and dreams have remained consistent within me?
- What specifically can I do to fulfill my plans and dreams?

When you begin to see your vision clearly, you will be able to fulfill your

life's purpose and become the leader you were created to be. This vision must be very plain to you because you need something specific to work toward; otherwise, you will risk not accomplishing your purpose. Note that a vision is not the same thing as a purpose statement, nor is it the same thing as a goal or an objective.

A statement of purpose gives you a general description of your overall calling in life. It is philosophical and abstract, while a vision is concrete and practical. A statement of purpose is open-ended in the sense that it can have many aspects and applications. In contrast, a vision statement is a very precise description that has a specific

emphasis and definable boundaries. It is only when you develop a precise statement of intention that you can develop goals and objectives that will enable you to fulfill your vision.

The following examples illustrate the difference between purpose and vision:

- Purpose Statement: My purpose is to improve the quality of education for inner-city children.
- Vision Statement: My vision is to fund and create two magnet schools for grades 9–12 in [city, state].

- Purpose Statement: My purpose is to improve the quality of education for inner-city children.
- Vision Statement: My vision is to get my master's degree in education so I can become a reading specialist and help teachers develop student-specific programs that will enable elementary school children to overcome reading disabilities and other obstacles to reading.
- Purpose Statement: My purpose is to improve the quality of education for inner-

city children.

- Vision Statement: My vision is to become a nutritionist and teach parents how to provide better nutrition for their children so the children will have more energy and mental alertness to be able to learn in the classroom.

Do you see how one purpose statement can have a variety of corresponding vision statements? These are just three ways in which such a purpose statement might be specifically applied through a person's individual vision. Visions are specific and concrete.

Vision Must Be Based on the Right Motivation

It is essential to recognize the foundational principle of the underlying motivation in developing a vision, for from this motivation all true leadership derives its essence and context.

Theologian Paul of Tarsus, one of the greatest leaders in history, wrote to his own leader-in-training, Timothy, “If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task” (1 Timothy 3:1). If someone desired to be an “overseer,” it would be a noble desire—as long as his motivation was to fulfill his God-given purpose and vision. The desire to aspire is a reflection of the

character of God in our inner being. It promotes the nature of God if we serve others in His love and promote the fruit of His Spirit. (See Galatians 5:22–23.)

A desire to become what you were created to be is a good thing. A desire to serve others is noble. Yet we need to guard against “setting our hearts” on leadership out of greed, self-centeredness, or a lust for power.

I facilitate many seminars around the world to train those who are in leadership positions in the realms of government, business, religion, and education. During these seminars, I am commonly asked this question: “How can I know if my vision as a leader is

inspired by God and merits the support of many people?”

This question is really one of motivation. My answer is a result of having questioned myself many years ago when I wanted to determine whether my personal passion, desires, and vision in life were divinely inspired. After much contemplation and meditation, I received an answer that has guided me for nearly forty years. The answer was simple: Does your vision improve, enhance, and help humanity? Does your passion make human life better on planet earth and relieve mankind of things that tear down and destroy?

This answer provides the criteria for

all personal dreams, passions, desires, and plans. If your purpose, vision, and goals benefit only you, then they are not divinely inspired. True leadership will always result in the advancement, progress, development, enhancement, improvement, protection, and security of humanity. Leadership inspired by God never destroys but is constructive and progressive. Any desire to lead that does not include empowering others and improving their lives is selfish ambition, and this type of ambition has no place in leadership.

Vision Challenges Convention

Another characteristic of true vision is that it has a tendency to defy

conventional thinking. Leaders must be willing to challenge traditions and experiment with new ideas. When you discover yourself, you become free from the controlling opinions of others.

Leaders have such a strong sense of purpose and security that they welcome the unknown. A leader has to step out in faith.

Thomas Edison never tired of experimenting with new inventions. He accumulated a total of 1093 patents! He certainly didn't allow conventional thinking to rule his experimentation. "The story goes that when a new employee once asked about rules, Edison answered, 'There ain't no rules around here. We're trying to accomplish

something.””13

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when there were few African-American doctors in America, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams became a successful and skillful surgeon, treating black and white patients alike. He was a groundbreaking visionary who saw a need for better health care and medical facilities for black Americans, who often received inferior treatment. Dr. Williams was instrumental in founding Provident Hospital in Chicago, and he inspired the establishment of black hospitals in other cities. He is credited with performing one of the first successful open-heart surgeries, in 1893.¹⁴ Dr. Williams did

not wait for social change but used his vision, skills, and influence to be a catalyst for social change himself by promoting and providing high standards in health care for African-Americans.

Visionaries have to act on their faith in the visions God has placed within them. There are those who say faith is a leap in the dark. I disagree! When we act on vision, we don't leap into the dark. We take great leaps into the light.

A Vision Needs a Plan

Once you understand God's vision for your life, you must develop a plan for fulfilling it. A vision becomes a plan when it is thought out clearly and can be

addressed specifically.

Too many people are trying to live their lives without careful thought or planning. They fail to accomplish their dreams, then wind up unsatisfied and frustrated. What is worse, they may never even realize they haven't accomplished anything in life to fulfill their intended purpose. A rewarding and productive life comes from having a specific plan to fulfill your personal vision.

Proverbs 16:9 says, "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." Your vision plan outlines what you want to do with your life today, six months from now, one

year from now, five years from now, ten years from now, twenty-five years from now, and fifty years from now. People in industrialized nations are living longer and longer lives on average, and a fifty-year plan is not unrealistic, especially if you are a young person still in college. In fact, if you are in your twenties, you may need a seventy-year plan. You will modify and refine your plan over the years as you continue to respond to God's leading. Yet, if you don't have a long-term vision to begin with, you may stop prematurely and never complete your purpose.

Through the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, your concrete vision of faith, and the natural abilities God has

given you, you can develop a plan for your vision. In addition, as you write down your plan on paper or type it on the computer, you can begin to pray for specific help in accomplishing each step of your plan. God gave you the vision, and you must have His help continually in clarifying and fulfilling it.

Again, when you write out your vision, keep in mind that even though it needs to be specific, it isn't necessarily the final word. It isn't a completely finished plan. You will gain a greater understanding of your purpose and vision as you deepen your relationship with your Creator and as you grow as a person. It is a good practice to review your personal vision on a regular basis

and adjust it as needed.

Your vision plan will include goals and objectives. Goals are the various tasks and endeavors you need to complete in order to fulfill your vision. Objectives are the detailed steps of your goals. Ask yourself, What do I need to do first, second, and third, and when do these tasks need to be accomplished? Include specific timetables for completing them.

Vision Requires Commitment

Some people have visions without the will to bring them into reality. An effective leader not only develops a specific vision, but he or she also makes

a strong commitment to it. Jesus expressed this perspective when He said, in effect, “My food is to do the will of My father.” (See John 4:34.)

Committing to your vision will enable you to stay the course with your purpose rather than be distracted by lesser (even if good) or unnecessary things.

I know people who have great ideas but do nothing to accomplish them. They talk about their ideas, but then but when they finish, they just go back home and sit. Vision is the source of self-motivation and discipline.

When I first entertained the idea of getting my bachelor’s degree, I thought it was the farthest thing from me. I sat at

home thinking, No one in my family has ever attended college. What am I doing even thinking about it? Yet I began to keep company with God, and I started to think, School. Attending college didn't happen overnight, however. The first thing I had to do was to get my GED. That was an important objective on the way to accomplishing my vision, and I had to commit to it. I began to study when everyone else was playing. I was doing algebra problems when everyone else was eating lunch. It took work.

After I got my GED, I thought I'd accomplished something big, so I said, "Ready now, Lord?" And He said, "No. You have to take entrance exams." I said, "Oh, no!" So, I started putting my

nose to the grindstone again. I studied and studied and studied, and I passed. Then, the Lord said, “Well, you wanted a B.A. Now you have to go to a university.” I thought, Oh, no, four years of my life. Four years seemed like a long time, at first, but they went by quickly.

When I finished, I thought, I’ve got a B.A. Now, let’s get a master’s degree. I worked at bettering myself. I overcame obstacles. Then, I looked back and thought, What was impossible became possible, and my mind began to open up to even more possibilities. When you have tasted the possibilities, it is very difficult to settle for impossibilities.

Vision Needs Momentum

Many people are going through life with no idea of where they will end up. If you will sit down with a blank sheet of paper or a blank computer screen and clarify your vision, setting goals and objectives for your life, you will find that you will accomplish much more than you might ever have imagined. A vision plan will give you much-needed direction and stimulus.

As you progress toward fulfilling your purpose, you must also recognize the danger of imagining you have accomplished your vision when you have actually fulfilled only part of it. Some people lose momentum too early and miss out on what they were really meant to do. When a leader loses a

vision, in effect, he dies. Leaders must not only conceptualize, plan, and commit to their visions, but they must also make sure to maintain them. See your vision through to the end, as God leads you, despite any roadblocks you may run into.

You may be facing a problem and thinking, I'm never going to get out of this one. Remember the problems you've worked through in the past? They came and they went. So, when problems come, remind yourself that you will be able to get through these difficulties, too. Ask God for encouragement and strength. There's nothing in this world that is not temporary. Keep going! Pursue your vision and fulfill your purpose.

Chapter Six

Share Your Inspiration

The Old Testament patriarch Abraham is considered the forerunner of the major world religions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. He believed, through faith in God's promise to him, that even at the age of one hundred, he could father a child who would give birth to a nation. This is inspiration.

David of Bethlehem, in spite of his youth and lack of military experience, and without formal training or mentoring, believed that he could beat the odds and defeat a nine-foot giant, thereby saving the dignity and integrity

of his nation. He later became the greatest king of Israel. This is inspiration.

Outside the biblical text, there are historical examples of others who have been inspired by their visions of a preferred future. Florence Nightingale was born into a family of wealth and privilege, but she believed she had a calling from God. She devoted her life to improving standards of medical care for both soldiers and civilians, as well as to providing exceptional nurses' training for women. This is inspiration.

Mahatma Gandhi was only five foot five and weighed roughly a hundred pounds, yet he seemed to bear the weight

of millions of his people in India who were crushed under the burden of a colonial empire. He believed that he could face the giant of Great Britain and deliver his people to a better future. This is inspiration.

Nelson Mandela was a simple African lawyer who returned from a respected university in England to his apartheid-oppressed people. He was lifted to a place where he saw a South Africa in which all men were equal, dignified, and free. He was willing to sacrifice the most valuable years of his life in a prison cell for the sake of this dream. This is inspiration.

Mother Teresa left her teaching job

because she envisioned a ministry of serving the “poorest of the poor” in India. In the process, she brought worldwide attention to the plight of the outcast, sick, and destitute. She sparked the same vision in the hearts of many other people who continue to bring care and dignity to those whom society has discarded. This is inspiration.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was persecuted and sent to work camps as punishment for his criticism of Stalin and his opposition to the Soviet system. Yet, through his brilliant writings, he promoted a time when his people would be free from Communist oppression. He motivated others within the Soviet Union to reveal the atrocities committed

against its citizens and inspired people around the world to work toward their liberation. This is inspiration.

Steve Jobs envisioned and developed a small computer that people could use in their workspaces and homes, replacing cumbersome, large-scale computers. Bill Gates saw the potential of giving every person access to people-friendly computer software. His dream led him to establish what became the global Microsoft empire. This is inspiration.

You must first be inspired before you can share your inspiration with others. This inspiration comes from your purpose and vision. When you discover

who you are, why you were born, your value as a human being, and your God-given potential, then and only then can you capture the power of purpose, which generates a vision. By developing your vision, you know clearly what you want and how to pursue it. When your vision becomes an integral part of your thoughts, incentives, plans, and actions, then you will inspire others to join you. You will have energy and passion for living that will motivate those around you. You will begin to experience what it means to be a leader.

Inspiration Is Central to Leadership

If you take away just one truth from this book, let it be that inspiration is

central to leadership. Inspiration is the capacity to cause others to discover themselves, their purposes, and their abilities, and to maximize their potential.

The source of inspiration is our Creator, and He is therefore the source of genuine leadership. Those who do not acknowledge the Creator and have not been reconciled to Him may exhibit manifestations of inspiration because they are still created in His image. Yet for all their influence, they are missing a vital aspect of leadership in the Creator's original and highest plan for humanity. We must be directed and empowered by God's Spirit to lead in a way that reflects the full extent of His purposes for our lives.

To inspire means “to activate, stimulate, energize, illuminate, or motivate by divine influence”; it means “to breathe into.” Paul used the word breathed in explaining the source of Scripture:

All Scripture is God-breathed [“inspired by God” nasb] and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.
(2 Timothy 3:16)

Inspiration is the heart of true leadership, and the breath of the Spirit of God is the source of inspiration. This is why, in order to be the leader that the Creator intended you to be, you must have a personal relationship with God

through His Son Jesus Christ. Allow Him to breathe into your being a purpose and vision for your life that will strengthen your faith and activate a passion in your heart to accomplish His dream. This soul-inspiring vision and passionate drive to fulfill a call transforms one from a follower into a leader. A true leader's work is not a job or career but the very life he lives in becoming what God made him to be. It is his life.

Inspiration is the only foundation for willing obedience based on love. Jesus expressed this principle in His appeal to His disciples, saying, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). The leader's deep commitment

to become and express his true self is the source of inspiration that stimulates others around him to strive to discover and become the best they can be. This commitment to help others generates in them commitment, cooperation, and respect for the leader's authority in his realm of influence. We are leaders to the extent that we can inspire others to join with us in fulfilling the vision. Leadership identifies and develops new talents and releases human potential.

Inspiring Others

Leadership depends on the ability to make people want to join in the vision. This can come only through inspiration. Is your vision God-inspired and

compelling enough that people begin to help you with it, even though they may not have wanted to initially? Consider the effect of Jesus' leadership on His disciples. For example, when He said, "Let's go to Samaria," they didn't want to go. I imagine they were thinking, We don't mix with the Samaritans. But Jesus sat on a well right outside Samaria and talked with a troubled Samaritan woman in order to help them see the vision He had for the Samaritans. When that conversation was over, the nearby Samaritan town invited Jesus to stay there, and all the disciples went along. (See John 4:3–42.)

I believe most of these Samaritans were looking around and saying, "These

Jews are in our town?” Jesus’ disciple Peter might have said, “I’m here only because of Him.” Of course, after Peter was filled with the Spirit of God, he went back with John and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, also. He and John preached the gospel in many Samaritan villages. (See Acts 8:14–25.) The key to mobilizing others is inspiration. If you can inspire, you can mobilize. This is leadership.

J. Oswald Sanders wrote, “The ability to inspire others to serve and sacrifice is the mark of a true leader.”¹⁵ Inspiration is the capacity to mobilize, activate, motivate, stimulate, and cause others—by your own character and vision—to initiate a change of their own

priorities and to participate in a corporate vision. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream that Americans of every race could live without prejudice and racism, and that they could be judged only by the “content of their character.” He paid the ultimate sacrifice for this dream but helped change both the laws of his country and the hearts of many of its people. In the process, he inspired others to share his vision and to work toward its fulfillment.

Inspiration is the foundation of true cooperation. When a leader conveys his vision, those who receive it become excited about participating because they see how their own purposes and visions find fulfillment in it. Participating in a

corporate vision is not meant to give you vision. You should have your own vision to begin with. Rather, your exposure to a corporate vision can stir up your personal vision as you discover a way to put your vision into practice through it. Always remember that you don't receive your vision from other people, but you often fulfill it in conjunction with others. The leader of the corporate vision helps to activate the passions, dreams, gifts, and talents of those who participate with him in carrying out the vision.

The Power of Inspiration

In 1980, Ronald Reagan inspired the American people with a message of

optimism after they had experienced years of recession, gasoline shortages, and daily newscasts about American hostages in Iran. His platform of a return to prosperity and strength resonated with many people in both parties. His popularity stemmed not only from his wit and communication skills, but also from his ability to connect with Americans and inspire them on a basic level concerning their belief in the values of optimism, ingenuity, and freedom.

During the highly contested U.S. presidential race of 2008, a young man of mixed race (his father was black, from Kenya, and his mother was white, from the United States) surprised many

by emerging as the presidential candidate for the Democratic Party. As I write this book, the outcome of the election is still being decided.

Regardless of party affiliation, or whether they agree with his political positions or not, people acknowledge Barack Obama's ability to inspire others. He first came into the national spotlight when he gave a speech about his vision for America at the Democratic National Convention in 2004 while he was running for the U.S. Senate. This speech received favorable reviews from people on both sides of the aisle and in the media. People could feel the passion coming from him because of his vision. After declaring his candidacy for the

2008 presidential race, he subsequently inspired many people, who came out for his public appearances and responded to his message of “hope.” He even inspired members of the Kennedy family political dynasty to support him. His candidacy is the result of his power to inspire.

Inspirational power takes many forms and involves all areas of life, not just the political realm. In 1753, Jacques-Louis David painted *The Oath of the Horatii*. The picture depicts three Roman soldiers with arms outstretched toward swords, and against the backdrop of sorrowing families. Painted in a time before telecommunications, the picture’s style and theme had a powerful impact on those who viewed it. It not only

altered perceptions of art and set a new direction in regard to the prevailing style of painting, but it also stirred feelings of duty, honor, and patriotism in many French citizens, moving them to see the need for positive changes in their society.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the art form of film was influenced by Australian director Peter Jackson. His passion for capturing the themes and characters of J. R. R. Tolkien's best-selling trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* inspired a film executive to stake the continued existence of his movie studio on the success of Jackson's three *Rings* films, which would be shot one right after the other. This was an

unprecedented move, since most studios wait to see if one film is successful before bankrolling another. Jackson's vision, creativity, and attention to detail in making the films inspired the cast and crew, as well as enthusiastic movie audiences and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The Academy awarded eleven Oscars to the third film, placing the movie a three-way tie for the most Oscars ever given to a single film. All three Rings movies are among the most successful films ever made.

Inspiration versus Manipulation

Inspiration is the most important force in leadership, not only because it motivates, but also because it protects

the leader from the temptation to manipulate others. Again, would-be leaders who cannot inspire others often resort to manipulation. Whenever you manipulate people, you are no longer a true leader—you have become a dictator. Inspiration is the currency of exchange between the leader and those who join in his vision. Once you inspire people, they give you their energies. You don't need to manipulate, coerce, or bribe anyone.

If leaders are to share their vision and inspiration with others, they must learn to communicate effectively with people. As we saw in the account of Jesus teaching His disciples about His vision for the Samaritans, people

sometimes need to be brought into a receptive frame of mind in order to be open to a leader's inspiration. A good leader discovers and refines his own communication style and endeavors to understand the mind-set and needs of his audience. An indispensable asset to a leader in this regard is a sense of humor and the ability to laugh at himself. Humor helps a leader to maintain a proper perspective in life and to reach out to others. With a healthy sense of humor, leaders can transform tense situations into positive environments and create an atmosphere of understanding.

In 1974, I went to preach in a little town right outside Tulsa, Oklahoma. It seemed like I was the only black man in

town. They didn't see black people in that area very often, and the only thing they really knew about blacks was that they were once slaves. I was invited there by a professor who wanted me to preach in a church. When I stood up, all I saw were white faces. They had come to see this young man from Oral Roberts University, and then they realized, He's black. I could feel the tension. Perhaps they thought that only white people went to Oral Roberts, and then the school sent me.

