

WHO?



WE ALL LEAD

Release Your Leadership Potential

TIM DETELLIS

Who, Me?

We All Lead

Release Your Leadership Potential

by Tim DeTellis

Who Me? We All Lead – Release Your Leadership Potential

By Tim DeTellis

This book or parts thereof may not be reproduced in any form, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the publisher, except as provided by United States copyright law.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are from the Holy Bible, New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation. Copyright © 1996 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189.

Copyright © 2011 by Tim DeTellis. All rights reserved. www.timdetellis.com

Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1 Leaders Serve Others

Chapter 2 Leaders Stay Focused

Chapter 3 Leaders Seek Wise Counsel

Chapter 4 Leaders Exercise Power with Authority

Chapter 5 Leaders Think Outside the Box

Chapter 6 Leaders Operate with Integrity

Chapter 7 Leaders Look for Leaders

Epilogue Where Do Leaders Come From?

Introduction

Leaders are born every day. And each person on this planet is a leader within their particular sphere of influence. We are wired to lead because God's creative leadership has been deposited in every one of us.

Your innate leadership potential is difficult to measure, but there are clues that it exists. For example:

- Do you feel as if you have a mandate to lead?
- Do you run toward leadership opportunities?
- Are you willing to risk in making decisions?
- Do others naturally look to you for guidance or help?
- Are you a big-picture thinker?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, your natural leadership qualities are already at work in your life. If you were unable to answer yes, that doesn't mean you have no leadership potential. It can mean that the right question was not asked or that your leadership potential is latent and not active at this time. But it is still there waiting for the right opportunity.

Gideon was a reluctant leader. In his own mind, he was the least important person in all of Israel, but God viewed him differently. One day Gideon was greeted by the Angel of the Lord with, "*The LORD is with you, you might man of valor!*" (Judges 6:12 NKJV). God saw something in him that Gideon didn't see...a mighty man of valor. This encounter resulted in Gideon leading the armies of Israel to overthrow the vicious warlords of Midian that had held the people captive for 7 years.

Simon was a loud, boisterous fisherman whose mouth ran a mile a minute. Impetuous and bumbling, he was the last person one would expect to be chosen by God. Nevertheless, Simon followed Jesus and was even renamed Petras (rock) – Peter – by the Lord. Peter went on to become the head apostle of Jesus and was crucified upside down for his unwavering faith and devotion.

The purpose for writing this book is to release the leader within every person who reads it. To accomplish that purpose, seven leadership traits are identified that were dominant in seven leaders found in the Bible. Each chapter examines that leader's dominant trait and how they used it. Then we examine how Jesus, the greatest leader of all time, demonstrated that trait in His own life and ministry. Through this process, I pray that you will begin to identify your primary leadership trait and gain the courage to develop it in your own life experience.

God views you as a world-changer. He has placed you here for such a time as this because He knows that you will shape the culture around you. God has entrusted you with vital gifts and

talents that are necessary to accomplish His work where you live, work and play. Furthermore, God has promised to be with you every step of the way as you set out to lead others into His presence (Matt. 28:18-20).

Remember, we all lead. The question is, will you release your leadership potential?

Chapter 1

Leaders Serve Others

You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around, how quickly a little power goes to their heads. It's not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave.

~ Jesus

The challenge of leadership is to be strong, but not rude; be kind, but not weak; be bold, but not bully; be thoughtful, but not lazy; be humble, but not timid; be proud, but not arrogant; have humor, but without folly.

~ Jim Rohn

The thought of being a servant seems very far from the minds of many powerful leaders today. They are in place to lead not follow, so for them to “serve” anyone would be to step away from the pinnacle of success and thus suffer loss of esteem in the sight of their subordinates. For them, being served by others is a perk of power...a cushion in the lap of luxury. This selfish attitude is present in the actions of leaders at every level of society and in every segment of society, including the church. In fact, there are leaders at the lowest echelons of society who are cruel, harsh task-masters that inflict their will on those under them.

From the earliest days of human existence the quest for control has been ongoing. People have worked, manipulated and connived to take hold of power so they could wield it over those with little or none. Civilizations have come and gone because of the improper use of authority and power. More will follow because some leaders will to be served instead of willingly serving.

What is a Leader?