As I stood there with all those beautiful faces looking at me, I could tell that they didn't know what to do. They were nervous. So I said, "Do you all know how I feel? I feel like a raisin in a

bowl of cornflakes.” They laughed and they laughed until they couldn’t laugh anymore. When they were finished, I started to preach and everything was all right. When I was through preaching, about sixteen people came forward to give their hearts to God. I was invited back to that church three times to preach, and they invited members from all the other local churches to come hear me. It was exciting.

You must have the ability to laugh at yourself. This is very important. Some people are too hard on themselves. Have you ever slipped and fallen in front of people? What should you do in that circumstance? Get up and laugh with them and say, “Did you see what I just

did? Isn't that funny? I just fell down.” Laugh, because if it had been somebody else, you would have laughed.

“A happy heart makes the face cheerful” (Proverbs 15:13). “All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast” (Proverbs 15:15). “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones” (Proverbs 17:22). Why do you take medicine? To get well when you're sick. A leader can go to someone who is depressed and downhearted and lift him out of his discouragement with a smile and some humor. It's rare for you to smile and not get one in return. A smile is something that you can't buy; you can't bribe someone for it. It is a gift

we give each other. The spirit of a leader is cheerful, pleasant, optimistic, positive, and open.

Leadership Is Contagious Inspiration

Leadership can be summarized as contagious inspiration. After a vision is ignited in the heart of the leader and catches on in the hearts of others, it begins to be carried along by the energy and momentum of people who envision the possibilities of a better future, a more effective product, a new cure, a more enriching environment, a life-changing perspective, or a renewed life.

What is your vision? Does it inspire you in your life, work, and

relationships? Are you ready to share it with others?

Chapter Seven

Commit to Principles and Values

Leaders are individuals whose characters have been tested, proven, and established as being faithful and trustworthy. Warren Bennis wrote, “Integrity is the basis of trust, which is not as much an ingredient of leadership as it is a product. It is the one quality that cannot be acquired but must be earned. It is given by coworkers and followers, and without it, the leader can’t function.”¹⁶ Trustworthiness is a product of character and competence—who you are and what you do. To become an effective leader, you must

earn the trust of others.

George Washington served alongside the most intelligent, gifted, and influential men of the remarkable group of leaders who came together during the American Revolution—men such as Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton. Yet all of them considered Washington to be the greatest man they knew. Why? His personal integrity caused these powerful and talented men to respect and admire him as their undisputed leader.

Principles and values are natural components in the successful realization of a leader's vision. True leadership,

therefore, always includes a personal code of ethics and standards that safeguard the character necessary for the leader to pursue and fulfill his purpose and vision. It is vital for a leader to develop his own sense of self and his role in the world. It is equally vital for a leader to test himself and his beliefs and principles. The world longs for people who will stand up for what they believe, even if they have to stand alone, because we can have confidence in such people.

Dangers of Unprincipled Leadership

There seems to be a deep desire in the unregenerate spirit of humanity—that which has not been reconciled to the Creator and is not being guided by His

Spirit for leadership—to dominate others and to use power for other selfish purposes. History is full of case studies of people who rose to powerful leadership positions through both legitimate and illegitimate means and then began to expose the dark motives of their hearts. Their immoral motives resulted in the suffering, abuse, and destruction of many innocent lives.

Adolf Hitler came to office promising the German people a return to their former glory as a nation. Yet, once he was führer, his distorted values and desire for self-glorification grew increasingly clear as he persecuted Germany's citizens for his own selfish purposes, instigated the Second World

War, and ordered or caused the killing of millions.

The leaders of the Russian Revolution promised equality for all citizens, but the aftermath under the Soviet Union was decades of oppression of its people and a waste of generations of potential.

William Shakespeare had remarkable insight into human nature and the dangers of a lust for power. In his play Richard III, he depicted a jealous and self-absorbed man who would go to any lengths in order to be king and gain power—even to the point of murdering a number of people, including his wife and two young nephews who were before

him in succession to the throne. Even more tragic is Shakespeare's play Macbeth, in which the title character, who was once a noble and honest man, becomes corrupted by a lust for power, urged on by the selfish ambitions of his wife.

In every area of life—government, business, religion, media, education, and so forth—there are people who aspire to positions of leadership and influence motivated by selfish ambitions. They may not go to the extreme of persecuting or murdering people, but their selfish ambition causes other types of human and social destruction.

- How might tax-paying citizens

be better off if various corporate leaders had not participated in financial impropriety? How would the lives of these executives, their families, and their employees be different? How might the financial markets be different today?

- How might the lives of people from certain drought-stricken nations been different if their leaders hadn't lined their pockets with foreign aid rather than giving it to those who needed it?
- How might the lives of people

in nations torn by civil war be different if their leaders and other instigators had pursued constructive solutions to political and ethnic differences instead of promoting the annihilation of those who are different from them?

- How might the lives and health of many young people be different if they had not been encouraged to experiment with drugs by those seeking monetary gain while ignoring the loss of life and personal potential?

- How might the integrity of baseball and other sports be stronger today if athletes had refused to be tempted by or pressured to take steroids or participate in illegal gambling?
- How might the families and constituents of politicians who have fallen because of sexual and financial scandals be living happier and more secure lives—instead of feeling ashamed and betrayed—if the politicians had lived lives of integrity?
- How might the social fabric

be different today if many law firms did not promote spurious lawsuits and greed on behalf of their clients?

- How might the faith of parishioners be stronger and more vital if their spiritual leaders hadn't violated their trust by being involved in extramarital affairs, molestation, or the misuse of funds?
- How might the emotional mind-set of many children be healthier today if their parents had thought more about them than their own selfish

pursuits?

- How might the lives of millions of individuals be free from guilt, depression, and even disease if they had decided not to compromise their standards for temporary pleasure or gain?

No matter what realm of life we may discuss, principles and values are all-important with regard to quality of life—for both the leader and those whom he influences and affects. True leadership cannot be divorced from the basic qualities that produce good, sound character. Leadership involves the total person and therefore cannot be relegated

to a “professional compartment” of our lives. There are many who insist that their personal lives should not be linked with their professional positions as leaders, and that their activities and behaviors outside their leadership roles have no bearing on their ability to perform. This grave error has accounted for the tragic downfall of many great men and women who attempted to violate this principle of the integration of the complete self in leadership.

Because leadership is a matter of inspiration based on character, you must study and embrace the qualities that make for strong character if you are going to exercise the capacity of quality leadership that the world needs today.

Trust is not a gift or a talent but a product of time-tested character forged in the midst of life's trials. A time-tested life is the raw material of character and trust.

Leaders develop the characteristics that qualify them for a distinguished place of trustworthiness. If you want to become the leader you have the potential to become, you must commit to strong principles and values.

The Overarching Principles of Love and Service

Effective leadership does not come as a result of an ambition to lead or to be great but from a deep desire to serve

others. In teaching His disciples about leadership, Jesus emphasized the overarching principle of service:

When [Jesus] was in the house, he asked [His disciples], “What were you arguing about on the road?” But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.”(Mark 9:33–35)

Jesus called [His disciples] 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)

In God’s kingdom, leadership doesn’t come to anyone who is trying to be the big shot or who is doing things just to be seen. It comes to those who serve others, putting their needs first. Paul echoed this truth when he wrote, “Serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Galatians 5:13–14). If we truly love others, we will treat them as we would want to be treated. Love and service go together. Love is the highest

law and principle of a leader: “If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right” (James 2:8).

Leadership Values

Paul outlined for his leader-in-training, Timothy, many of the values that are needed for true leadership. In every field of leadership, these values are essential requirements.

If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able

to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders. (1 Timothy 3:1–7)

During the race for the presidency of the United States in 1992, the candidates—Bill Clinton, governor of Arkansas and George H. W. Bush, the incumbent president—were engaged in an intense

battle over issues of personal character and morals. Many considered these issues to be less important than political and governing abilities. However, it is evident from the above passage that biblical qualifications for leadership include all aspects of an individual's character. These qualities not only characterize effective leaders, but they also serve as signs of progress for any society. I have grouped these qualities into leadership values.

The Value of Faithfulness

Faithfulness is a virtue of character that applies to all aspects of leadership. Each of us has talents, but we must be faithful to use them. You might have

potential as a piano player, but if you don't make time to practice, your talent will not serve you well. Similarly, being a talented leader isn't enough; you must also be faithful to develop the character of leadership.

A man or woman's faithfulness in leadership will always be proven in his or her marriage relationship. We call people who break their marriage vows "unfaithful." In our church, engaged couples go through an entire year of premarital counseling. One of the principles I teach is that the Bible plainly tells men they should enjoy the "wife of their youth," even in old age. (See Proverbs 5:18; Malachi 2:13–16.) The Creator's original and best plan for

human beings is one husband for one wife and fidelity within that relationship.

One aspect of faithfulness is that your word can be trusted. An unfaithful partner is someone who breaks his or her word. When a couple gets married, words make the marriage legal—words such as “I do” or “I will.” A marriage contract is signed with words: the couple’s names. If you break your promise of faithfulness to your spouse, it reflects on your capacity to be faithful in a position of leadership. A leader must set a high standard in his or her marital relationship and commit to faithfulness.

The Value of Self-Control

Whenever you are placed in a position of leadership, you automatically become a target of temptation. If a thousand people are gathered together and one person is put above the crowd, he becomes an easier target than if he were still in the crowd. In other words, when you become a leader, you are usually in a highly visible position, and you become attractive to many interests. Why do leaders have to fight against the temptations of lust, bribery, financial greed, and gluttony? It is because their positions make them vulnerable. Yet they are responsible for resisting these temptations.

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood

the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don’t be deceived.(James 1:12–16)

While external temptations will inevitably come, the leader must call upon his inner strength and commitment to withstand them. That strength includes the encouragement and power of God’s Spirit, who lives within him. “No

temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Inner strength also refers to the leader’s fortitude, which he has established ahead of time by setting standards that he is committed to maintaining, regardless of the circumstances.

Many people fall under every new temptation, whether it is lust, greed, fear, or something else. They have no control or integrity to safeguard themselves and to give themselves a clear perspective. Some people sacrifice their principles

for personal gain or fame. If you want to be a leader but cannot control your passions, wait a while before accepting a leadership position. Now, more than ever, we need leaders who will maintain their integrity and will not fall into temptation's trap and subsequently into disgrace. Be forewarned that traps will be set to entangle you, now and in the future.

Let me ask you: Are you conscious of your weaknesses? Some of you may think you will evade temptation, but beware—traps are being set for you, too. “If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!” (1 Corinthians 10:12). If you desire to be a leader, look for these traps. They are all

around you. “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith” (1 Peter 5:8–9). Watch over your heart diligently. (See Proverbs 4:23 nasb.)

The Value of Steadiness

Learning self-control enables a leader to fulfill the value of steadiness or temperateness. James, a leader in the first-century church, encouraged the recipients of his teachings, “Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” (James 1:19). If you are steadfast, it means you respond with calmness and gentleness the first time,

the second time, and the ninetieth time. You don't interrupt people, assume you know what they are going to say, or fly off the handle. You value the worth and dignity of those around you.

How do you react when people say something unexpected or when situations don't go as you would like? Are you able to respond in a constructive way? When a problem or crisis occurs, are you able to think through your options calmly and positively? Can you maintain the confidence of those looking to you for leadership? This kind of steadiness is a much-needed trait among leaders today. The book of Proverbs warns us, "Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for

him...An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins” (Proverbs 29:20, 22).

The Value of Integrity toward Those Served

Learning to withstand temptation also helps a leader to uphold the value of integrity toward those he serves and influences. Paul stated that one who aspires to become a leader must have a good reputation in all circles. In essence, a leader develops a character that is not open to attack or censure because it is above reproach. He strengthens and builds up his community through his ethical example and his trustworthy contributions.

In addition, Paul said that a leader is hospitable. He is generous and open toward those around him and is willing to work for and with others for their good. He does not pursue his vision only for what he will get out of it but for how it will help his family, community, and nation.

The Value of Responsible Communication

Paul said that a leader is able to teach. This ability to teach will take different forms depending on one's field of leadership. However, those who are able to teach have certain qualities. First, they study the areas of life related to their visions, learning what they need

to carry them out effectively. Second, they seek understanding from the knowledge they collect so they can put it into perspective and gain wisdom in how to apply it. Third, they are able to communicate their knowledge and wisdom to others who are involved in their visions, whether directly or tangentially, and who need the information and wisdom to fulfill their roles in the visions. All three of these areas are the responsibility of a leader.

The Value of Personal Integrity

Leaders in all walks of life must demonstrate their commitment to the highest ideals and principles of the Word of God, never compromising the

standards of truth and honesty. We have already looked at the areas of faithfulness and resisting temptation, but there is a whole range of issues and circumstances in which integrity is needed in a leader. The more familiar you are with God's Word, the more you will be able to recognize pitfalls to your integrity and seek to maintain values consistent with the nature of the Creator.

The Value of Maturity

The value of maturity may be seen in the qualities of responsibility and humility.

Responsibility

Many people are well-meaning and desire to serve as leaders, but it is those who are faithful to what they have been given who are ushered into leadership. It's easier to get excited about a vision than it is to remain faithful to it. As we have seen, faithfulness in the little things is the qualification for promotion to bigger things: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much....And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?" (Luke 16:10, 12).

Faithfulness in caring for and using what we have been given is a quality of

maturity. Leaders love responsibility. Do you welcome responsibility? Even if someone says to you, “I’d like you to vacuum the rug in the lobby,” accept the task as a road to leadership. Think of yourself as the leader over the vacuum cleaner with a responsibility toward God. God is watching to see just how well you perform in this area. If you are lazy and clean only the most visible part of the rug near the front doors but leave the rest dirty, God will take note. He will conclude, “You are halfhearted.” Do you think He will give you greater responsibility?

Some people are afraid of a little responsibility. They pray that their supervisors, pastors, community leaders,

or parents won't ask them to do anything: Oh, Lord, don't let her ask me to take charge of that project. Don't let him ask me to clean the church. Don't let her ask me to help with those preparations. Don't let them ask me to take care of that person.

Leadership is fostered in the individual who believes that within him lies the potential to face and handle any task. He is not afraid to make decisions or to accept the consequences of those decisions. This is the exercise of responsibility.

God will use people who are excited about responsibility, who welcome it with willing hearts. They ask, "Can I

help with anything? Can I do anything else?” That’s the kind of person I like to have around me.

I have a friend named Leroy who is a man of God. The Lord uses him to minister to me in ways that nobody knows. Leroy is always asking, “Is there anything else I can do?” There’s always something to do, but there are people who will avoid me because they don’t want to work. Yet when God wants to do something great, they’re the first ones who want to go along. Imagine the Lord saying, “You know, I’ve been watching you for twelve months, and when the work gets hard, you’re the first one to go home. I’ll use someone else who’s willing to work.” If you’re going to be

lazy, be lazy by yourself where nobody else can be influenced by you!

In Genesis, we find the account of Joseph. (See Genesis 30:23–50:26.) Despite devastating trials and opposition, he remained faithful and was diligent in exercising responsibility. He was a self-starter who took on responsibility unasked, and he did not turn it down when it was offered to him. When Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream by a revelation from God, the ruler said, in effect, "I want you to take charge of my house, my servants, and the land, economy, and social work of my country. You are in charge." Did Joseph answer, "But I've never studied social work, I don't know anything about

economics, and I don't have any experience in politics"? No. Instead, he asked, "When do you want me to start?" The Bible says that Joseph took a chariot and went throughout the land checking out his new responsibilities. (See Genesis 41:39–46.)

What do you do when you are given responsibility? Do you say, "They are always picking on me and asking me to do something," or "I'm afraid to try something new"? There are two reasons why a leader will pick you: (1) you're lazy, and he is trying to get you moving, or (2) you're the kind of person who always wants responsibility, and he can use you and depend on you. If you qualify in the second area, you're on

your way to leadership. Winston Churchill said, “The price of greatness is responsibility.”¹⁷

Humility

A true leader is not only responsible, but he is also humble. Paul wrote that a leader should not be a new convert and inexperienced or he may be tempted to become conceited from being placed in a position over others. A person inexperienced in the values and principles of leadership could easily miss the whole point of leadership and use it for selfish ambition, personal gain, and a false sense of security. One who has worked hard to understand leadership and become an honorable and

mature leader will exhibit the quality of humility. He will be comfortable with himself and be aware of his strengths without thinking they make him better than others. He will use these strengths for the benefit of others, while being well aware of his weaknesses and protecting himself from vulnerability. Most of all, he will be filled with gratitude that he is able to live each day moving toward the fulfillment of his God-given vision. Humility is a hallmark of maturity.

Recovering from Moral Failure

One of the greatest tragedies in the world is when someone with tremendous potential falls and then feels he can

never get up again. Yet the lives of noted leaders like Moses provide hope and inspiration for us all. Moses rashly murdered a man, thinking that in doing so he was helping those whom he had a vision of freeing from oppression. His vision was correct, but his methods were wrong. He hadn't learned to seek God to find out the methods God wanted to use to bring about their freedom. After this experience, Moses went into exile for many years, but that was not the end of God's plan for him.

Forty years after the murder, God said to him, "I want to use you." Moses replied, "You don't understand; I don't qualify. I'm not impressive. I don't have anything going for me." God said, "I

want to use you anyway.” Why? Because during the forty years Moses had spent as a shepherd in the desert, he had gained leadership qualities, including patience and the ability to endure hardship. He had learned enough so that God said, in effect, “You are the kind of man I can use.” (See Exodus 2:11–3:12.)

If you have failed in some way, you must take time out to see what went wrong. You need to seek forgiveness and develop self-control, steadiness, maturity, and all the values of leadership. Trust the Creator to restore you to leadership when you are ready for it. Remember, true character is made in secret and displayed openly.

When a leader fails, he is usually rejected by those whom he has been leading because of this breach of faith. The following are recommendations for healing and restoration.

“Falling Up”

Leaders are normally trained in how to succeed, but they rarely are taught how to fail effectively. They fall down, but they don't know how to “fall up” after failing. The road of history is littered with the remains of leaders who lost their character, such as political leaders, religious leaders, corporate/business leaders, husbands, wives, aspiring presidents and prime ministers, kings, and noblemen and

women. These have all tasted the death-dealing poison of falling from the pinnacle of trust. However, failing in leadership is not as great as failing to deal with that failure effectively.

Failure in leadership is the closing of the account of trust. This is the most difficult experience a leader will ever face because trust is the currency of leadership success. It is impossible to lead those who do not trust you. Trust is a deposit on the leadership account by the followers over a long period of time. The account is maintained by the leader's continual faithfulness and protection of that trust. The leader protects the trust account with his integrity and character. Violation of the

trust account by a self-imposed destruction of this integrity and character cannot be restored merely by forgiveness. While the followers may forgive the leader immediately, the trust account will still be depleted.

The leader must constantly be aware that a trust account, which may have been built over thirty or forty years, can be cancelled in thirty or forty seconds. The challenge in this regard is that a leader who has failed cannot expect the account to be reestablished as a result of his remorse, confession, and repentance. In fact, it may take longer to restore the account than it originally took to build it.

What Should a Fallen Leader Do?