A leader can be defined as “one that leads or guides.” That definition, however, is lacking as a leader is far more than someone engaged in the activity of leading. A leader is also “one who is in charge or in command of others.” To be in charge of others means the leader is responsible for the well-being of those under his or her command or direction. This places weight on the truth that leaders must look out for those being led to ensure their safety, success and satisfaction.

When leaders forsake their responsibility toward their subordinates, they abandon the primary premise of looking out for those under their charge. This lack of accountability and irresponsible action towards others leads to a self-serving despotism that injures the powerless and drains the resources available.

Leadership, therefore, must be measured in total. In other words, the success of the leader is not only measured by how well the goals and objectives were attained, but also whether the people under the leader's care were treated with respect and dignity.

Servant Leadership

Leaders that serve others have not abandoned their position of authority. Rather, they have come to understand that by serving others they are able to impart vision, build a team and encourage people to higher levels of participation. When leaders help build confidence in their subordinates, they discover latent talents and undisclosed gifts that are available to accomplish the larger vision. Every person under a leader's care is a valuable resource of experience, gifting and talent just waiting for the opportunity to excel. True leaders know how to mine this rich vein to bring balance to the team and accomplish great exploits.

Furthermore, when leaders serve others, they in turn are served. The axiom, *you reap what you sow* is regularly demonstrated as subordinates give their all to support their trusted leader. This environment then becomes a hotbed for success as the team grows invincible in their quest for success.

Servant leaders are not on a peer level with their subordinates. Though these leaders serve those under their authority, the full weight of leadership responsibility still rests squarely on their shoulders. Their peers are other leaders that carry the responsibility of the vision and of the welfare of their subordinates.

Charisma at Work

Leaders who have the best interest of others in mind are usually very popular among their subordinates. This popularity stems from a genuine concern for others and their obvious love for life.

What sets these leaders apart is charisma, *a sparkle...that money can't buy...an invisible energy with visible effects*. Charismatic leaders move easily among their peers and subordinates, bringing hope, encouragement, joy and delight to be "in the game."

Charisma can be defined as...

- The ability to inspire enthusiasm, interest, or affection in others by means of personal charm or influence.
- A rare personal quality attributed to leaders who arouse fervent popular devotion and enthusiasm.

Did you notice that the common element is the affection and devotion of others? When it comes to charisma, the bottom line is being mindful of others. Leaders find fulfillment in serving and find great pleasure celebrating the successes of those around them. The victory they enjoy the most is a team triumph. Consider the following 5 qualities of charismatic leaders:

1. They Believe in Others

True leaders believe in and value the worth of other people. Leaders kindle within others a desire to excel by simply believing they can succeed by using their God-given talents, fortitude and intelligence.

2. They Make it Possible for Others to Win

Leaders know that when the team wins, every individual on the team wins. Therefore, leaders look for gifts and talents, visible and hidden, in those under their charge in order to give each person responsibility for a part of the vision in the area of their giftedness. By doing so, trust is cultivated and success is assured.

3. They Set the Attitude Tone for Others to Follow

“As goes the head, so goes the body.” This truth is evident in the morale of the team. If the leader is sullen and withdrawn, likewise the team. Conversely, if the leader is upbeat and positive, encouraging those around him, then the team will be upbeat and positive in their approach to the tasks at hand.

4. They Lead with Passion

Passion is the fuel that drives leaders to accomplish the vision placed before them. Without passion, leaders founder and become disgruntled, often jumping ship to find another arena in which to pour their energy. Passion for the vision must not be mistaken for arrogance or disregard for others as leaders strive to take hold of that which has taken hold of them.

5. They Welcome More People on the Journey

Leaders welcome others along the way to join in the mysterious, exciting adventure of fulfilling a powerful God-inspired vision. They understand that the vision is large and broad enough for every follower to enjoy success.

Notice the emphasis on team-building through the personal effort of sharing yourself with others. To be a successful leader, you must have willing, enthusiastic followers. No president of the United States has been elected without ardent supporters elevating him to greatness on their enthusiastic shoulders.

Joseph, Son of Israel

Many leaders are written about in the Bible, but for the time being, I want us to focus on Joseph. His story begins in Genesis chapter 37 where we learn that he was the favorite son of Jacob. He and his younger brother, Benjamin, were born by Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel. Because Rachel had been barren for many years, the two brothers were their father's favorites among all the other sons as they were born late in Jacob's life.