It is tragic to observe the disgraceful descent of many respected leaders who, by their own indiscretion, lack of discipline, lack of responsibility, and abuse of privilege, destroy their characters and sell their integrity for temporary pleasures. Many such leaders have made the mistake of believing that their past accomplishments, achievements, and reputations can be exchanged for the trust they have lost. This is not so. The following are the steps to restoration, reconciliation, and reclamation:

1. Admission of one's need for help.
2. Confession of one's violation

of trust.

3. Identification of a true and reliable authority in one's life to be accountable to.
4. Complete submission to that authority without condition.
5. Obedience to the advice, counsel, and instruction of that authority without condition.
6. Acceptance of full responsibility for one's fall.
7. Agreement never to attempt to defend oneself or one's act of indiscretion.

8. Agreement to allow the authority to represent and speak on one's behalf to one's constituency and the greater community.
9. Total submission to the discretion of the authority with regard to one's readiness to return to public service.
10. Permanent establishment of a relationship with the authority for ongoing accountability.

If a leader follows these steps, he can find healing and restoration. The safest course to take when you fall is to return quickly to your relationship with God

and to submit yourself to a qualified human authority.

Failure is not the termination of the leader's call, assignment, gifts, or talents. It must be seen as a detour, an interruption, and even an attempt to cancel destiny. If you have fallen down, it's time for you to "fall up" and seek restoration.

The Fuel of Leadership Is Trust

If the source of leadership is inspiration and the life of leadership is confidence, then the fuel of leadership is trust. We have seen that effective leadership is essentially built on the foundation of inspirational power and an

honorable life that produces confidence in one's character. Trust is a product of time and integrity.

Leadership values can be summed up by this passage about the fruit of the Spirit of God:

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22–25)

Chapter Eight

Express Your Passion

Passion comes from inspiration and is a vital catalyst for leadership. We have seen that a catalyst is “an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action.”¹⁸ Michelangelo was so involved in painting the Sistine Chapel that he went for weeks without changing his clothes, stopping only to get something to eat or to take a brief period to sleep. That’s a passion for purpose! Life with purpose provides the fuel for passion, persistence, and perseverance.

The Catalyst of Passion

Passion Motivates

When a leader is passionate about his purpose and vision, he does not need others to motivate him to work. He is his own motivation. He is a self-starter. He has a drive to work out the details of his vision plan. His passion directs the management of his time, resources, and priorities. He organizes his life to be able to fulfill his vision and is frustrated when he is unable to work toward it.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” Do you have a vision that gives you a wholehearted motivation for living and working? One sign that you have come to understand your true purpose is that you possess a passion that motivates.

Passion Energizes

Someone who is doing what he was born to do is filled with energy and excitement. He can't wait to get out of bed in the morning. How many people drag themselves to work, push themselves through the day, and long for the weekends? Leaders have a strong desire to fulfill their visions. They can't sit still until they've made progress toward them. Here is an indication of whether or not you are pursuing your true purpose: If you are able to eliminate what you're doing and still be happy, then you're not passionate about it.

The leader's energy also gives him consistency. He doesn't stop working

because of boredom or the myriad distractions he encounters daily. Sometimes, he even has to remind himself to eat or sleep. He wants to be doing what he is doing. Working on his vision doesn't deplete his energy but only seems to fuel it.

Passion Renews

Passion not only motivates and energizes, but it also renews the whole person. It satisfies the spirit because the person is fulfilling the purpose of his Creator and is doing what he was meant to do. It refreshes the soul because pursuing purpose and vision brings interest in life and hope for the future. It also often reinvigorates the body, giving

people energy they never knew they had, relieving stress and tension, and sometimes even lessening or alleviating other physical symptoms.

Passion Fortifies

Passion causes people to keep going regardless of obstacles because they are focused on fulfilling their purposes. In this way, it gives them both persistence and resilience. Newt Gingrich said, “Perseverance is the hard work you do after you get tired of doing the hard work you already did.”¹⁹ Persistence, resilience, and perseverance are essential because opposition and setbacks are part of the process of fulfilling vision. Moreover, these

qualities are especially needed when a leader experiences failure. Passion for purpose stirs him to get back up and keep moving toward his vision.

An Unconquerable Force

Passion is a desire that is greater than opposition and stronger than death. This idea is expressed in the Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon: “Love is as strong as death. . . . It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned” (Song of Songs 8:6–7).

It was passion that led Florence Nightingale to discard her personal opportunities in order to bring comfort to the sick and wounded on and off the battlefield. It was passion that caused theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer to join the German resistance during World War II and give up his life to free his country from Hitler and Nazism.

We see that passion for purpose is stronger than death when a person's vision is captured and carried on by others after he dies. It was passion that motivated Mother Teresa to resign from her teaching job and devote her life to helping the poor and outcast. Today, her legacy and work continue in the lives of those she has inspired. The greatest

example of a passionate purpose greater than death is Jesus Christ. He said, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). The power of His life, death, and resurrection changed the course of history, reconciled untold numbers of people to the Creator, and gave humanity eternal hope for the future.

Communicating Your Passion to the World

Expressing passion for purpose takes a variety of forms because every person’s vision is unique. Let’s look, therefore, at three general areas in which passion is communicated in tangible

ways. These areas overlap at times, but they can be identified as distinct expressions of passionate vision.

A Passion for Creating, Building, or Producing

Some people express their passion for purpose primarily through what they create, build, or produce. Whether it is the making of a work of art, a building, an invention, or an organization, the outcome is a reflection of a passion born in the heart and carried out through the mind and body. A passion for depicting movement in sculpture led artist Auguste Rodin to bring about a revival in the art form.²⁰ A passion for creating buildings led architect Frank Lloyd Wright to

design and oversee the construction of many famous structures, such as the Johnson Wax Building in Wisconsin, Fallingwater in Pennsylvania, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York. A passion for invention inspired Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, and others to produce many of the forerunners of the conveniences we enjoy today, such as the lightbulb, phonograph, and telephone. Do you have a passion to create, build, or produce?

A Passion for Positive Contribution

Other people express their passion for purpose through their efforts to bring positive advancements to the world. Let's look at just one area: medical

advancements. A passion for eliminating disease led Louis Pasteur to prove that germs are connected with disease and to invent the process of what became known as “pasteurization.” A passion for healing inspired Clara Barton to found the American Red Cross. A passion for saving lives led Willem Kolff to invent the first artificial kidney dialysis machine. A passion for seeing children live healthy lives has motivated actor Jerry Lewis to devote decades of his own life to raising money to fund research to cure muscular dystrophy and to assist those who suffer from it. Do you have a passion for a positive contribution in the world?

A Passion for Eliminating Wrongs

Still others express their passion by working to eliminate wrongs in society. J. Oswald Sanders wrote, “Leaders who have impacted their generations did so only after they got angry at injustice and abuse among men.”²¹ Some people’s visions are born out of something they are angry about. They may be angry about unethical behavior, homelessness, crime, or hunger. Those who love the Creator and His ways hate wrongdoing. They hate the pain it causes people so much that it makes them mad. I get angry when I see young people being destroyed by drugs. I hate it. I love those young people, but I hate what is killing them.

A true leader hates the things God

hates. Jesus became very angry with those who were using God's holy temple as a market. (See John 2:14–17.) He also became angry with those whose hearts were so hard that they didn't want a man to be healed because of their own selfish agendas. (See Mark 3:1–5.) God hates pride but loves mercy. On a different occasion, Jesus quoted these words to some of the same people: “Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice’” (Matthew 9:13; see also Hosea 6:6). Paul became angry with those who were preaching legalism and drawing the Galatians away from freedom in Jesus Christ. (See Galatians 5:11–13.)

The wrongs of society stir up true

leaders to find just and practical solutions. Compassion itself can be a product of anger against that which hurts humanity. Yet leaders must be careful to properly direct their anger so that it results in real solutions rather than just rage and frustration. They must also guard against cynicism and despair. Indignation against evil becomes a legitimate vision when a leader's passion is channeled in positive and constructive ways. Do you have a passion to eliminate wrongs in your nation or in the world?

From Inspiration to Implementation

Are you beginning to see the connection between purpose, vision, and

passion? Passion enables us to move forward with our God-given visions, to go from inspiration to implementation.

What are you passionate about? Are you frustrated because you would truly like to do something that you haven't yet been able to? Take some time to consider what motivates, energizes, renews, and fortifies you—or what would generate those effects in you. Then, think about how to communicate your passion to the world, because passion is the catalyst for leadership.

Chapter Nine

Empower Others

We have seen that a leader is one who guides by influence. In essence, a person can have “subordinates” but no one whom he is effectively leading. If, as a leader, you think of those who are participating in your vision as being less than you are, you will usually view them as a resource to be managed rather than as potential leaders to be developed.

In contrast, a leader is one who leads others to leadership. He leads himself first and then inspires others to follow him into leadership. Another way of saying this is that a leader is one who deploys himself²² and, by so doing,

inspires others to do the same.

Consequently, a true leader is more concerned with deployment than with employment—for himself and for others.

How to Discourage and Stifle People: “Leading” by Authoritarian Power

Some of what we call leadership is really only a flaunting of authoritarian power. This situation is usually characterized by the following:

- A controlling atmosphere. Some people “lead” by promoting an environment of fear, intimidation, obligation, dependency, or guilt.

- A discouragement of creativity and individuality. Ideas are imposed from the top down, and there is no room for a contribution of ideas and solutions by subordinates.
- A lack of teamwork. When people are not encouraged to work together, are pitted against one another, and are excluded from the mission of a company or organization, they will usually retreat into their “corners” and take on an attitude of self-preservation. This separation and estrangement can lead to

unnecessary repetition of tasks, suspicion, apathy, power struggles, and decreased productivity.

- An absence of appreciation and credit. Authoritarian power is not concerned with the contributions of subordinates except to make sure that they have completed their tasks. Those who wield such power don't credit those who have played a role in successes, but they are quick to blame others when there are mistakes and losses.

All those who “lead” in this way may

have plenty of employees or workers, and even colleagues, but they also have few or no followers or leaders-in-training—without whom they cannot become real leaders. Authoritarian power nullifies people's potential and stifles them spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and sometimes physically.

Common Responses to a Flaunting of Power

Those who use authoritarian methods lack followers who are developing into leaders. This is due to three highly predictable responses to their abuse of power:

1. Resistance (Fight): When

someone is pushed by someone else, the natural reaction is almost always to push back. Authoritarian power can lead to resentment, angry confrontations, and emotional outbursts.

2. Resignation (Flight): Most of us do not enjoy fighting, and we certainly do not like a steady diet of it. When faced with a relationship characterized by continual conflict, we try to get away from it. People may temporarily tolerate an unpleasant environment, hoping that it will change. But

as that hope wanes, those who find more promising environments tend to leave.

3. Submission (Succumbing to Pressure): Of the three alternatives, the saddest and most depressing is this one. In some cases, subordinates function in a way that is almost subhuman. In an attempt to avoid conflict and risk, submissive subordinates make little or no effort to think or to contribute to the organization.

Leadership Principles for
Empowering Others

Obviously, authoritarian power leaves much to be desired. As a leader, you can cultivate others by keeping in mind the following empowerment principles:

Leadership Is a Commitment to People

True leadership never exists for itself. A leader who empowers others recognizes their value. He does not attempt to clone them or to make everyone else over in his image. His deep desire is to help them discover themselves and deploy their abilities, talents, gifts, and potential. To him, as long as people who work together have the same goals, it is not important that

they have the same personalities and ways of accomplishing things.

What is your attitude toward your colleagues, employees, friends, and family members? Do you expect others to think and act exactly as you do? Or do you recognize and appreciate their individual personalities, gifts, and contributions? Do you acknowledge the distinct ways in which people may accomplish the same task according to their personalities? Leadership values the unique styles and skills of each person who contributes to the whole.

Leadership Promotes Teamwork

A leader's vision cannot be

accomplished with an individualist attitude. No great work was ever done by just one person. The Charlie Chaplin film Metropolis depicts workers as mere cogs in the chain of industry. Yet, the basic function of the leader (after inspiring others in his vision) is to provide an environment that fosters mutual respect and builds a complementary, cohesive team where each unique strength is made productive and each weakness is made irrelevant.

Leaders Set an Example

A leader recognizes that the tone and standards he sets for the accomplishment of his vision have a direct bearing on his ability to empower others. If he

influences those who share his vision in a positive way, progress will be made. If he resorts to authoritarian power, unjust practices, or carelessness, he jeopardizes the vision. The quality and integrity of daily advancement toward the vision are his responsibility. Leaders must act with integrity, modeling their expectations and clarifying the necessary requirements of the vision.

The leader's attitude is all-important. He must be confident about his vision if others are to be confident about it, as well. Because of his own belief in his vision, the leader inspires others to believe that accomplishing it is truly possible.

Leaders Know and Encourage People's Abilities

Leaders enable people to discover and to fulfill their own God-given purposes. To do this, they invest time, resources, and energy in learning about and encouraging the abilities of others. They recognize others' potential and help them to develop their skills and talents in both breadth and depth.

Leaders Show Appreciation for People's Contributions

Leaders consider success a corporate issue, not a personal one. While pursuing their visions, they show appreciation for everyone who is

involved. They understand that people need respect, recognition, empathy, gratitude, encouragement, and trust. When accomplishments are made, they distribute credit rather than trying to grasp it for themselves.

Oppression or Empowerment?

Perhaps you are just beginning to understand your leadership potential, or maybe you are currently working toward your vision. It could be that you have suddenly found yourself in a leadership position without having had any training. Regardless of your circumstances, respecting the principles of empowering others is essential for completing your God-given purpose with integrity. These

principles apply to all kinds of visions and leadership situations. Even though some visions involve tasks that are necessarily more solitary than others, there comes a time when we all need others to help us fulfill our visions. How you think about others and treat them during the process of working toward your vision is just as important as the end result. Will you fall into authoritarian power, or will you allow the outworking of your vision to empower others?

Chapter Ten

Discipline Yourself for Your Purpose

The highest form of government is self-government. Leaders have a deep dedication to personal discipline. They adhere to self-imposed limits so they may be certain to achieve their visions. They do not want to lose out by pursuing personal indulgence rather than the fulfillment of their purposes.

Are you self-disciplined? Do you impose high standards and strict parameters on yourself for the sake of fulfilling your purpose and vision? The following are some key characteristics of personal discipline.

Characteristics of Personal Discipline

Delayed Gratification

Self-discipline means patiently waiting for the right and best results in life. Too many people want to rush the process—whether it is in regard to forming relationships, obtaining possessions, or achieving success—and they pursue an immediate “reward.” A leader settles only for what is best in regard to his relationship with the Creator and his purpose and vision. He has learned when to reject immediate gratification for the sake of gaining greater benefits in the future.

Self-Sacrifice

Leaders are willing to make sacrifices for the sake of service. They think more about those whom they are serving through their visions than about their own comfort. Entertainment and relaxation are not their principal goals in life. While they are aware that their bodies and minds need times of renewal and refreshing, they make the best use of their time that they can.

In addition, when leaders make decisions, they are aware of the consequences of those decisions in relation to their goals. There are only so many hours in a day. When we choose to be involved in one activity, we are

making the choice not to be involved in another activity. When we decide to put our resources in one place, we are making a decision not to put our resources in another place. Leaders understand the principle of priorities in relation to their visions. We will talk more about choices in chapter twelve, “Manage Your Priorities.”

The Pursuit of Excellence

A leader disciplines himself in the pursuit of excellence; he shuns mediocrity. He strives to develop his skills and talents and to gain relevant knowledge and wisdom in order to accomplish his vision. While others allow laziness or apathy to set in,

leaders discipline themselves to keep moving toward their goals by tapping into their original passions and accepting responsibility for completing tedious or difficult tasks. Leaders mold themselves to obtain what is best for their lives and will not settle for less.

Not Compromising for the Sake of Popularity

It can sometimes take a great amount of personal integrity and discipline to withstand the temptation to compromise your vision for the sake of temporary popularity and others' approval. If you are easily influenced by other people, regardless of your personal convictions, this is a characteristic you particularly

need to focus on eliminating. True leaders cannot compromise their visions so that others will like them or so that they will not have to deal with opposition. When Nehemiah was fulfilling his God-given vision of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem following the Israelites' exile to Babylon, he told those who were trying to force him to stop, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?" (Nehemiah 6:3 nkjv).

Not compromising one's vision doesn't mean that a leader shouldn't learn to listen to those who genuinely want to help and who may have

suggestions on how to fulfill his vision in a better and more efficient way. That is cooperation, not compromise. That is using wisdom and all your available resources in making decisions. Leaders must learn the difference between not compromising their principles and impeding their own progress through pride, stubbornness, or self-absorption.

A Willingness to Walk Alone

Because leaders do not seek popularity, and because their visions are usually innovative and counter to the status quo, they often have to walk alone—especially at first. How do you react when people oppose you or disregard your ideas? Do you immediately give up

your plans? Or are you willing to keep pursuing your dream because you are convinced of your purpose and because your passion for your vision won't allow you to discard it? If you have to walk alone, draw strength from the One who walked alone in His vision in order to reconcile you to your Creator.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:2–3)

If you want to be an effective leader,

you have to discipline yourself to be self-possessed, stable, and consistent. Otherwise, circumstances in your life can get out of control and you can be easily swayed by other people who don't have your best interests in mind.

Let's look at a negative example of this truth from the life of Moses. After delivering the Israelites from Egypt, Moses left them in the wilderness while he went up onto the mountain to talk with God. He was there for so long that the people became frustrated. They said, "Moses must have died." Moses' brother Aaron was in charge while Moses was away, and he allowed himself to be pressured by the people into making a golden calf as an idol for

them to worship. He did not hold his ground or even tell them how disrespectful and foolish this act would be after God had powerfully delivered them from the Egyptians. When Moses returned, he asked Aaron, “What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?” (Exodus 32:21).

Notice how Moses asked the question: “What did these people do to you?” Aaron replied, “Do not be angry, my lord.... You know how prone these people are to evil” (v. 22). He was blaming the sin on the people, even though he had been in charge. Aaron continued, “They said to me, ‘Make us gods who will go before us’” (v. 23).

Aaron's response was an indication of weak leadership. The words "They said" imply that his decisions were influenced, controlled, and subjected to the opinions and wishes of the people. He was no longer leading the people but was being swayed by them. It was leadership by the will of the majority.

This type of governing is the fundamental principle of an absolute democracy. At first glance, it seems attractive, honorable, and fair. My personal conviction is that democracy is the best system fallen man has developed to safeguard himself against unbridled abuse by his fellow man. It is man's best attempt to provide a system to govern sinful men. However,

democracy—especially an absolute democracy—is not the best model to follow in pursuing your vision because it may cause you to be swayed by the crowd and compromise your principles.

First, in a democracy, authority flows from the bottom up rather than from the top down, as it does in the kingdom of God. Second, the very premise of an absolute democracy lends itself to the appeasement of the masses as opposed to a commitment to what is true and right. At times, democracy in action may necessarily violate sound principles in order to maintain its existence. A nation that has a democratic form of government can be effective only if its constitution is based on and committed

to correct principles. Moreover, its leaders must be committed to these principles. If leaders don't live up to their own standards, often, the people will not be committed to them, either.