Joseph was especially favored by his father...so much so that Jacob gave him a richly ornamented robe as a token of his love. This made his older brothers jealous and caused a major division in the family. When Joseph told his family of two prophetic dreams he had concerning the brothers bowing down to him their anger became even more intense.

Joseph was hated so much by his brothers that they sold him as a slave to a caravan headed for Egypt. The brothers told their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. The old man was so filled with grief he could not be comforted.

The caravan sold Joseph to an Egyptian official named Potiphar (Gen. 39). Over time, Joseph demonstrated his trustworthiness and was successful at everything that came his way. Potiphar noticed this about Joseph and promoted him to be in charge of the entire household. However, all was not well in the house. Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph and when he declined and ran away, she accused him of rape. Potiphar was furious with Joseph and had him imprisoned.

Despite this dreadful turn of events, Joseph still endeavored to do his best and to make the most of the situation. Soon, he became the most trusted inmate and was given charge over the entire prison.

Two of the inmates had been trusted servants of the Pharaoh; one was the chief cupbearer and the other the chief baker. One night, both men had dreams but didn't know what they meant. When Joseph saw them the next morning, they were both distressed because of their dreams. Joseph inquired of the Lord for an interpretation of the dreams and then told the men what God had shown him. Joseph then asked the chief cupbearer to remember him before the king after he was restored to his position.

Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream and called for all the wise men and magicians of Egypt to bring an interpretation. When none were able to interpret the king's dream, the chief cupbearer remembered Joseph and brought him to the king's attention.

After hearing the dreams of the king, the Lord gave Joseph an interpretation that spelled out 7 years of plenty and 7 years of famine across Egypt. Pharaoh asked Joseph what he should do to

prevent a disaster during the famine years so Joseph laid out a plan that would ensure the people had plenty to eat. The king then put Joseph in charge of the entire nation, second only to himself.

Servant Leadership Rewarded

Because of Joseph's attitude toward serving those around him, he rose to the highest levels of Egyptian government. Though imprisoned, Joseph stayed true to the principle of serving, not only the head of the prison, but also the inmates under his care.

While serving the king as his second in command, Joseph still served the people by ensuring they had plenty to eat during 7 years of severe famine. So successful was Joseph in his management, the very brothers who had sold him as a boy unknowingly came to him asking for food.

After being away from his family for many years, Joseph was reunited with his aged father and his brothers, including Benjamin, his younger brother. When his brothers asked for Joseph's forgiveness, he willingly did so saying:

And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.
(Gen. 45:5-8)

Godly servant leaders understand the importance of being in tune with God and with the people who surround them. They listen to the Lord and lead according to His plan and His agenda. Though servant leaders are available to the people whom they lead, they are not "man pleasers" who only seek the accolades of men. Instead, these men and women lead with strong hearts and a willingness to do the right thing at the right time. Their focus is on the goal with their followers in their mind throughout.

Jesus, the Greatest Servant Leader

Jesus led from His heart. What I mean is that Jesus' heart was inclined toward His Father yet still embraced those who followed Him. Jesus did not mince words. He always told the truth and made it clear where He was going. Furthermore, Jesus made it clear that those who followed Him would face obstacles including persecution:

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
(Matthew 5:11-12)

But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.
(Luke 21:12)

Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.
(John 15:20)

What set Jesus apart from the leaders of His day was His willingness to serve alongside those who followed Him. Jesus found solace with three trusted followers—Peter, James and John—with whom He shared many private moments. One of the most powerful was on the Mount of Transfiguration when the disciples saw Jesus in His heavenly glory (Matt. 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36). Had Jesus been a “loner leader” these men would have missed a very profound experience and would not have been able to see Jesus as He really was...glorious!

Leadership Trait #1: Servant Leadership

The Scripture quoted at the beginning of this chapter are Jesus' own words to His disciples regarding leadership:

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
(Matthew 20:25-28 NIV)

If this is how Jesus led, then we too should do likewise.

Chapter 2

Leaders Stay Focused

...one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

~ Apostle Paul

Obstacles cannot crush me. Every obstacle yields to stern resolve. He who is fixed to a star does not change his mind.

~ Leonardo da Vinci

Joel, a prophet in ancient Israel, wrote “*Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!*” (Joel 3:14). I can only imagine how that looked; people milling around confused and wondering which way to go. Things haven’t changed much over the past 2,800 years. Sometimes I look around and wonder if I’m in the valley of decision. It seems that people everywhere have trouble deciding how to live, what to do or where to go.

King Solomon wrote, “*Where there is no vision, the people perish*” (Prov. 29:18 KJV). Another translation says, “*Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint*” (NIV). Joel saw a people wandering around in the valley of decision with no vision of their future, no revelation of what they needed to change in order to escape that valley of death. “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there.” For those whom Joel prophetically saw, the truth of this wise saying was evident.

Living with no vision of the future, no revelation of what, where, how and when, causes people to cast off any restraint and to live with no boundaries. This in turn leads to confusion about how to live, what to do and where to go. Running around in circles may put miles on the odometer, but you don’t go anywhere and you never arrive.

The Role of Vision in Leadership

Vision is the ability to see what is not yet. It drives perseverance, which is the willingness to do what it takes to make the vision a reality. Vision infuses leaders with passion, the fuel that enables them to accomplish their dream.

A key trait of visionary leaders is their ability to direct full attention on the task at hand while keeping the big picture in clear focus. Jesus declared that those who serve Him must have that trait as well: *“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God”* (Luke 9:62).

When a farmer plows a field to prepare it for planting and eventual harvest, he must first outline a plan that encompasses the entire field. The vision in this case is for the harvest that comes at the end of the growing season. To accomplish that vision a number of decisions must be made, including:

1. The crop must be selected.
2. The proper field must be chosen.
3. The field must be plowed in order to plant the seed.
4. The seed must be irrigated with water and fertilized.
5. Depending upon the crop, the soil in the rows between the plants must be turned to uproot weeds.
6. As harvest time draws near, plans must be in place to procure the proper equipment to bring in the harvest and store it.
7. Finally, the crop must be harvested and brought in for storage.

Each of the above points has related subordinate tasks that must be completed with the total vision in mind. For example, plowing the field must be done correctly in order to have a successful harvest. If the field is on a slope, the furrows must follow the contours laterally across the slope so that water will be held in the rows instead of running off. If the rows are plowed straight up and down the slope, water will rush downhill with nothing to catch and hold it, causing erosion and crop failure.

Likewise, if the field is on level ground, the rows must be straight to take full advantage of the available soil. Jesus’ statement about looking back after beginning to plow takes on greater meaning in this context. Farmers choose a marker in the distance upon which to fix their gaze as they plow the field. This ensures that the rows will be straight and properly aligned. If the farmer’s gaze is diverted away from the marker, the rows will be crooked and valuable soil will not be planted. Crooked rows also increase the difficulty of other field work, including the harvest.

Visionary leaders are much like the farmer. Vision determines the course of their lives and the tasks to which they set their hand. Vision also determines the priority of relationships and which of those relationships are key to the success of the vision.

The greatest lesson I learned from my father about vision and leadership was not on the mission field and not in a church setting...it was on a sailboat. He taught me that sailing is unpredictable because of the wind and currents of the sea. Added to that are mechanical and navigational challenges that often present themselves at the most inopportune times.

I learned from my father that a successful sailing trip requires complete focus on the destination. To arrive safely, I had to make adjustments due to storms, mechanical failure and changing currents. He showed me that the task at hand may change, but my focus must remain on the destination. If the focus shifts, then the danger of missing the mark becomes very real.

Likewise, leaders must understand that the vision journey is filled with unpredictable circumstances. When working with people, competing agendas will always be a reality to contend with. These agendas can well change the course and cause the leader to lose focus and take his eyes off the vision destination. Countless companies have started strong only to falter and fail because the original vision was lost due to competing agendas.

Navigation in sailing and in leadership requires clear focus in order to weave through the chaos and storms of rogue waves, unfavorable winds, currents of criticism and agendas that would change the destination and alter the vision's purpose. Consider Apostle Paul. He was constantly criticized and maligned for the stance he took for the gospel of Christ, yet he never wavered. His focus remained sure and true so that at the end of his life he could write, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"* (2 Timothy 4:7).

Stay Focused At What Cost?

Israel's King David loved God and according to Scripture was "a man after [the LORD's] own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14). David's focus in life was squarely on the Lord and His Law.