God's kingdom is a theocracy. In other words, what He says goes, even if you don't agree. That's the way He operates. When God calls you to be a leader, He gives you His Word, and His Word stands, no matter who disagrees with Him. I appreciate all the ideas and philosophies about leadership that we have in our nations. In the church strata, especially, there are many different types of church governments; but when it comes to our relationships with God, there is no democracy.

How does this concept apply to leadership of an organization or company? Let me stress that it must not be construed to mean that the need for cooperation and participatory management should be ignored. Again, there must be an environment of cooperation and teamwork for there to be corporate success. However, this must be done within the context of a singular vision based on God's purposes. It is important to understand that you can't lead people when they're leading you. If God said something in His Word, you do it, no matter who disagrees with you.

In the situation with Aaron, instead of leading, he was being pushed. And as he

continued his explanation to Moses, it got even worse:

They said to me, “...As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.” So I told them, “Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.” Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!

(Exodus 32:23–24)

Wait a minute—the golden calf just came together by itself, walked out of the fire, and said, “Worship me”? That’s ridiculous. Aaron probably designed the idol and instructed the people on how to build it.

If you are the kind of leader who just lets things happen to you, you won't be in a leadership position for very long. You can be a victim of your circumstances or you can stand by your beliefs and principles—even if it means walking alone—having the faith and discipline to withstand the pressure to compromise.

Making the Right Decisions

Our world needs leaders who are disciplined people. If you need help establishing discipline in your life, ask for it, but don't stop there. Take the advice given to you and change your actions. Discipline means imposing strict guidelines on yourself. Ultimately,

don't let someone else set guidelines for you; set them yourself in accordance with God's Word and the requirements of your vision.

Your life is dependent on the two words yes and no. "Let your yes be yes and your no be no. Anything more than this is evil." (See Matthew 5:37.) When you are facing a moral decision or a tight spot with temptation, the easiest thing to do is to say, "Well, maybe it'll go away." That won't work. It's either yes or no. When you are facing a clear choice between two alternatives in the pursuit your vision, you may want to procrastinate the inevitable decision, or you may try to take on too much by choosing to do both. Neither of these

will work. It's either one alternative or the other. When you want to seek the easy way out rather than sacrificing for your purpose, you may tell yourself that it doesn't matter. That won't work. It's either compromise or faithfulness. Discipline means making the right decision under pressure.

The highest form of discipline is self-discipline. In fact, only the self-disciplined have earned the right to discipline others. Those who have excelled in this quality will rise above the surface of life and command the respect of others.

Chapter Eleven

Coordinate Your Resources

Effective leaders learn to identify and coordinate all the resources needed to fulfill their visions. They closely monitor the three major areas of their administrative duties: (1) personnel resources, (2) financial and physical resources, and (3) planning.

Personnel Resources

First, a leader identifies the unique gifts, talents, and maturity levels (including strengths and weaknesses) of those whom he is leading. Next, he determines the best place for them within the organization, business, or

group. These abilities are the keys to maximizing people's contributions to the vision and to assuring leadership productivity.

Organizations exist in the context of social relationships. Both knowledge and wisdom are needed when placing people in particular teams or positions. A leader is like the conductor of an orchestra who recognizes the value and unique sounds of each instrument and who possesses the skill to place each part in a unified whole to produce a resplendent harmony. In a sense, the leader "makes music" in an organization or in society. Leaders help to bring harmony to the social structure by selecting good people, placing them to

win, clarifying responsibilities, giving opportunities for gifts to be exercised, monitoring progress, providing guidance, and rewarding positive contributions.

One of Ronald Reagan's strengths as a leader was his ability to identify people with great talent, place them in key positions, and give them the opportunity to contribute their experience and gifts in fulfilling a worthy cause. He had the capacity to "staff" his weaknesses. In other words, he found people with skill and experience to fill in the areas where he lacked skill or experience. This is leadership coordination.

Abraham Lincoln filled his presidential cabinet with his political enemies, and many people thought this act was foolish. Lincoln, however, knew the personal strengths of each cabinet member, and he believed they needed to be appointed to their positions for the country to be governed effectively. Before long, almost all these men came to respect Lincoln deeply as a person and as an extraordinary leader. They became loyal and effective cabinet members at the most difficult time in America's history. Lincoln's example shows that a strong leader is not afraid to seek advice and assistance from those who hold opinions that are distinct from his, and that he doesn't reject sound

insights even when they come from those who oppose him.

Financial and Physical Resources

A leader needs to be a faithful steward of the financial and physical resources he oversees. A steward is someone who looks after somebody else's property. Use your resources in the best interests of your God-given vision and learn to make them productive so that they yield good returns. "Other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times" (Mark 4:8, emphasis added).

It is essential for those who aspire to be leaders to learn how to be good managers of their personal resources first. If you cannot be a good manager of your own resources, what else can you be trusted with? For example, if you are making \$500 a week, how are you handling it? Suppose you require money for a personal need and you are given that money. If you spend it on something frivolous, how can you be trusted to handle resources for someone else or for the accomplishment of your own vision? Leaders treat their finances as a resource God has provided to meet the needs of their visions, not as a means of filling their lives with luxuries or nonessentials. Be faithful over what is

given to you now, and you will be entrusted with more later on.

In essence, stewardship is the effective management of energies, resources, and materials toward a worthy objective. The word manage means the ability to coordinate and keep control. Anyone who has learned to take control of his or her life can move toward the implementation of vision.

Planning

In order to coordinate all his resources, a leader has to engage in planning. He cannot merely identify his purpose; he also needs to design a plan to take him to his destination. Before and

during the process of carrying out his vision, a leader needs to plan the involvement of the people and the material resources that are needed. In doing so, he needs to prepare for both the short term and the long term.

As soon as you have a clear vision in mind, assess the needs of your vision and determine what you require to carry it out now, next year, five years from now, ten years from now, and so on. Proverbs 16:9 assures us, “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.” God expects you, with His guidance, to make plans for your vision. This verse implies that if you don’t have a plan, God can’t direct you toward its fulfillment.

Formulate a Plan

As we discussed in chapter four, “Capture Your Vision,” the first step is to write out a concrete plan, including your overall vision and the goals and objectives you need to fulfill in order get there. Include deadlines that specify when you would like to accomplish certain stages of your plan. Sometimes, the hardest part is thinking through your vision clearly so you can list the particulars for taking you there. Yet working at your plan haphazardly will yield disappointing results.

Expect Your Plan to Require
Adjustment

Some people make a plan and then try to follow it to the letter, even when it becomes obvious that modifications need to be made. As I emphasized earlier, expect to make some adjustments along the way as you continue seeking God and moving forward—while still keeping to the overall vision. This includes making modifications to timelines and deadlines. Remember to rely patiently on God's guidance and wisdom every step of the way.

The Source of Resource

All leaders must recognize that the Creator is the Source they should look to for the resources they need to complete their visions. If you look only at the

resources you have at a given time, it may seem as if your vision will never come to pass. Yet Jesus assured His disciples—and us—that we can trust God to provide. “Your Father knows what you need before you ask him... Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:8, 33–34).

A leader has enough to concern himself with on a daily basis not to worry about future provision. Of course, you need to plan for the future, but planning is one thing and worrying is

another. God the Father knows everything you need. In fact, He knew it before you did because He determined what He would call you to do.

Therefore, trust that everything you require will be provided at the right time. God will never call you to an assignment without giving you the provision necessary for accomplishing it. All the resources you need will become available when you need them, as you begin planning and implementing your vision.

Chapter Twelve

Manage Your Priorities

In chapter ten, we talked about how leaders make decisions fully aware of their consequences and their impact on desired goals. In this regard, understanding the principle of priorities is essential. The choices we make regarding how to use our time and where to put our resources have an enormous impact on whether we achieve our purposes.

Managing your priorities means choosing what is important among many available alternatives. It is identifying the goals and decisions that will take you to your destiny. First-century apostle

and theologian Paul expressed this critical component of prioritization for effective living when he wrote, “‘Everything is permissible for me’—but not everything is beneficial. ‘Everything is permissible for me’—but I will not be mastered by anything” (1 Corinthians 6:12). Many things in life are good, but you must determine which of them are best for you in light of your leadership calling.

Focusing on your vision will protect you from trying to do everything. Your greatest challenge will not be in trying to determine what is good versus what is bad but rather what is the best choice versus what is merely a good choice. Priority is the basis for effective

decision-making.

Your vision should influence the way you conduct your entire life so that you prioritize your activities and commitments in keeping with the vision. Sometimes, the choices we have to make are overwhelming, and we can feel pressure from others to do things that are not really necessary. To avoid overcommitting and to keep from becoming entangled in distracting activities, you must establish a hierarchy of priorities.

What Comes First?

Our Relationship with Our Creator

Maintaining a clear and open relationship with God our Source is our first priority. He is the author of our lives and the initiator of our visions, and we must endeavor to maintain a vital connection with Him at all times.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

(John 1:1–4)

For in him we live and move and have our being.(Acts 17:28)

Our Relationship with Our Family

The pursuit of our visions should not cause us to overlook our families. Paul wrote, “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8). Because leadership demands the giving of oneself to others, no leader’s time is fully his own. His gifts, talents, and experience are employed in service to others. Leaders belong to their generations and not to themselves. This has a direct effect on their families, close friends, and others dear to them. Jesus found Himself in this situation at the age of twelve when, after staying behind in Jerusalem to speak

with the teachers in the temple, He had to say to His earthly parents, “Why were you searching for me?...Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49). Yet He always respected Mary and Joseph. “They did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them” (vv. 50–51).

Your family’s needs are not negated by the needs of your vision. As you seek God and make plans for carrying out your vision, make sure you have not neglected your most important responsibility next to God. The leader must be careful to strike a balance between serving people and meeting his

family responsibilities and other obligations. On the other hand, it is difficult for a leader to function unless his family members are willing to make some sacrifices. This is why it is important for spouses to understand the leadership call on their husbands or wives.

Your family members may not always understand or support your vision. However, this should not cause you to be careless toward them or to disregard them. “God has called us to live in peace” (1 Corinthians 7:15). Moreover, as you pursue your purpose and are inspired by your vision, God will enable you to provide for your family, and you may inspire them through your passion

for your purpose. The support of our families encourages and strengthens us. Do all you can to share your vision with those closest to you.

Our Current Obligations

Until we are released from our current obligations, we must fulfill them to the best of our abilities. For example, if you desire to leave your job in order to pursue your true vision, you must remain a faithful worker in that capacity until you are released from it. There may be other areas of obligation, as well. As you prioritize your vision, you can begin to drop unnecessary or distracting elements in your life. You will be able to eliminate some obligations right

away. Others may take some time. In the meantime, you can commit them to God to use for His glory. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23).

Priorities Specific to Vision

Prioritizing your vision means taking an honest look at how you currently spend your time, money, and other resources, and thoroughly examining how these should be reordered to enable you to fulfill your purpose. While this paring away may seem difficult at first, it will be well worth it when you see the rewards of moving toward your purpose.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.(Hebrews 12:11)

A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.(John 16:21)

When you can see your vision clearly, it helps you to reorder your priorities so that you can train, prepare, and provide for your vision.

How to Reorder Your Priorities

The decisions we make inevitably reveal our current priorities. For example, while our bodies need adequate rest, sometimes we use fatigue as an excuse to delay work on our visions while we relax in front of the television. We have to realize that there will probably never be a “perfect” time to begin pursuing our visions. Yet there is a right time, which is the present.

The following are some examples of areas in which you need to assess your current priorities. Then, reorder them, as needed, in line with your vision. Decide on new priorities that will take you to your vision, such as taking a class, learning more about finances, or developing a skill. Realize, of course,

that there will be important “interruptions” in your life that will need to be addressed. Don’t schedule yourself so rigidly that an unexpected event or emergency could throw off your entire life. Provide for emergencies and balance in your life, but also plan for steady progress toward your vision.

Time: How much time are you spending on your relationship with God, your relationships with family, your church, work, types of entertainment, sports, volunteering, hobbies, and so forth? What areas need more time? Less time? What should you be spending time on to fulfill your vision?

Knowledge/Education: What knowledge and information are you taking in? How does it relate to your purpose? What specific knowledge and education do you need to fulfill your vision?

Finances and other resources: What are you spending your money on? Where are you investing it? How are you managing other resources in your life? How does your use of money and other resources relate to your vision?

Health: What priorities do you have in relation to your health,

and how do these priorities affect your vision?

Avoiding Peer Pressure and Double-Mindedness

Earlier, we talked about the importance of independent decision-making in maintaining discipline. This quality applies directly to determining one's priorities in life. Good leaders are people who can think on their own. They don't think independently of God but of other people's opinions. Can you imagine what would have been the outcome if Moses had asked for the recommendation of the people in the face of the various dilemmas the Israelites encountered in the wilderness?

The nation never would have reached the Promised Land. As we discussed earlier, a true leader doesn't follow the crowd. God uses people who think independently. Again, leaders do not ignore the opinions or contributions of others; rather, they weigh the value of all input and then make their own decisions.

A good leader also does not depend on people's opinions to confirm God's will for his life. If God tells you to do something, be careful with whom you discuss it, especially at first, because you'll get many opinions. Seek God and His Word to make sure you have heard clearly from Him. Then, share your vision with others as seems wise and timely.

There is a good example of independent thinking in Joshua's life. He took the people of Israel into the Promised Land after Moses died, telling them,

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)

Now that's what I call a leader! Notice, he didn't deny that other options were available to the Israelites. He didn't ignore the fact that there were

other “gods” to serve, or that the other nations had things that looked attractive. He simply said, “As for me and my household....” He came to his own conclusion. Are you an independent thinker?

Jesus displayed the quality of independent decision-making during an encounter with His earthly family. In John 7:1–9, His brothers attempted to influence Him to go to Judea and make Himself known to the world. Even in the face of His own family, He declared, “The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right” (v. 6). Following the right timing is part of setting priorities.

When people fail to make progress toward fulfilling their visions, it is often because they haven't learned that prioritizing creates useful limits on their choices. Focused choices are essential because they enable you to reach your destination.

Chapter Thirteen

Mentor Your Successors

Every person, from his or her own perspective, desires to be successful. What is success? Success can be defined as the efficient and effective completion of an assigned task to the level of expectation of the one who gave the assignment. In other words, true success is the fulfillment of original purpose. Success is not measured by what you have done compared to what others have done, but rather by what you have done compared to what you should have done. Consequently, the true essence of effectiveness is successful completion of the correct assignment or purpose. Effectiveness is not doing things right

but doing the right thing.

Suppose I hire someone to clean my house and request that he wash the dishes while I run an errand. After my departure, he proceeds to the kitchen and begins to work on the floor. With great intensity and energy, he scrubs, mops, and waxes until it is immaculately clean and shining. Pleased with his accomplishment, he smiles at his reflection in the floor with great personal pride.

Upon my return, I enter the kitchen and am deeply impressed and surprised by the excellent condition of the kitchen floor. I haven't seen it sparkle like that since I first built the house. Then, turning

my gaze from the floor, I am dismayed to see the dishes in the same condition they were in when I left. This story illustrates the principle that it is possible to do a good thing without doing the right thing.

Measurements of Success

We have certain accepted measurements of what constitutes leadership success in various fields. Here are some examples:

Industry executive: the number of products produced and sold

Salesperson: the achievement or exceeding of sales goals and quotas

Politician: election to office

Leader of religious congregation: the number of members who attend the church

Investor: the level of return on the money invested

Athlete: the number of races won or goals achieved

General: the number of battles won

Surgeon: the number of successful operations completed

Teacher: the number of students with high grade point averages

Are these outcomes true or complete measurements of successful leadership?

As we have seen, it is possible to sincerely, zealously, and efficiently do an excellent job on the wrong thing and therefore fail. In the story above, my employee was not effective because, even though he did a good thing, he did not do the right thing. He was busy but not effective, active but not progressive.

How does a person know he is doing the right thing? The right thing is something that fulfills his purpose. Purpose is the original intent or predetermined result for an individual. It is the expected end.

It is imperative that you know and understand the purpose of something before assuming responsibility in a task.

Where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable, and precious time, energy, and resources are wasted. In any discussion of effective leadership, therefore, it is necessary that we clarify the primary purpose of leadership, for in its primary purpose is found its definition of success.

A Leader's Lasting Influence

In chapter two, I described leadership as “the capacity to influence others through inspiration, generated by a passion, motivated by a vision, birthed from a conviction, produced by a purpose.” In this chapter, we will explore the lasting influence leaders should have on others.

The Leader's Legacy

It is my conviction that the ultimate purpose of leadership in any endeavor—whether it is business, religion, politics, sports, medicine, education, or another area—is not the accomplishment of goals or the achievement of quotas but rather the leader's legacy through his successor. Leadership is concerned more about people than products, more about mankind than money. True leadership is measured by the people you “produce.” Otherwise, after you pass on from this generation, your vision could die with you. Consider the following scenario.

Cheryl worked for a flower-delivery

chain store, but she had the dream of opening her own flower shop. She was motivated by the vision of providing beautiful but affordable arrangements for families and small businesses. Her creative talents, combined with her business sense and accounting skills, made her well situated to start a small business. After careful planning, she left her job, executed her business plan, and recruited support staff. Others caught her excitement, and she hired a team of young people eager to learn from her experience and skills. Her business caught on and grew, and she was both successful and fulfilled in her work.

Cheryl was so intent on perpetuating her dream, however, that she kept her

hand in every aspect of the company—from the smallest detail to the largest decision—even after five and then ten years. She insisted on creating all the designs, which her employees merely carried out. Few of their ideas were accepted. Her original team of eager workers grew discouraged at their lack of training and responsibility. When they discovered they would never really be able to learn the business, they left to find jobs elsewhere. This hurt Cheryl's feelings, but she determined to hire others to take their places. She couldn't really understand why there was a continual turnover in her staff, but she enjoyed the success of her company, even while putting in necessarily long

hours. Her company's success gave her a sense of personal worth.

When it finally came time for Cheryl to retire, she realized that all her employees were fresh out of high school and had no in-depth knowledge of flowers or overall business expertise. They had no experience with designing arrangements, ordering supplies, or accounting. Her own children had gone into other occupations because they hadn't had an opportunity to learn the business, either. Though Cheryl tried to interest them, they now had their own careers. She couldn't find anyone else who shared her vision for the company and wanted to carry on her individualized approach. Her

prospective buyers all wanted chain-store franchises that used predetermined flower arrangements. In the end, she sold her shop to a buyer who wanted to use her storefront, equipment, and materials to expand his own large franchise. To Cheryl, her life's work was lost the moment she finalized the sale.

Cheryl wanted to create a successful business that would last beyond her lifetime, but she didn't realize that to perpetuate vision, leaders must transfer leadership to others. Whether or not her physical business lasted more than a generation, she would have invested her vision of individualized service and creativity in the lives of her younger employees, and it would have lived on

in them.

Again, this principle of leadership transfer is true in any leadership context, whether it is in a business, government, church, nonprofit organization, or even a family.

The Greatest Investment

The greatest investment in leadership is not in things but in people. Even though we are necessarily involved in a variety of activities to fulfill our visions, we as leaders must ask, “Whom am I investing in to produce better leaders in the future and after my generation?” Let me reemphasize that the most valuable investment anyone can make is in

another person, not in a piece of property or equipment. People who intend to extend their lives through projects will ultimately fail.

Jesus Christ never built a building, and He never produced a product. He created people. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). He changed the course of history, and the leaders He trained were said to have “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6 nkjv). Creating leaders is the ultimate purpose of leadership. I hope you will be stirred up to refocus your interests in regard to your priority in leadership. No matter how great your

vision, it is important to produce visionaries to carry it on. Your goal is not to amass followers but to train leaders.

To fully understand this ultimate purpose of leadership, we must explore how the role of follower developed and what the objective of those functioning as followers should be. This objective is also the goal of leadership.

The Origin of Followers

As we noted previously, when God created human beings, He clearly established His purpose for them when He declared, “Let them rule over...all the earth” (Genesis 1:26). This

command designated both male and female as God's agents to rule, govern, control, and manage His creation. He declared their leadership ability and responsibility.

In this regard, let's review God's principle of potential. Whatever God calls for, He provides for. God's command that man rule the planet established the fact that He had placed within man the capacity and potential to fulfill this assignment. The assignment is evidence that the potential and ability to lead are within all of us. Again, you were created to lead: you possess the capacity to be a leader within the sphere of purpose for which you were born. God did not create followers; He

created leaders.

So, where did followers come from?

Recall that man's violation of his Creator's laws and principles resulted in his internal corruption and the loss of God's Spirit within him. Consequently, he lost his position because man was created to be a leader led by the Spirit of God; therefore, that which he was created to rule over began to dominate him. He became a slave to his environment and was unable to fulfill his original purpose.

Man's loss of position also opened the door for human beings to dominate one another. Those who were stronger,

cleverer, more intelligent, more privileged, or more manipulative began to use others for their own purposes. Again, in His original plan and purpose, the Creator never intended for there to be some people who are always leaders and others who are always followers or “subordinates” among men. We were all intended to exercise His authority and dominion as a corporate entity on earth, working together as each fulfilled his unique purpose and assignment.

We can live according to our original intent because God enacted a restoration plan to recover man’s position and to train him once again for leadership. This restoration plan involved the life, sacrifice, and resurrection of Jesus

Christ, through whom God's Spirit is again made available to human beings.

Stages of Leadership Development

In light of the above truths, it is important to understand the following when exploring the purpose of leadership: Maintaining followers or subordinates is not the goal of leadership. Many in leadership positions today believe that their leadership should be measured by how many people look to or depend on them. They boast in the fact that they are in great demand by their followers, and they actually consider this to be evidence of their effectiveness. Usually, quite the opposite is true.

Many of these leaders use the dependency of their followers to prop up their insecurity and stroke their egos. They feed on the needs of others and therefore implement programs and systems that perpetuate this dependency. In contrast, as we saw in the chapter on empowering others, true leadership guides followers into discovering themselves and inspires them to be what they were created to be. The ultimate goal of leadership is to train followers to become leaders and to lead people to independence and then interdependence.

This principle is seen throughout creation. God created everything to experience three phases of life development:

1. Dependence: Every living thing—whether it is the fruit whose stem is connected to the branch of the tree or the human embryo who is attached to his mother's womb—begins life dependent on its source.
2. Independence: Every living thing must mature to a stage at which it detaches itself from its source and expresses its own individuality and identity. The fruit ripens and falls from the tree; the embryo develops into a baby, leaves his mother's womb, grows up, and becomes independent of

his parents.

3. Interdependence: After independence, every living thing is responsible for contributing to the ongoing development and replenishment of its species. It produces the seeds of reproduction on which the entire species relies to continue.

A human being can be truly interdependent only after he has become independent. When you have discovered yourself and your unique purpose and identity, then you can fully contribute to the lives of others. The true nature of

leadership is to lead people from dependence into independence and then to inspire them to interdependence.

Creating Other Leaders

The ultimate goal of true leaders, then, is not to perpetuate followers but to help create other leaders. The purpose of leadership is to inspire every follower to become a leader and fulfill his potential.

Reducing Dependency

The true leader measures his success and effectiveness by the diminishing degree of his followers' dependency on him. The less they need him, the more

effective he is.

This principle is seen throughout Scripture; it continually manifests itself in God's encounters with humanity. God has placed within everyone the capacity to be a leader within the context of his or her purpose in life. The writer of the book of Hebrews told those whom he was helping to train, "Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!" (Hebrews 5:12). He expected them to become leaders who would then train others to be leaders.

Releasing Others' Potential

Jesus expressed His anticipation of the transition from follower to leader on many occasions. He told His disciples, “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father” (John 14:12–13). These words indicate that His purpose for training His disciples was to teach them how to be responsible leaders.

In John 20:21, Jesus declared to His followers, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” In Matthew 28:18–19, He stated, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore

go and make disciples of all nations.” Jesus obviously did not see authority as permission to lord it over others or to wield power in the affairs of men. Rather, He saw it as a vehicle to allow others the freedom to develop and reach their full potential. He employed the disciples so He could deploy their leadership abilities.

Realizing the True Nature of a Leader's Worth

Jesus clearly stated His philosophy of the purpose of leadership when He said, “I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor [God's Spirit] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him

to you” (John 16:7). Did He say it was for their good that He was going away? This seems like a very strange thing for a leader to say. The average leader thinks in the opposite way: I don’t want to leave this position. I’m not going to let anyone take it from me. The ultimate proof of Jesus’ success as a leader was the fact that He left. He saw effective leadership as the ability to release the potential of others and to inspire them to fulfill that potential.

Most leaders have become so attached to their positions that they have allowed these positions to become synonymous with their worth and value. This is what happened in the story of Cheryl. She failed to help her employees

develop their own potential because she thought she was the only one who could fill her position, and because she relied on her position for her sense of self-worth.

True leaders separate their self-worth from their positions. They do not confuse their value with their professions or their self-esteem with their assignments. They are always aware that assignments are dispensable but worth is permanent because it comes from the Creator. This is why they don't mind giving over an assignment to someone else. They know they don't lose their worth or their purpose when they give a particular responsibility over to others.

A lack of leadership transfer is a problem that can be found in all areas of life—political, religious, civic, business, and family. Because transferring leadership is one of the weakest areas of leadership practice, there are few real-life examples for us to draw from. One of the main reasons for this is that people feel as if they are “giving up” their leadership when they transfer authority to others.

What we need to realize is that we do not give up our leadership. We give it over. If you give it up, it's as if you have lost something. Giving it over means you have continued something.

Several good examples from the

Scriptures of those who gave over their leadership are Moses, whose successor was Joshua; Paul, whose successor and “true son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2) was Timothy; and, of course, Jesus Christ, who entrusted the leadership of His brand-new church to Peter and the other disciples after He returned to God the Father in heaven.

Joshua had served as Moses’ right-hand man for forty years. When it came time for Moses to die and Joshua to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, “the Lord said to Moses, ‘Now the day of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the Tent of Meeting, where I will commission him.’ So Moses and Joshua came and

presented themselves at the Tent of Meeting” (Deuteronomy 31:14). Moses was still alive when Joshua was commissioned as his successor and placed in position before all the Israelites. Everyone knew that he was now in charge. After Moses’ death, “the Lord said to Joshua...: ‘As I was with Moses, so I will be with you’” (Joshua 1:1, 5).

Paul expressed the leadership principle of transferring and releasing authority to others when he told Timothy, “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 Timothy 2:2).

Jesus passed authority to Peter when He told him, “Feed my sheep” and “Feed my lambs.” (See John 21:15–17.) After Jesus transferred authority, the whole organization grew under Peter after he received the Holy Spirit, of whom Jesus had said, “The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26).

Recall also what Jesus did when He was on the cross. He looked down and saw His mother, and He knew someone needed to take His place as her earthly provider. His close friend and disciple John was there also, and He said to both of them, “Dear woman, here is your

son,’ and to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ From that time on, this disciple took her into his home” (John 19:26–27). Jesus gave responsibility for her protection and provision over to John; through this act, He was protecting His household. Right to the end, He was thinking in leadership terms. Many people don’t realize that this incident was a powerful act of leadership. He handed over His “business” to Peter, but He handed over the care of His family to John. Jesus was very conscious of mentoring. He was a true leader.

Two interesting examples of leadership mentoring and transfer in the contemporary world are Billy Graham and Nelson Mandela. Billy Graham

successfully passed the leadership of The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to his son Franklin after mentoring him and clearly identifying his successor to those in his organization. Nelson Mandela effectively transferred the presidency of South Africa to Thabo Mbeki, his successor whom he had been mentoring. This occurred without a coup d'etat and all the problems that might have accompanied the exchange of power in the second democratic election following the end of apartheid.

Promoting “Greater Things”

Jesus said it would be better for Him to go away because otherwise the Counselor, God's Spirit, could not come

to take His place. The Counselor came to promote and expand, on behalf of Jesus, the work that He had begun. Many people are being held up in fulfilling their purposes because others will not help them develop into leaders and will not make room for them. It is very important that we fully understand the philosophy of leadership transfer. If we do not fulfill our purpose of training leaders, then those who come after us cannot do “greater things.”

Again, Jesus Christ was not attached to His position on earth, and He saw the transfer of that position to His disciples—His leaders-in-training—as progress. In John 14:12, when He said, “Anyone who has faith in me...will do even

greater things...because I am going to the Father,” He was indicating that He felt His staying on earth would hinder the leadership progress of His disciples. In John 16:7, when He stated, “It is for your good that I am going away,” He was implying, “If I stay in this position, it will be a disadvantage to you.” True leaders understand that the purpose of leadership is to prepare others to take their positions.

If you are a leader who is training others to carry on the vision, then you are preparing future leaders. This is the fundamental purpose, philosophy, and focus for which God created us. We are meant to make room for others to become leaders. The brilliant

mathematician and physicist Sir Isaac Newton wrote, “If I have seen further [than certain other men] it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.”²³

Making Leaders from Followers

True leaders, therefore, bring their followers into leadership and make themselves increasingly unnecessary. Their joy is to see others stand in their own integrity and strength, maximizing their potential in God and fulfilling the capacity of their leadership ability. This is the purpose of leadership.

A significant measure of your leadership effectiveness is the level of productivity in your church, business,

school, organization, or government in your absence. If your presence is required for your followers to function, then your leadership is likely weak. Since the purpose of leadership is to inspire others to exercise their leadership capacity, you are a successful leader when your followers can lead others.

Again, Jesus demonstrated His effectiveness as a leader by leaving. He was so confident of His leadership success that He transferred the completion of His mission to the leadership of the men He had once called to follow Him. A leader mentors his successors by providing vision, inspiration, and guidance, producing

leaders who can carry on the purpose. The leader-mentor should be alive when his student-successor takes over. However, this usually does not happen. Normally, the leader dies and someone else takes over—someone who may or may not be able to carry on the vision.

The assignment given by the Lord to the leadership of the church, as presented in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, clearly signifies the purpose of leadership:

It was he [Jesus Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare [train] God's people for works

of service [leadership], 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 [responsible, independent, and interdependent], attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants....(Ephesians 4:11–14)

These words confirm God's purpose of setting up leadership in the church to train, develop, and produce quality leaders who are transformed from "infants" into mature adults—dependents into independents, independents into interdependents—in other words, followers into leaders. The ultimate test of leadership effectiveness is not how

many people are following you but how many people are now being influenced by those whom you have trained. Simply put, success without a successor is failure.

We need to learn that the purpose of leadership is to produce a more effective generation of leaders after us by identifying, unearthing, developing, and refining the hidden leader in every follower.

Part 3

Exercising Leadership over Your Life

Introduction to Part 3

Many people approach leadership with tremendous enthusiasm but little understanding of the dynamics involved. We are not prepared to handle full leadership responsibilities all at once. As we have seen, leadership preparations include developing character and gaining experience.

Maturity is indispensable to good leadership. You must exercise leadership over your own life if you are to make steady progress in becoming a leader. The chapters in part 3 provide additional guidelines for developing the character and qualifications necessary

for leadership.

Identifying and developing these areas in your life will strengthen your leadership ability and make you more effective in fulfilling your vision. Begin to cultivate the leadership qualities that are within you. Take this responsibility with integrity and faithfulness.

There is no place for untested character in positions of responsibility. If you desire to be a leader, be willing to gain experience over time and understand that you have to qualify for receiving the trust and confidence of others. Don't try to rush things. You have the potential to be a leader, but maybe not today or even tomorrow. All great

leaders are the products of time and the trophies of life's battles.

Jesus said, in effect, "If you have not been faithful over a little, I can't make you ruler over much." (See Luke 12:42–48.) Many people want to go from the crib to the throne instantly. They want to be the leader, the president, or the pastor—right now. Jesus Himself was thirty years old before He came into His full ministry. People did not live as long then as they do today, so this was the equivalent of middle age.

Finally, remember that most of the great leaders of history were people just like you. They were not necessarily smarter, wiser, or more gifted than you

are, but they had a passion for life that was motivated by a purpose and a sense of destiny. They developed and maximized their leadership potential. Are you ready to do the same?

Chapter Fourteen

Spiritual and Moral Leadership

Every true leader has a strong spiritual commitment. If you desire to become an effective leader, you must strengthen your relationship with your Creator and continue to develop your spiritual life.

It is the responsibility of the leader to secure the trust, confidence, and commitment of his followers by adhering to moral, ethical, and spiritual principles. It is essential that the true leader be vigilant in guarding his spirit, mind, and body from any compromise that would render him untrustworthy and

unrespectable in the sight of others. He needs to adhere to the highest principles of honor, integrity, morality, and self-respect. He must commit to spiritual and ethical standards and disciplines so that there will be no need for the imposition of external discipline.

Spiritual maturity naturally incorporates many of the qualities you need to be a leader. Seek to develop these and other aspects of spiritual and moral leadership.

Lead according to God's Spirit

Do you seek to lead according to your abilities alone, or are you looking to God for wisdom and strength? As we

have seen, we were created to operate by the Spirit of God. Therefore, if any other spirit influences our lives, we are unable to become or function as the leaders we were designed to be. Just as an automobile was created to operate on gasoline, if a person is not filled with this necessary source of “energy,” he is unable to truly perform his God-given purpose. If a car’s tank is filled with glue instead of gasoline, the vehicle will malfunction and its vital components will eventually be destroyed. Likewise, if a person does not have a vital connection with God and is not filled with His Spirit, he will malfunction. We learn to discern our life’s purpose and vision through our relationship with the

Creator and by a continual intake of His Word, because genuine vision is always in alignment with His nature and character.

If we want effective, just, and qualified leaders in our world today, we must become men and women who are filled with God's Spirit and led by His will. I challenge you to step forward and offer your service and skills to the nation and community in which you live. I urge you to help restore just, effective, and Spirit-led leadership to the world by first submitting yourself to the Supreme Leader and Creator of leaders.

Develop the Attitude of Servanthood

Are you seeking to serve others or yourself?

The leader uses his life to serve others. The ultimate servant leader is Jesus Christ. Even though He was all-powerful, He empowered humanity. Even though He was the Creator, He became like His creation and lived on the earth. Even though He was divine, He served humanity. He was without defect, yet He embraced our imperfections and took them on Himself so that we could have the freedom and ability to become leaders.

The principle of leadership is not “self-serving” but “selfless service.” It is the opposite of selfish ambition—

ambition that does not take others into consideration. Servanthood is the nature and attitude of true leaders.

If you want to become a leader in order to gain fame, respect, renown, or importance, or so that you can exercise power over others, this is selfish ambition, and it could end in self-destruction. It violates the principle of respect for the value and worth of all people.

The fundamental principle of true leadership must begin in the heart, “for out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34). The danger of misguided, unchecked ambition manifested itself in a classic

case over two thousand years ago during an exchange between Jesus and His disciples recorded in Mark 10:35–37. Brothers James and John requested of Jesus, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory” (v. 37). They coveted a position of leadership and power for themselves rather than for the purpose of serving others.

The great Leader of leaders used the occasion of this irresponsible and insensitive request to teach one of the most important lessons in motivation and the attitude of true leadership:

You know that those who are regarded as 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 slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

(Mark 10:42–45)

Likewise, Paul wrote, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:1–2).

How does a leader live this life of

sacrifice and selfless service? It is impossible to do on one's own, as many fallen leaders can attest. When the great King Solomon became the leader of Israel after his famous father, David, he prayed this prayer:

You have shown great kindness to David my father and have made me king in his place. Now, Lord God, let your promise to my father David be confirmed, for you have made me king over a people who are as numerous as the dust of the earth. Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?(2 Chronicles 1:8–10)

True leaders must lead from hearts that are attuned to their Creator and are led by His Spirit. A sacrificial and selfless nature, as well as the wisdom to lead, come from Him. As James wrote, “The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere” (James 3:17).

The leader’s motivation is securing the well-being of those whom he is serving. His motivation to lead should not be greed for money but rather an eagerness to serve. He is excited and enthusiastic to fulfill his purpose and mission in life. Some people think, Unless I can make a certain amount of

money, I won't work there, or There's no glory or money in that, so I'll choose a different career. Have a willing heart and an eagerness to serve in accordance with your vision rather than being concerned about making a lot of money in life. A servant always leads according to the needs of those whom he is leading.

Assess your personal motivation for leadership. Are you willing to serve? Are you willing to be patient? Are you willing to say, "I'm available"?

Be Yourself—Be Humble

One who desires to be a leader must not be misguided by the perceived glory,

prominence, or benefits of such a position. A true leader possesses a pervasive spirit of humility. He is constantly aware that the opportunity to lead others to a greater future is a corporate effort and not an exercise in personal heroism. If you want to be a leader, you need a mixture of courage and strength tempered with humility.

What is humility? Humility is the ability to be yourself. The word humble comes from the Latin root word humus, meaning “earth.” Humility denotes earthiness or an awareness of one’s true essence. (See Genesis 2:7.) Being humble, therefore, does not mean degrading or reducing oneself in the estimation of another, but rather having

an awareness, acceptance, and appreciation of one's true worth and value. In this regard, you cannot "decide" to be humble because it is not something you decide to be; it is what you are. Leaders are individuals who have discovered their true selves and know who they are. Thus, true leaders are naturally humble, in the full sense of the word.

Humility is also the ability to transfer glory. In other words, you are not so anxious to receive all the recognition that you can't acknowledge someone else's contribution. You can say, "This person's help made it possible." John the Baptist displayed great humility in his declaration about Jesus Christ: "He

must become greater; I must become less” (John 3:30).

Humility is not stupidity. It doesn't mean that you allow yourself to be pressured to do something because someone puts you on a guilt trip. Humility is the ability to control knowledge and power, even though you know they are yours to exercise. It is speaking your knowledge at the right time, in the right words, and to the right person.

The leader is not an actor or a performer, but he is conscious that leadership is both a private and public lifestyle. He never uses the position of leadership to conceal his defects but

instead submits through the service of that position to the daily reminders of those defects and the need to strengthen them. James wrote, “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up” (James 4:10).

If you have to say, “I’m humble,” you’re not. When people tell you that they’re humble, it is probably proof that they are proud. Proof of your humility is someone else telling you, “You know, I like you. You don’t think you are above anybody. You esteem others higher than yourself.” Paul wrote, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to

the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3–4). Humility is a character quality that results from God’s love and mercy in our lives. When I realize what God has done for me, there is no way I can think of myself as being higher than you are, because what He did for me, He’ll also do for you. Since leadership is born out of a God-given vision, as well as a passion to accomplish that task and to inspire others to develop and release their potential, it derives its fulfillment from the success of others.

A humble leader will also be willing to take on the jobs nobody else wants. If something needs to be done, someone with true humility will step in and do it. He’ll do it with joy and in the best way

he can because he understands the importance of getting the job done. Before Jesus was arrested, He and the disciples had their last meal together. It was a custom in those days that before a meal was served, a servant washed the feet of the arriving guests. There were no servants when Jesus and the disciples arrived for dinner, but their feet needed to be washed just the same.

I can just see the disciples arguing among themselves about who would do this menial task. As they were arguing, Jesus took a towel and a washbasin and began to do the job Himself. The disciples were stunned into silence. Jesus had gotten their attention, and they learned a valuable lesson on the true

meaning of leadership. He told them,

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.(John 13:14–16)

Again, humility is knowing who you are and accepting it without boasting. People can secretly harbor self-congratulation and an overestimation of themselves. This comes from considering the praise of men to be the measure of their worth. Often, people's pride is evidence of their poor self-

concept and low self-esteem. They think they can elevate themselves by devaluing others. They attempt to secure a sense of superiority by maintaining a feeling of inferiority in others.

Sometimes people think others can't function without them. This is the idea that the success of everything depends on you. Consider the following scenario. When Phil became a manager in his company, he began to think that the company couldn't run without him. He would even express the idea out loud in meetings, asking, "What would you do without me?" One Wednesday, he had a heart attack and died. Everyone was sad that week. They sent condolences to his wife, and they went to his funeral on

Saturday. However, by the next Tuesday, the company had hired his replacement, who moved into his office exactly one week after he died. This type of situation happens all the time. The company says, "Life goes on," and they quickly forget you.

Death is the final proof that everyone is expendable. Moreover, circumstances can change when we least expect them to. Recall that even many of those who opposed communism in the Soviet Union and other nations in Eastern Europe thought it was unconquerable. Then, the Berlin wall came down after fifty years, and the Soviet Union dissolved after seventy years. The wise leader realizes that nothing on this earth is forever, and

that “what has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Keep in touch with humility, and don’t think your company or even your home can’t function without you. You’re setting yourself up for failure in leadership.

There is a thought-provoking poem by Percy Shelley that describes the ruins of an enormous, ancient statue of a once-powerful ruler. The only part still standing was the bottom portion, consisting of “two vast and trunkless legs of stone.” Nearby, half buried in the sand, was the head of the statue, the arrogant sneer of the carved face still visible. This ancient ruler, who believed

his accomplishments would live forever,
had this inscription written on the
pedestal of the statue:

“My name is Ozymandias, king of
kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and
despair!”

Shelley then described what was left
of his works:

Nothing beside remains. Round the
decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and
bare
The lone and level sands stretch far
away.²⁴

The ruler's works had turned to dust. This poem is a powerful parable of the folly of inordinate pride in one's personal accomplishments.

True leaders are always aware that they are only links in a long historical chain. They have the temporary privilege and brief opportunity to serve their generations with the gifts they have received, and they are obligated to prepare others to replace them. They esteem others above themselves and seek their good. They are also constantly aware that they owe any measure of success or accomplishment to God and to the contributions of others. They never forget where they came from, and they live to bring others to where they are.

Paul reminded us not to think of ourselves more highly than we should. “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you” (Romans 12:3). Be yourself—nothing more and nothing less. This is humility.

Be Willing to Sacrifice

Anyone who is preoccupied with the elevation of his own status, glory, and objectives is not a true leader. Jesus established the centrality of self-sacrifice in His statement, “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever

loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:39).

To become the leader you were born to be, you must be willing to sacrifice. Remember that true leaders not only have found a purpose and objective to live for, but also have found a vision to die for. Greatness in life is found in the willingness to die to yourself—your pleasures and personal ambition—for the sake of your vision.

Self-sacrifice has been a quality of many leaders over the years, including the following, whom we have noted in other contexts:

Self-sacrifice was manifested in

Jesus's disciples, all of whom were persecuted and most of whom were killed for being His followers and carrying on His mission.

Self-sacrifice was seen in the lives of Corrie ten Boom and her father and sister, who sacrificed their freedom, health, and lives under the Nazis in order to save others from death.

Self-sacrifice was demonstrated by Mother Teresa, who gave up a safe and secure teaching position to care for beggars and lepers in order to restore to them dignity and a sense of self-worth.

Self-sacrifice was exhibited in the life of Nelson Mandela who, when fresh

out of law school with a promising future ahead of him, gave it up to spend twenty-five years in prison cracking hard rock with a pickax for the sake of a conviction to deliver people from oppression.

Many times in your spiritual development, the Lord will ask you to do things that you might consider unpleasant at the time. It might be a short-term missions trip to a Third World nation where your personal comfort will be challenged. You might say, “Lord, I think You’ve made a big mistake.” God does that because He’s trying to build character in you and work disobedience out of you. He wants to have confidence in you. If you have been

disobedient in the little things, He can't trust you with something big.

Paul took young John Mark on one of his missionary journeys, but he apparently hadn't tested his confidence and faithfulness. Halfway through, John Mark couldn't handle it anymore and he quit. Later, when John Mark wanted to go on another missionary trip, Paul told him, "Stay home." (See Acts 15:37–39.) It appears that later on, however, John Mark learned to be responsible. (See 2 Timothy 4:11.)

Do you have a vision that is so powerful that you are willing to sacrifice for it? Are you responsible enough to sacrifice for it, even when

times are difficult?

Cultivate a Grateful Attitude

A leader lives in a constant state of gratitude to his Creator for His love and provision and for the opportunity to pursue his purpose and vision. Paul was a man filled with thanksgiving and gratitude. At various times, he wrote,

Always [give] thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.(Ephesians 5:20)

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.(Colossians 3:17)

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Having a grateful attitude toward God and others will give you strength and peace and will set a positive tone for your leadership. Do you have a spirit of gratitude and thankfulness?

Prove Yourself to be Trustworthy

True leaders are trustworthy; they are sought out for advice and assistance in sensitive situations. Daniel exhibited this quality. When you think of Daniel, you think of the lions' den. But that was only a few hours of Daniel's life. His life was full of many other events.

Daniel 6:1–2 reads, “It pleased Darius [the king] to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel.” This man of God was a Spirit-filled government official. God wants us where the action is, and Daniel was right there.

Daniel was so good at his job that the king put him over the other administrators, as well. Of course, this made them jealous, and they began to look for corruption in his life. Verse 4 says, “They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.” Wouldn’t it be wonderful to work with someone who wasn’t negligent, someone who

kept his or her word? Reliability and trustworthiness are essential leadership qualities.

Trustworthy servants also are discreet. They are able to keep confidences. They don't engage in gossip, and they don't set people against one other or use their weaknesses to manipulate them.

A trustworthy leader also has a good reputation. "He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap" (1 Timothy 3:7). One who desires to be used in leadership has to guard his reputation. How many leaders today have good reputations?

If I were to go unnoticed to your workplace and listen to the people you work with, what would they say about you? What is your reputation? The Bible says that Daniel's enemies couldn't find any fault with him. He was the third-highest-ranking politician in the country, and they tried to smear his reputation. They couldn't, though, because he had a sound spiritual foundation and a strong moral quality. (See Daniel 6:1–4.)

Natural and Spiritual Leadership

Genuine leadership is a marriage of natural and spiritual qualities that produces a well-integrated character. However, when a leader's natural, God-given qualities are exercised in

leadership without being submitted to spiritual influence, then abuse and self-destruction can result. There are countless examples of potentially great leaders who developed and displayed an exceptional degree of natural leadership qualities. However, because they neglected the complementary and protective spiritual qualities, they failed to fulfill their leadership function effectively.

“Natural” qualities can be defined in two ways. One definition refers to the inherent endowments, gifts, and abilities that are given at birth (for example: physical characteristics, such as height; having an ear for music; having good coordination for playing sports; or being

naturally patient). These are the natural qualities referred to in the above paragraph. The second definition refers to attitudes and qualities of leaders who are not directly influenced by the priorities and power of God's Spirit.

J. Oswald Sanders listed some differences between natural and spiritual leadership in his book *Spiritual Leadership*.

Natural Leadership	Spiritual Leadership
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Self-confident	Confident in God
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Knows men	Also knows God
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Makes own decisions	Seeks God's
---------------------	-------------

will

Ambitious Humble

Creates methods Follows God's
example

Enjoys command Delights in
obedience to God

Seeks personal reward Loves God
and others

Independent Depends on God²⁵

Sanders' lists indicate the basic differences between an individual who attempts to lead without a relationship with God and one who leads because of that relationship.

When we are led by God's Spirit, we may manifest what appear to be leadership characteristics under the "Natural" category, but they have a spiritual foundation. For example, self-confidence, the first quality, can be a by-product of confidence in God's faithfulness and power. Paul said, "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6), and "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Paul was not confident in himself, but he was confident in God's abilities. In a similar way, at the challenge of the Red Sea, Moses displayed his confidence in God's faithfulness and

power:

Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.(Exodus 14:13–14)

The natural leader “knows men” and the spiritual leader “also knows God.” Yet, the spiritually attuned person experiences a continual cycle of increasing knowledge of God and men. As he comes to know God better, he also learns about and understands the nature of humanity better. This reality is expressed in John 2:24: “But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he

knew all men.”

The spiritual leader’s ability to be decisive is enhanced by his clarity regarding God’s will and purpose for him, so that he makes decisions without wavering. The spiritually alive leader’s reliance on God actually makes him more independent than other leaders. His dependence on God creates a freedom from the opinions and criticisms of others; he stands independent of circumstances and environmental influences.

Spiritual and Moral Leadership Serves Others

You can see, therefore, how a

relationship with God through His Spirit enhances leadership. In addition, as I wrote in an earlier chapter, God's Spirit bestows supernatural gifts on each person who is reconciled to the Father through Jesus Christ, and their purpose is to build up others. (See 1 Corinthians 12:4–11.) These special gifts the Spirit gives are not for our private enjoyment but for the accomplishment of God's purposes through His leaders on earth. As with all leadership gifts, they are to be exercised for the “common good.” (See verse 7.)

Chapter Fifteen

Intellectual and Physical Leadership

A leader must train himself intellectually and physically for the purposes of his vision. This self-training is a lifelong process to ensure his effectiveness, his continued stamina, and the ultimate completion of his life's purpose.

Intellectual Leadership

Pursue Knowledge

How effective would a teacher be if he came into his classroom and asked his students what he should teach? If the

students don't know anything and the teacher doesn't know anything, how is learning to be accomplished? Leaders are inherently teachers. If you are going to lead, you need to have something worthwhile to say and demonstrate to others.

True leaders are constantly reaching for more knowledge to help them fulfill their visions. If you desire to become an effective leader, you must give yourself to study and never graduate from the University of Life.

Leaders cannot always afford to wait for others to come along and teach them. Often, they must initiate their own learning. The more they know, the more

they realize they still need to learn. Therefore, they read, they take classes, and they actively use both their ears and their eyes. They listen to others. They are curious and are always asking questions to help them understand the world and the people who live in it. They constantly develop new skills and new interests that will enable them to fulfill their visions.

Many people want to be leaders, but they are never in a position to learn. They use all kinds of excuses, such as “I’ve been working hard” or “I’m too busy.” Then, they wonder why they aren’t being used effectively.

Initiate your learning by focusing on

what you already know that you need to learn to further your vision. Today, most people, especially in the Western world, can't use the excuse that they are unable to find a teacher. There are thousands of helpful books in bookstores and in libraries that can build us up spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually and teach us what we need to know. There are television, radio, and Web-based programs that help us to learn and grow. There are continuing education courses at community colleges, online courses, and college courses on CD. Many of these resources can be used free of charge.

Great leaders love knowledge, but they don't just take it in. They live the

principles they have learned until they become a part of their lives. We are not just to absorb knowledge for its own sake. It is the purposeful application of knowledge and the principles we derive from that knowledge that will enable us to lead effectively. Always be open to learning and growing; as you do, you will be used more and more.

Apply Wisdom to Your Knowledge

Second, you must not only gain and apply knowledge, but you must also combine it with wisdom. I once spoke to a man who had a college degree but just couldn't seem to get along with others on the job. He had knowledge but no wisdom regarding how to relate to his

coworkers. Wisdom should not be confused with education.

Proverbs 4:7 says, “Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost you all you have, get understanding.” Wisdom is the ability to use knowledge effectively. It is having a clear understanding of how various parts and principles relate to one another. It means having a clear perspective.

Wisdom protects us from abusing knowledge by enabling us to apply it properly and effectively. It helps us to put our knowledge into a context that helps both others and ourselves. Again, some people are intelligent but seem to have no wisdom. Once, when I was

flying to Miami, I tried to talk with the lady sitting next to me. I said, “Good evening,” and she said, “Praise the Lord.” I said, “Nice weather,” and she said, “Glory to God.” I asked, “What’s your name?” and she said, “Thank You, Jesus.”

Then I asked, “Where are you going?” She answered, “Bless God, hallelujah, glory to God, I’m going to Miami, praise God.” “What are you going to do there?” “Well, thank You, Jesus, by the grace of God, when I get there, glory to God and with His mercy and the angels guarding me, I’ll go into Miami, praise the Lord, thank You, Jesus. He’ll walk me down to the store, hallelujah, glory to God, I’ll buy a pair

of shoes, thank You, Jesus, and if His grace follows with me and goodness and mercy are behind me, thank You, Lord, I'll buy a dress, praise Jesus.”

I was sitting there thinking, Lady, let's just talk. Let's just converse. She had knowledge of God's Word and a relationship with Him, but she had no wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to use what you have and to use it effectively. God wants to see you live out your faith in Him in a relevant way. “[Wisdom] is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her” (Proverbs 3:15). This verse indicates that you can receive the greatest academic honor and still be foolish. Wisdom is more important than academic

accomplishments. Do you want to be a leader? Go after wisdom, discipline, and understanding.

Wisdom is vital for us because when we make a mistake, it shows us why we went wrong and teaches us how to do things the right way in the future.

Wisdom also helps us to avoid making mistakes in the first place. The book of Proverbs offers wisdom to the young and to all who lack wisdom.

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for

giving prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young—
let the wise listen and add to their
learning, and let the discerning get
guidance.(Proverbs 1:1–5)

Again, wisdom is the ability to use
knowledge effectively. Many people
have knowledge, but not all have
wisdom or common sense. Many people
have information, but they have no
revelation. The Scriptures teach that
wisdom comes from above. (See James
3:17 kjv.) The source of true wisdom is
God.

My son, if you accept my words and
store up my commands within you,
turning your ear to wisdom and applying

your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:1–6)

Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Proverbs 9:9–10)

A leader must have a dynamic

relationship with the Source of wisdom and use the wisdom he receives in living out his life.

Think Creatively

Third, leaders must exercise creative thinking in pursuing their visions, in dealing with sometimes delicate situations with others, and in confronting difficult circumstances. We must learn to think creatively in a variety of situations because when a leader wants to advance his vision or when he faces obstacles, he needs to create his own circumstances and environment. Otherwise, he may become a victim of his situation.

King Saul allowed himself to be a

victim of his circumstances. Thousands of Philistines were camped on the hills, so many so that they looked as numerous as a colony of ants. Moreover, they were armed with knives, daggers, spears, and shields. And there was their champion, Goliath, nine feet tall, screaming, cursing, and threatening God's people. Saul felt that all the circumstances were against him. He said, in effect, "Whew, that is one big man. We can't kill him!" The Israelites were "dismayed and terrified" (1 Samuel 17:11).

Then, along came young David, bringing food to his brothers, who were soldiers in Saul's army. He heard what Goliath said, but he created his own circumstances. He asked, in essence,

“How dare Goliath defy God! Let me get at him!” (See 1 Samuel 17:26.) Imagine, a young boy put the king and all his best soldiers to shame. David walked up to Goliath and said, “I’m going to have your head today. I’m going to cut it off and feed you to the birds.” Goliath laughed, “Who’s this little runt who’s come here to make me ashamed in front of my people? Go get me a man.” David replied, “You’re looking at him,” and he defeated Goliath and cut off his head. (See verses 41–51.) He changed the circumstances.

What do you do when everything is against you? Do you act like Saul and say, “Whew, this is a big problem. We’re never going to get out of this

one”? Do you say, for example, “Everyone has a job except me; there are no jobs left in the city. I’m going to live in poverty”? If that is what you think, then you’re looking at the circumstances. Why don’t you create your own? I love to hear somebody say, “Since there are no jobs out there, I’m going to create my own job.” Create your own circumstances.

When I was in college, I had a roommate named Steve. When Steve was completing his last year, he ran out of money. Do you know what he did? He borrowed a friend’s lawn mower and began to mow people’s lawns to earn some money. After graduation, I heard from a mutual friend that Steve had his

own company and was making more than \$100,000 a year. When I asked what kind of company he had, my friend replied, “A lawn mowing company.” He had created his own circumstances. He had a strong and steady will, and he didn’t let the situation rule him.

You can exercise creativity in a variety of ways. One way to train your mind to think creatively is to learn how others have made advancements through thinking in new ways and trying new methods. Find out how leaders have effectively diffused explosive situations or restored broken relationships. Thinking creatively will take you into new territory as you create new environments in which to fulfill your

purpose and vision.

Physical Leadership

Leaders must also exercise leadership in relation to their physical bodies. Much has been made of the before and after pictures of U.S. presidents and the accelerated aging they experience. If you look at photographs of Abraham Lincoln just before he took office and then pictures of him four years later, the difference is stunning. Leadership can take a heavy toll on leaders. They often have to work harder, longer, more intensely, and beyond the call of duty to be effective. There is no way to do these things without being affected by stress, mental fatigue, and

physical demands. Leaders must therefore maintain an exceptional degree of stamina and physical energy if they are to continue to motivate and inspire themselves and others in their vision.

Exercise and Have a Healthy Diet

To promote his health and well-being, a true leader will commit to a physical exercise program and a healthy diet. If you do not have such plans in place, make an appointment with your physician and get started on a safe and healthy program that allows you to make steady progress toward your goals. Crash diets and hit-and-miss exercise sessions won't do it. You must develop an effective program that you can

maintain.

Break Unhealthy Habits

Applying leadership to the physical realm of your life also means breaking bad habits that undermine your health. It takes personal integrity and desire to break a bad habit. If you possess the inner strength, with God's help, to break deeply imbedded habits, such as procrastination, overeating, or oversleeping, then you have begun to tap into the leadership potential within you.

Paul wrote to Timothy that if a man desires the ministry of a bishop or overseer, he must first master his own house. How can he master the house of

God if he cannot master his own house? (See 1 Timothy 3:4, 12 nkjv.) I would suggest that house does not mean only the dwelling of your family, but also your physical body as the dwelling of God's Spirit. You cannot fully conquer challenges and obstacles until you have conquered yourself. Leaders master themselves.

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Anyone who wants to be a leader must realize that his body is like a special palace in which God's Spirit lives. You

don't go into a palace and throw around garbage, do you? Then why would you put garbage in the palace of your body?

I believe that our society has given in to temptation in this area. Our bodies are becoming garbage dumps. Junk food fills our stomachs, smoke clogs our lungs, and alcohol saturates our kidneys and livers. If you are called to lead, you must exercise self-control and be disciplined about what you take into your body.

This principle applies to any habit. Some people don't smoke, but they eat too much. They don't know how to say, "No, thank you." Taking leadership in this area of your life means learning how to say no to what will undermine your

health and yes to what will build you up
and strengthen you as you serve God and
others.

Chapter Sixteen

Emotional Leadership

True leaders exhibit emotional maturity. Learning to manage your emotions and relate to others in a positive way is one of the most important areas of leadership development. Here are some qualities to develop in order to be an emotionally healthy and secure leader.

Be Secure in Your Self-Worth

Seek Approval from God rather than
Adulation from People

A leader who knows who he is does not depend on others to validate his

sense of self-worth. Leaders have to be careful not to encourage and embrace an overestimation of themselves by their followers, especially to the point where they, rather than the vision, become the focus of attention. When a leader encourages such adulation, it is often a manifestation of insecurity. A true leader understands that any measure of popularity he has is simply a temporary reaction of people to his gifts and position and does not reflect who he is as a person. He is more concerned about pleasing God than about being popular with people. He has “an audience of One,” as some have called it. He does not confuse applause with affirmation. He does not confuse temporary awards

with eternal reward.

Evaluate Yourself according to Your Own Purpose, Not Others'

A leader who is secure in his sense of self-worth also does not evaluate himself in light of others. It is natural to measure the success of leadership by the accomplishment of objectives.

However, we can be tempted to measure our success by a comparison to the accomplishments of others. Doing so can lead to the development of a jealous spirit. A true leader does not measure his success by comparing himself to others but by evaluating how he is fulfilling his own purpose and vision.

If you are sure of your assignment in life, then you are free from competition, comparison, and thus jealousy. Guard your heart and mind against a destructive spirit of deceit and envy. There is no need for it. You are the only one who can do what you were born to do. God will not reward you for competition but for obedience to Him and to the vision He has entrusted to you.

Cultivate the Quality of Openness toward Others

Those who are secure in their self-worth also possess the quality of openness. They are able to share their ideas and rationale while maintaining genuine respect for the ideas of others.

They have the ability to accept others' opinions, personalities, characters, positions, and statuses without being threatened in their own security or trying to exert control over others. However, they are not easily manipulated by the behavior of others, nor do they easily take offense at people. They do not possess a negative, angry spirit that suddenly loses control and goes into a rage.

When people say things that irritate you, do you get angry right away? If so, that is an indication of immature leadership ability. Keep in mind that the minute you become a leader, you are a target for others. Those who are the most visible receive most of the ridicule.

Therefore, you must be able to control yourself and not allow anger to immobilize your rational capacity.

Proverbs 16:32 says, “Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.” In other words, you could be a valiant warrior and still not be a leader.

Proverbs 29:11 says, “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.” A wise man is one who controls his temper. As we have seen, self-control is among the fruits of the Spirit. (See Galatians 5:22–23.)

Sometimes people say, “So-and-so made me so mad.” No one on earth really has the power to make us mad. If I

can make you mad, then I control you in that area, and if I control you, then you are not exercising control over yourself. Since we do have control over our thoughts and actions, if what I say makes you mad, it's because you choose to be mad about what I said to you. You determine whether I make you angry or not. When people say derogatory things about us, it is up to us to decide that what they are saying is not worth getting worked up about. If a person is always under the control of others, he can't be used in leadership.

Avoid the Fear of Man

Are you easily intimidated by people? Again, do you compare yourself

with the abilities and accomplishments of others? God made you unique in order to fulfill a special purpose. (See, for example, Ephesians 2:10.) The Bible says that God sought you out, not the other way around. (See John 15:16.) He has a plan for your life, and you do not need to feel inferior to anyone else. To become a leader, you must possess a deep sense of security, which represents your recognition of your identity in God, your awareness of your self-worth, your emotional anchoring, and your personal strength.

In Acts 5, Peter and the other apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin, the ruling religious council of their day. Jesus had worked with Peter for three

and a half years, shaping his character and teaching him to rely on God. Peter had been filled with the Holy Spirit and was a leader. Therefore, his answer to the high priest's question is not surprising.

“We gave you strict orders not to teach in this [Jesus’] name,” [the high priest] said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.”(vv. 28–30)

Peter knew that there is only one ultimate authority, and that is God.

A true leader is never intimidated by anyone because he has self-confidence that is grounded in Christ. He is aware that nobody is better or worse than he is, just different. He knows that all people have the same value before God.

God cannot use someone who is afraid of other people. For example, how do you behave when you're with your boss? Do you say what you want to? Or do you say what you think he wants to hear? People who have confidence in God and their own abilities have no fear of men. If you have to talk to your boss about something

that's on your mind, do you think about it for twelve months, get to his door, and then say, "Let me think about this some more"? Or do you go right in with an attitude of respect and speak your mind? Be courageous. Of course, wisdom and discretion are needed in such circumstances. However, some people never act in a courageous way because they already believe they're going to be turned down or that failure is inevitable.

The Bible says, "Fear of man will prove to be a snare" (Proverbs 29:25). A snare is the same thing as a trap. When you're caught in a trap, you can't move. You can't express what you want to, and so you never progress in your leadership. Perhaps you haven't been

promoted because your boss sees you as a person who has no confidence in himself. True leaders love confident people.

Robert Coles, noted author, psychiatrist, and Harvard professor, said this of Abraham Lincoln:

Abraham Lincoln did not go to Gettysburg having commissioned a poll to find out what would sell in Gettysburg. There were no people with percentages for him, cautioning him about this group or that group or what they found in exit polls a year earlier. When will we have the courage of Lincoln?26

Courage means standing up on your strength. For years and years, I used to pray for strength. Guess what? I never got an ounce. Why? Because you already have all the strength you need. Do you know where your strength comes from? Joy. “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). You can’t pray for strength before you find your joy. What happens in this world is not supposed to affect your joy, for true joy comes from within. Joy is the secret of our strength.

Courage has been described as doing what you’re afraid to do. Thomas Jefferson said, “One man with courage is a majority.” The scars you acquire by exercising courage will never make you

feel inferior.

One of the greatest examples of a confident leader is Jesus. Standing before the great and powerful Pontius Pilate, His hands were bound, His back was bleeding, and His beard had been plucked out. He seemed to be nothing but a mutilated, weak, and insignificant man. Pilate said to Him, in effect, “Do You know who I am? Do You know that I have the power to give You Your life or to take it?” (See John 19:10.)

Jesus was also brought before King Herod that day. Standing before these two earthly rulers, He could have been intimidated. Instead, He said, in effect, “Pilate, you could have no power over

Me unless it was given to you from My Father. To show you that I came for the purpose of dying for the world, you go ahead and condemn Me. I'm going to let you do your job.” (See John 19:11.)

Jesus knew who He was. True leaders know who they are and the authority under which they function.

Stand Up under Opposition

Just as a leader must exert moral courage rather than give in to the fear of man, he must also be able to stand up under various kinds of opposition. If you accept the call to leadership, you must be willing to be misunderstood, criticized, opposed, accused, and even rejected. This reality, also, was

demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ. “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isaiah 53:3). Great leaders often are not recognized or appreciated by their contemporaries but rather by succeeding generations. If you depend on or need the agreement of everyone around you in order to feel secure, you will never be an effective leader. True leaders cause change, and change by its very nature engenders conflict and resistance.

Realize that, as you lead, you will inevitably encounter opposition. This does not necessarily mean you are

wrong, but it does indicate that you are challenging others to change. Peter stressed that we should not cause trouble for ourselves by behaving poorly, but that we may well suffer from doing what is right. “If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler” (1 Peter 4:14–15).

Scripture gives us many examples of people who endured opposition as they lived out their life’s purposes. Moses had a passion for setting the Israelites free from their slavery. Because he embraced his God-given vision (as much

as he understood it at the time), he was rejected by his adopted father, the pharaoh of Egypt. In fact, he was cast off by his entire adopted nation, abandoned to the desert, and forced to live for decades as a fugitive and shepherd before seeing the realization of his dream. Job experienced intense spiritual, emotional, and physical suffering but held on to his integrity and trust in God. His wife disparaged him for his convictions, telling him to “curse God and die!” (Job 2:9). His friends judged him, assuming he had done something wrong, but they did not represent God’s nature and ways accurately. (See Job 42:7.) When you hold a conviction, you can expect

criticism and rejection. Sometimes, that criticism and rejection may come from your family members and closest friends.

If you think you should be exempt from all criticism, you do not yet deserve to be given a leadership position. Criticism is common to all leaders; no one is spared from it. I would even say that one of the proofs of leadership is criticism. One of the badges of leadership is criticism. The very nature of effective leadership involves taking a position on issues, making decisions, and determining direction. These actions will always result in some form of reaction from those in your realm of influence, and the

reaction may well be negative.

Criticism is often the manifestation of others' jealousy, insecurity, or fear, and it should be seen as a normal human response to change. True leaders are not waylaid by criticism; rather, they often see it as a positive opportunity to test their convictions and commitment. If you do not want to be criticized, then decide to do nothing in life. It is better to be criticized for taking action than to be ignored for inaction. Criticism is one of the greatest tests of a leader's maturity, conviction, and commitment to his vision. If you are ready for criticism, you've made great progress in your preparation for leadership.

Be Prepared for Aloneness

Take Time to Be Alone

Because the leader is the one with the vision and sees the end from the beginning, he must both live the process and keep an eye on the destination at the same time. He has the ultimate responsibility for the vision's progress. He works behind the scenes in ways that no one else sees. A leader must face the inevitable challenge of meeting the demands that come with leadership. These involve the need to make critical decisions, often under time constraints and external pressure. A certain aloneness comes with these responsibilities. Despite the fact that a

good leader delegates, he is aware that there are decisions only he can make. He must weigh all the issues, information, and opinions and make the best possible decision. This can exact a heavy toll on his emotional, psychological, and physical capacities; it may become a source of temporary stress that must be managed. Few followers can ever appreciate this difficult responsibility upon the leader.

Because of the weight of his task, a leader needs to be able to be alone in order to process his responsibilities, renew his spirit, mind, and body, and receive guidance from God. Luke the physician wrote about Jesus, “The news about him spread all the more, so that

crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Luke 5:15–16). Do you have the capacity to pull away from the crowd so you can gain perspective and hear from God?

Sometimes, leaders are isolated by circumstances beyond their control. Yet, in many cases, it is in these times that leaders find their true selves. Moses found himself in the desert when he had an encounter with God and discovered who he really was and how God wanted him to fulfill his dream. Paul found himself while he was in Arabia for a time after his encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. (See

Galatians 1:15–17.) Jesus came to terms with His purpose while fasting in the desert at the beginning of His ministry, and later while praying in the garden of Gethsemane just before His crucifixion. It is in isolation and loneliness that you may discover or renew your assignment.

Be Able to Stand Alone

Leaders not only must be able to be alone at times, but they must also be able to stand alone. Jesus was forsaken by all His disciples in His greatest hour of need, yet He stood firm and saw His purpose fulfilled. Paul was abandoned by coworkers and friends in his ministry during the pressures of persecution and hardship, yet he kept going.

Joseph was called upon to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh's baker and cupbearer, who were in prison with him. To the cupbearer, Joseph told of a coming promotion, but for the baker, he predicted death. (See Genesis 40.) God had given the interpretations, and Joseph was obligated to deliver them accurately. If he had been concerned about the approval of others, he might have been tempted to lie or at least shade the truth, but Joseph wanted only God's approval and so he did what was right.

Many times, it is necessary for a leader to go against the approval of his own family. If you are tempted to compromise in order to gain the

approval of others, don't do it. True leaders do not become controlled by others' accolades or opinions.

Throughout the Bible, you'll find the leaders whom God raised up going against the grain most of the time. Some religious leaders during the time of John the Baptist wore showy robes or tried to draw attention to their supposed piety by wearing long tassels. Instead of these things, John wore camel's hair. He came out of the wilderness saying, "I have the word of God." (See Luke 3:1–18.) The leaders' response was, in effect, "You don't look or act like we do." (See, for example, Matthew 11:7–15.) But their opinions did not affect him. He stood alone in his purpose.

Are you willing to stand for the truth and for correct principles, staying committed to your purpose even if you have to stand alone? If you are not willing to stand alone in your vision, few will be willing to stand with you.

Evidence “Controlled Power”

A leader must also be gentle, or meek. Some people think that meekness is the same thing as weakness. Meekness means “controlled power”—power without abuse. It means the ability to use power wisely. This is important because, many times, leaders are tempted to abuse power. The minute they receive authority over other people, they begin to feel that they can misuse and

control them. When you are a leader, you must be a gentle person. Wait to accept leadership until you have that gentle character, until you know that you have influence but won't abuse it.

Having a gentle nature also means that a leader won't be a show-off. Leaders don't need to show off because they know who they are and what they have. Some people are pushy. They might walk up to you and say, "Do you know who I am? I am the honorable Dr. So-and-so with a PHDWXYZ degree." They indicate that you are supposed to act in a certain way when they are present. Being gentle means that you don't go around telling people, "I'm a leader." That's not gentleness; that's

insecurity. Another quality of a gentle leader is that he is not quarrelsome. Do you know how difficult it is to work constructively with a quarrelsome person?

Leaders who are truly gentle have the demeanor of an ambassador. Suppose an ambassador from another country walks around every day trying to convince us that he is the ambassador. He walks down the street, calling, "I am the ambassador." You might think he is crazy. You know he is the ambassador; he doesn't have to tell you. He proves who he is by the credentials, administration, and operation of his office. Likewise, gentle leaders work quietly in the confidence of their life's

assignment without looking around to see who is watching them. They are not people who want others to see what they are doing. That's pride. Leaders know that what they are doing is important, but they don't have to shout it from the rooftops.

Possess a Forgiving Spirit

True leaders are so secure in their relationship with God that they can forgive and ask for forgiveness without hesitation. A person may be hurt by someone, and ten years later, when he sees that person again, he still wants to get even. If you harbor unforgiveness, you negate the possibility of being used effectively by God.

If anyone should have been permitted to be resentful and unforgiving, it was Joseph. When he was a young man, his brothers threw him into a pit, sold him into slavery, and then told his father that he had been killed by a wild animal. He could have carried that injustice in his heart for years, but he didn't do that because he was a leader-in-training. Even through additional trials in his young life, he acted honorably. These difficulties were all preparing him for the great leadership role he would be given.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on

Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, "Make way!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt." ...Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout Egypt. During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the

cities.

(Genesis 41:41–44, 46–48)

Joseph was now a powerful leader, and he could have used his new status to take revenge on his brothers. In Genesis 42, we read that Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food during the subsequent famine. After testing their character, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and embraced them. He forgave them and explained that God had used their evil intentions for good—both in his life and theirs. (See Genesis 42:3–16; 45:1–15.)

“[Love] keeps no record of wrongs” (1 Corinthians 13:5). True leaders reject petty, childish resentments. They can't

afford to overreact to negative behaviors, criticism, or human weakness. They don't have the time to waste on such things. They know that God desires for us to forgive even major offenses, just as He has forgiven us. When Peter wanted to know how many times we should forgive others, Jesus replied, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18:22). Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Stephen, one of the leaders of the first-century church, was stoned to death. As he was dying, he prayed, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60).

True leaders forgive and don't carry grudges. In addition, they do not feel superior when they discover the weaknesses of others. They are aware that they, too, have weaknesses. They realize that behavior and potential are two different things, and they believe in the unseen potential of all people. They believe in the ability of others to change. They feel grateful for their blessings and are able to naturally and compassionately forgive the offenses of others. True leaders know that their feelings are not the same things as facts, and they act on that awareness. This requires strong control over their thoughts, and it also fosters humility within them.

Exercise Faith in Adversity

A good leader has the ability to stay calm in times of crisis. Once, when Jesus and His disciples were out in a boat, Jesus fell asleep, and a storm came upon them. Although the disciples had leadership potential, Jesus demonstrated His leadership by keeping control of His emotions, exercising faith, and dealing quickly with the crisis. (See, for example, Matthew 8:23–27.)

Paul demonstrated how a leader handles adversity. He and his fellow prisoners, along with their Roman guards, were on a ship headed toward Rome. A violent storm came up and they began to sink. God was with them,

however, and they all made it safely ashore an island called Malta. You might think, What a disaster! Not Paul—he healed all the sick and got the attention of the entire island as a testimony to the power of God. (See Acts 27:1–28:10.) True leaders see crises and setbacks as opportunities to maximize their potential.

When Moses and the Israelites left Egypt and reached the Red Sea, the people started crying out because they were afraid. Pharaoh was pursuing them from behind, and the Red Sea was in front of them. They could hardly believe Moses when he said to them, in effect, “Be still. Everything is in order. Stand firm and see the deliverance of the

Lord.” Then, Moses ran to God and cried out, “Lord, help!” He took his disappointment and fear to God. (See Exodus 14:8–14.) Again, leaders know how to keep self-control in crises. That’s why they are leaders. They have to be in charge, even when they don’t feel like they are. Sometimes your knees may get shaky, but as a leader, you must stand nonetheless.

This means that you must be an example for others. They will imitate you. If Moses had started crying in front of the Israelites, they would have wept even more. I can picture Moses going behind a rock and saying, “Now, what are we going to do, Lord? I’ve got them all calm. Now You must come through.”

The Lord said, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on” (Exodus 14:15). In other words, “I told you all to leave Egypt, but you’ve stopped moving.” (See Exodus 14:10–16.) You see, Moses knew he was on the right track, but the circumstances didn’t look very good. Yet he knew how to control himself in difficult times, and he regularly turned to God for help.

Leaders maintain their peace in adversity, not because they deny its existence but because of their confidence in their purpose, their deep commitment to their vision, and their total trust in their divine Source and the potential He has placed within them. True leaders are never restricted by natural limitations.

They see beyond the restrictions and embrace the impossible.

Suppose your boss kept telling you, “We’re losing money; we’re going down the drain; this company is going to close.” You would probably think, I’m going to lose my job; I’m going to get fired or laid off. A good leader is always optimistic, even in the midst of difficulties. He looks for creative ways to solve problems and has faith in God’s provision.

Again, Joseph is a good example of someone who exercised faith in the midst of adversity. He developed this quality long before he was made Pharaoh’s prime minister. In Genesis

39:22, we read, “So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.” In those days, they didn’t have nice jails like we have now. At that time, they threw you into a pit where there was no bathroom, bed, or kitchen. That pit was your bathroom, your bed, your kitchen, and everything else. Joseph was thrown into one of these pits, yet he remained faithful and trusting. He kept a steady will.

Eventually, the warden saw in Joseph a man who had self-confidence and competence, and he elevated him to a position of responsibility in the prison. While Joseph was in jail, he interpreted dreams for people and helped them out.

He kept seeking to be useful and to grow as a person. That's faith.

When you find yourself in negative situations, what do you do? Do you say, "Oh, Lord, why did You put me here? I've served You all these years and look what You've done. Why did my house burn down? Why did I lose my job?" This is not the attitude of an effective leader.

We need to talk about ourselves the same way God talks about us. He says, in effect, "Out of the miry clay I will lift you up and put your feet on a rock." (See Psalm 40:2.) "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord will deliver you out of them all." (See Psalm 34:19

kjv.) Instead of worrying about the affliction you're in, start thinking about the way God will lift you out. A good leader keeps his faith, even in adversity. He is optimistic. Your attitude will determine your altitude. Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). He also declared, "Everything is possible for him who believes" (Mark 9:23).

Can you keep yourself calm in crises? Can you exercise faith in adversity? Can you give your circumstances to God and watch as He faithfully provides? Keep asking yourself, Am I developing the qualities of a leader?

Chapter Seventeen

Relational Leadership

Every leader must learn how to build relationships with others. If you desire to be a leader, you will need to develop the ability to inspire and work with people as you progress toward your vision.

Inspire Confidence

As I wrote earlier, leaders will inevitably be criticized by some people. Yet they will just as surely inspire others, even if they are misunderstood or opposed at first. You can always tell when someone is a leader because people have willingly joined him in

accomplishing his vision. A good leader is someone in whom people can have confidence. Are you able to secure the trust and support of others? If you are, then you are on your way to being a leader. People will gain confidence in you if you develop some of the qualities we have already discussed: if you are committed to your purpose, faithful over little things, and willing to sacrifice for your vision.

Although Joseph was opposed and rejected by his brothers, he inspired the confidence of others in Egypt. He had this effect on Potiphar, who was his first master after he was sold into slavery.

The Lord was with Joseph and he

prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. (Genesis 39:2–5)

Potiphar saw that Joseph was responsible, so he put him in charge of his estate. When Joseph proved himself faithful, he was promoted. The work of a leader will prosper when people have

confidence in him. He will be surrounded by faithful coworkers who will bring fresh, new ideas and better ways of doing things.

Be a True Lover of People

Leaders are friendly and openly invite people into their lives. They are not afraid to extend themselves to others because they are secure in themselves. They are easy to befriend because they are confident in their self-worth and can share themselves without fear. They have an understanding and open attitude that puts others at ease. True leaders really care about people with an unconditional attitude, and they always seek the potential within them. They are

able to speak the truth with love and sensitivity. They attract people because they express a spirit of acceptance; they withhold judgment, give the benefit of the doubt, and make people aware of their importance and value. They see all people as equal and strive to bring out the best in everyone.

Do people seek your company? An antisocial person is not likely to make a good and effective leader. There are “leaders” who may talk to you but not like you. Their care for you extends only as far as it must in order to obtain what you can give them. They don’t want to know how you’re doing. They just want to stand up before you and perform. Yet a leader called by God becomes a

people-lover. You cannot really help people if you don't like them. The Bible says, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

Let me give you an example of how you can tell whether you are an effective, people-loving leader. In John 4:4–42, we find the story of the woman at the well, which I alluded to earlier when discussing Jesus' perspective toward the Samaritans. Jesus had just finished ministering and He was tired. He and His disciples began walking toward Galilee.

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob

had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)(John 4:4-9)

This woman was prejudiced. It's very difficult to be a representative of God if you are prejudiced. Every person on the face of the earth is made in God's image. The Bible says, "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is

a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen” (1 John 4:20). It’s amazing how we aspire to be leaders yet fail to realize this very basic principle of loving people.

Jesus went on to say to the woman at the well,

“If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his

sons and his flocks and herds?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” “I have no husband,” she replied. (John 4:10–17)

Notice that Jesus not only was concerned about restoring her relationship with God, but He also wanted to meet her personal needs. He said to the Samaritan woman, “You have

a need. I want to help. Where do you hurt the most?” She was hurting in her domestic life, so Jesus zeroed in on her problem and asked, in effect, “How’s your husband?” The woman said she had no husband.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

(vv. 17–18)

This poor woman always seems to get criticized by people after they read her story. What they may not realize is that in those days, if a married woman

couldn't have children, her husband could just divorce her and leave. This may have been her situation. She may have been kicked out of one house, and then another man married her, but when she didn't have any children, he kicked her out, as well. And so on.

After the fifth husband, can you imagine how this woman must have felt about men? How do you think she felt about society? Here was a woman who apparently had been the topic of gossip for years. After so much frustration, she must have finally decided, I'm just going to live with this one so he won't have the chance to disgrace me by divorcing me. She was rejected and depressed.

Jesus listened intently as she said, “I can see that you are a prophet” (John 4:19). Then, He told her,

Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

(vv. 21–24)

Read her answer carefully:

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.” Just then his disciples returned and were surprised....(John 4:25–27)

Here is where you can begin to tell the difference between a leader and a follower. Followers will usually be surprised when a leader stands up and does something unexpected. The disciples “were surprised to find him talking with a woman” (v. 27). That statement sounds strange to us, but in those days, any man who claimed to be

respectable never spoke to women in public. Jesus was talking to a woman! The disciples couldn't handle it; He was breaking tradition. He was destroying their preconceived ideas about God. He was killing prejudice.

As much as the disciples wanted to, they did not ask Jesus why He was talking to the woman; they were afraid to question him about it. (See verse 27.) They knew that every time they asked Jesus a question, He would confound them. Therefore, they had decided that they were going to keep silent because they didn't want to be embarrassed in front of one another. They knew that if Jesus was talking to a woman, then it must be all right, because He'd been

right all along.

The second reason they were surprised, as we saw earlier, was that it was not common for Jews to associate with Samaritans. Not only was she a woman, but she was also a Samaritan woman.

I like what she did next. Leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come see a Jew.” Was that what she really said? No. Did she say, “Come see a rabbi”? No. Let’s compare what this woman said with her earlier statement. In verse 9, she said, “You are a Jew.” In verse 29, she said, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the

Christ?” She started out prejudiced and ended up enlightened.

A true leader is not prejudiced. He treats everyone the same because everyone has similar needs, problems, and hurts. What does everyone need? The black man, the white man, the Haitian, the Korean, the Indian, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Russian, the American, the Bahamian—all people need love and respect, just as you and I do. A good leader knows how to love people just as they are and to guide them into what they can be, just as Jesus did for the Samaritan woman.

Promote Peace and Reconciliation

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). A leader is one who both keeps the peace and restores peace after it has been broken. Hebrews 12:14 says, “Make every effort to live in peace with all men.” An important function of leadership is conciliation, the ability to discover common ground between opposing viewpoints and then to induce both parties to accept it. This ability comes from wisdom, and wisdom comes from the Word of God. A good leader does not depend on the knowledge of this world alone; he is filled with God’s Word, and he judges everything in the light of God’s wisdom.

“True leaders inspire others to

become better; they engender a sense of expectation and trust in regard to behavior that becomes a source of self-discipline on the part of followers.”²⁷ If others reproach themselves when they disappoint you, then you are leading by inspiration. Peter, after denying Jesus, demonstrated this quality by self-imposed shame. (See Matthew 26:75.) Leaders are not harsh when they correct others. Jesus restored Peter with forgiveness and kindness. (See John 21:1–19.) And Paul wrote to the Galatians that when someone falls, he should be restored gently. (See Galatians 6:1.)

The Bible says, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with

God and men” (Luke 2:52 nkjv). God wants you to have favor. Part of promoting peace is treating people right in the first place. It’s often difficult to win over someone who’s mad at you because you haven’t treated him well. “An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city” (Proverbs 18:19). The Scriptures also state that if we obey God and follow Him, He will make even our enemies to be at peace with us. (See Proverbs 16:7.) There are many ambitious young leaders who have the right hearts but the wrong heads. They have the right messages but the wrong methods. They keep creating enemies when they should be promoting peace, cooperation, and reconciliation.

Uplift Others

The attitude of a true leader is cheerful, pleasant, and optimistic. It is enthusiastic, hopeful, and believing. This attitude is contagious and acts like a magnetic field, drawing out the best in others.

“The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction” (Proverbs 16:21). If you want to help someone who is hurting, lift him up with kindness. Verse 23 says, “A wise man’s heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.” Have you ever heard someone say, “I’m going to give you a piece of my mind”? That’s not what people need; they need a piece

of your heart. The Bible says that good works come out of the good treasure of your heart. (See Matthew 12:35; Luke 6:45.) Uplift others by giving to them out of the good treasure that's in your heart.

Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man.

(Proverbs 3:3–4 nasb)

The lips of the righteous know what finds favor.

(Proverbs 10:32 tniv)

Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the

bones.(Proverbs 16:24)

Because leaders believe in other people, they always extend a spirit of acceptance. An uplifting leader does not lord it over others. (See Matthew 20:25–28.) “To lord over” means to claim a sense of ownership over or to rule with a haughty spirit. There are leaders who make you feel as if they own you, as if you can’t do anything without their permission. They always want you to give an account of where you have been and what you have been doing. True leaders are committed to uplifting others and helping them to become the best they can be. They find their joy and pleasure in seeing others develop and release their own potential,

and become leaders themselves.

Handle Failures Constructively

In every organization and ministry, there will be opportunities to fail, and some people do fail. Leaders need to realize that everyone is capable of failing. Instead of making people feel degraded and useless, encourage them and say, “Look, you didn’t do it right, so let me show you how to do it.”

The first thing some people say after they make a mistake is, “I’m never going to be worth anything. My father always told me that I was a failure, my grandmother told me that nothing worthy could come out of my life, and my

teachers told me that I was stupid.” They sit down in a puddle of failure and wallow in it. Sometimes, they stay in that puddle for years.

When people fail, a good leader doesn't treat them as failures. He corrects them and tries to help them learn from their mistakes so they can do better the next time. There are many people who will “cancel” you after you make one mistake. They don't want to talk to you anymore; they don't want you around; they put you aside because they don't want to deal with you. That's poor leadership. Again, leaders separate people's behavior from their worth and do not confuse people's value with their present conditions.

Peter denied Jesus when Jesus was arrested and taken away for trial. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, He could have rebuked and rejected Peter, but instead He was very kind toward him. Jesus knew Peter had done wrong, He knew Peter had failed him, yet He used the opportunity to show him how to be a leader. He was pointed, but He spoke the truth in love. (See John 21:1–17.) In fact, after Jesus' resurrection, an angel instructed Mary and the other women to tell Jesus' disciples to meet Him in Galilee, and He made sure that Peter was specifically included. (See Mark 16:7.)

Proverbs 17:27 says, “A man of knowledge uses words with restraint,

and a man of understanding is even-tempered.” Having restraint means that although you may want to express your displeasure in no uncertain terms, you don’t. A wise and knowledgeable leader exercises patience and self-control, even if he feels like giving someone a tongue-lashing. Effective leaders always go for the win-win option because they respect the value of all people.

If you want to be a leader in God’s kingdom, you must know how to deal effectively with your failures and with the failures of others. Look at failures as lessons, and then move on. Don’t dwell on your failures or let them define you. Good leaders encourage other people to get out of their failures, too. That’s

important. Think about Jesus and Peter. Peter failed Jesus many times, but Jesus always helped him to get back on the right path. If you missed your exit on the highway of life, don't continue in the wrong direction. Stop, turn around, and get back on track. Remember, failure is only a temporary detour and should never become a permanent address.

Afterword

I encourage you to set your life on a course of leadership training that will enable you to become an exceptional leader for your generation to emulate. The realization of your leadership potential is tied to your willingness to commit to refining, developing, and incorporating the character and characteristics of leadership in your life. You must commit to becoming a leader.

Many people will merely continue to sit at home, hoping that someone will come along and promote them to something better. They will sit for years, waiting—and they will die waiting. You

can't afford to let that happen to you.

Our world is suffering from a lack of leadership, but you can help change this situation. You have within you the ability to become a change agent in your time. Don't wait for someone else to take responsibility for the future. Rise up from the seat of a follower and enter the school of leadership, for it is God's will that you become a leader and lead others to their full potential in Him. Settle for nothing less than your best. If you accept this challenge, then read this book again until you are filled with the desire and knowledge to lead others to leadership.

Be available and say, "I want to do something on this earth." Discover

God's purpose and vision for your life.
Then, step out in faith and do it!

The Kind of Leader to Be

Endeavor continually to develop your full leadership potential and to become the following:

- a responsible leader
- a growing leader
- an exemplary leader
- an inspiring leader
- an efficient leader
- a caring leader

- a communicating leader
- a goal-oriented leader
- a decisive leader
- a working leader
- a unifying leader
- a competent leader
- a leader led by the great Leader of leaders, Jesus Christ!

The quality of tomorrow's leaders lies in the character of today's leaders-in-training.

—Dr. Myles Munroe

A Word to the Third World

Today, there are approximately 6.7 billion people on planet earth, a large number of whom live in countries and conditions that have been labeled “Third World.” This term was coined by a French economist who was attempting to describe the various groupings of people throughout the world based on their socioeconomic status. Whether or not this term is valid, it is generally accepted as a description or manner of identification for millions of people.

I was born in—and still live in—a part of the world that is said to fall within this category. The term is applied

to people groups who did not participate in or benefit from the industrial revolution. A large number of these people were not allowed to take advantage of the industrial revolution because they were subjugated at the time, being used to fuel the economic base for the revolution. Many of them were reduced to slaves and indentured servants, roles that robbed them of their identities, dignity, self-worth, and self-respect.

Despite changes in conditions and a greater measure of freedom and independence, many of these peoples are still grappling with their identities and their senses of self-worth. Many of the nations that progressed and developed

through the industrial revolution have reinforced (by attitude, policies, and legislation) the notion that these Third World peoples do not possess the potential to cultivate the skills, intelligence, and sophistication necessary to approach or equal those of industrialized states.

With this prejudice and misconception in mind, I wish to say to all Third World peoples everywhere—whether you are from Africa, Asia, Central America, or another region—that your potential is limitless and cannot be measured by the opinions and estimations of others. You possess the ability to achieve, develop, accomplish, produce, create, and perform almost

anything your mind can conceive. God created you with all the potential you need to fulfill your purpose in this life.

Zeal without Skill

Historically, Third World peoples have always been hardworking, dedicated, zealous, and highly sensitive. Many of them are products of oppression and have had instilled in them a sense of timidity, a lack of self-confidence, and a spirit of dependency. They fail in many cases to realize the capacity of the leadership potential within them.

In most of these Third World countries, the system of colonialism carried with it the dehumanizing element

of fostering dependency and robbing individuals of the essential aspect of creative development. This debilitating system also provided its subjects with basic training for service but not productivity.

In essence, people were taught how to grow sugarcane but not how to make sugar; they were taught how to grow cotton but not how to make cloth. The result was a perpetuation of dependency, for even after they were “liberated,” or, as some call it, “emancipated,” they were left with the raw material but no abilities to transform them into end products.

In effect, they were left with the zeal

of freedom but not the skills for development. This is why so many Third World nations today are still experiencing tremendous hardship and turmoil. The industrialized states that once colonized them have maintained a sense of control and superiority that manifests itself in a sophisticated form of economic instead of political colonialism.

Third World nations essentially are still being led to look to the developed states for their standard of quality and excellence. This breeds a sense of disrespect for, and suspicion of, their own products, as well as a denial of the great potential that lies dormant in these great peoples.

This distrust and denial of potential was also transferred to Third World churches through some mission efforts. Many churches throughout Third World countries are products of foreign-based missions and in most cases were dependent on a “mother” church organization. This dependency factor continued even into the time of national independence, leaving many of these ministries without well-trained, confident, competent, and skilled leaders.

Even to this day, despite the fact that many of these church organizations have qualified and capable leaders, there is still the notion that the presence of a foreign element is necessary for the

maintenance of excellence and quality.

However, there is a fresh wind of responsibility blowing throughout the Third World countries that is stirring a sense of destiny and purpose in the hearts of people. This awakening of the spirit of responsibility is being felt in all arenas—political, social, economic, and spiritual. It is therefore imperative that Third World peoples look to the strength and potential lying deep within them, and, with a renewed commitment to the Creator, Jesus Christ, prepare themselves for the refinement of their skills. Ecclesiastes 10:10 states, “If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success.”

It is my desire that every man, woman, boy, and girl in every nation and every race will come to realize the tremendous potential and capacity for greatness lying dormant within them.

True Leadership Is Freedom

“No one is truly free until everyone is free.” This concept is the goal of leadership. Much of what we call “freedom” is not freedom at all but simply permission given by an oppressor for others to become somebody. This is not freedom. If the source of your liberty is another person or a group, then you are only as free as they allow you to be. Freedom cannot be given by another.

True freedom is a product of truth, not legislation. Expressing God's concept of freedom, Jesus stated, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32 nkjv). In essence, He saw true freedom as a result of understanding the truth about yourself and everyone else. In other words, no one can give you the "right" to be free. Freedom is not something you receive; it is something that happens to you. Free men can never be bound.

The full concept of freedom is found in the very word freedom. This word is constructed from the word free and the suffix -dom. It indicates a state or condition of being free. This truth is at the very heart of the purpose for man's

creation and is expressed in the foundation of God's intention for humanity. In Genesis 1:26, God declared, "Let them rule...over all the earth." This declaration established not only the purpose for man's creation, but also the measure of his fulfillment. He was created with the freedom to rule.

In essence, no man is truly free until he has the liberty to rule, or have dominion over, his environment. Note that this is not a freedom to dominate other people, but rather to have dominion over one's own realm. This is the heart of true leadership: to inspire men to declare independence from the bondage of other men's opinions and prejudices and to tap the unlimited

potential within them to creatively dominate the earth, which is their destiny.

Therefore, any form of leadership that restricts, denies, inhibits, limits, suppresses, oppresses, obstructs, or frustrates this God-given mandate and capacity is not leadership at all. True leadership sets followers free to be led by the Holy Spirit, for only he whom the Son sets free is free indeed. (See John 8:36.)

“No one is truly free until everyone is free.”

Notes

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About the Author

Dr. Myles Munroe is an international motivational speaker, best-selling author, educator, leadership mentor, and consultant for government and business. Traveling extensively throughout the world, Dr. Munroe addresses critical issues affecting the full range of human, social, and spiritual development. The central theme of his message is the maximization of individual potential, including the transformation of followers into leaders and leaders into agents of change.

Dr. Munroe is founder and president of Bahamas Faith Ministries

International (BFMI), a multidimensional organization headquartered in Nassau, Bahamas. He is chief executive officer and chairman of the board of the International Third World Leaders Association and president of the International Leadership Training Institute.

Dr. Munroe is also the founder and executive producer of a number of radio and television programs aired worldwide. In addition, he is a frequent guest on other television and radio programs and international networks and is a contributing writer for various Bible editions, journals, magazines, and newsletters, such as The Believer's Topical Bible, The African Cultural

Heritage Topical Bible, Charisma Life Christian Magazine, and Ministries Today. He is a popular author of more than forty books, including The Most Important Person on Earth, The Spirit of Leadership, The Principles and Power of Vision, Understanding the Purpose and Power of Prayer, Understanding the Purpose and Power of Woman, and Understanding the Purpose and Power of Men.

Dr. Munroe has changed the lives of multitudes around the world with a powerful message that inspires, motivates, challenges, and empowers people to discover personal purpose, develop true potential, and manifest their unique leadership abilities. For more

than thirty years, he has trained tens of thousands of leaders in business, industry, education, government, and religion. He personally addresses over 500,000 people each year on personal and professional development. His appeal and message transcend age, race, culture, creed, and economic background.

Dr. Munroe has earned B.A. and M.A. degrees from Oral Roberts University and the University of Tulsa, and he has been awarded a number of honorary doctoral degrees. He has also served as an adjunct professor of the Graduate School of Theology at Oral Roberts University.

Dr. Munroe and his wife, Ruth, travel as a team and are involved in teaching seminars together. Both are leaders who minister with sensitive hearts and international vision. They are the proud parents of two college graduates, Charisa and Chairó (Myles Jr.).