When David was a young man and Saul was king, David fell in love with Saul's daughter, Michal. Saul told David he could take her as his wife if he would bring evidence of killing 100 Philistine warriors. Unbeknownst to David, Saul's secret desire was that David would be killed in the heat of battle. Nevertheless, David pursued and destroyed a Philistine army and brought Saul proof of his exploit, 200 foreskins of the slain warriors; twice as many as Saul required. True to his word, Saul gave Michal to David in marriage (1 Sam. 18:25, 27).

Saul's hatred and fear of David grew ever stronger to the point where Michal helped her husband escape an assassination attempt carried out by Saul's men. Soon after, Saul gave Michal to another man to be his wife.

After David became king, he sent for Michal to come live in the palace as his wife. Not long after, David and his men went to bring the Ark of the Covenant to the City of David. Filled with joy, the king began dancing through the streets wearing nothing but his undergarments. David's rejoicing was an act of worship to the King of Heaven, the Lord of Hosts, God Almighty.

Michal watched the procession from a window in the palace and saw her husband, the king, dancing in only a linen ephod before the entire city. Filled with disgust, Michal despised David in her heart and resolved to rebuke him for his unseemly behavior (2 Sam. 6:16).

The Scripture records that:

When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, 'How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!'

David said to Michal, 'It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel—I will celebrate before the LORD.'

I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor.'

And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.
(2 Sam. 6:20-23)

Notice that David's focus was on the Lord. His vision didn't waver and his commitment remained firm even in the face of a rebuke by his wife. Notice also that David is held in honor throughout Scripture, but Michal fell to dishonor because of her actions and was barren till her death.

This example demonstrates the necessity of staying focused and alert. Leaders must be willing to be undignified and humiliated in pursuit of the vision and not be afraid of what others may think. Sadly, David's own wife fell into the trap of criticism and judgment, which caused him to separate himself from her.

Vision determines who you spend time with. Do you associate with those who believe in the vision and encourage you in your passion to pursue it? Or do you spend time with small-thinkers who have no concept of the vision and how it drives your life? I assure you that if you find like-minded people to associate with you will go farther than associating with negative thinkers who only want to tear you down instead of build you up.

Leaders must make difficult decisions about the people close to them. By answering the questions below you will discover keys to help you choose the right mix of voices that speak into your life. Do the people you associate with...

- ...build you up or tear you down?
- ...speak positively about the vision and mission or find fault with it?
- ...believe in and encourage you?
- ...think they could do your job better and tell you so?

- ...question your authority and motives?
- ...say “I told you so.” when something doesn’t work?

If you discover that the majority of people who speak into your life are negative and find fault with the vision, then you must decide if their poisonous attitude and words of death will be tolerated. If not, then disassociation may be the only answer. Likewise, when people who speak positively about the vision and speak words of encouragement come to you, embrace them and receive their words of life.

Jesus, the Greatest Focused Leader

Jesus came to earth as a baby for a purpose and lived His entire life on purpose. Though many respected and influential leaders of the day tried to divert Him from the vision and mission, Jesus remained true through the cross to the resurrection and is now seated at the right hand of God.

Jesus’ ability to remain focused was a leadership strength exhibited by God in the creation of the universe and all the systems that flow through it. God’s creation also demonstrates an attention to detail that is unparalleled in any human endeavor.

Jesus, God’s only begotten Son (John 3:16), was present with the Father in creation (John 1:1-4), thus we know that the creative ability of God the Father is present in the Son:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him...

(Col. 1:15-17, 19)

By the fact that Jesus embodies the fullness of the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—we know that when we receive Jesus, His fullness then dwells within us: *“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him”* (John 14:23). Therefore, we have the potential to exhibit in our humanity many of the same leadership traits of Jesus. The key is submitting our life and leadership to Him and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and teach us along the way.

Consider how focused Jesus was on His mission:

He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.”

(Luke 4:43 NKJV)

He [Jesus] then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he

must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."
(Mark 8:31-33)

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.
(Luke 9:51)

Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.
(John 12:27 NKJV)

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.
(Heb. 12:2-3)

This same dedication to vision and purpose is possible for us humans. God wired us to be passionate and dedicated to mission. Therefore, as leaders our role is to help others discover that passion within themselves. What army could be stopped if all the warriors were filled with passionate vigor to see the vision accomplished and were dedicated to keeping the main thing the main thing?

Leaders! Now is your time to release the passion within to see the vision come to reality. Now is your time to press in to victory in your God-given arena. Now is your time to raise up a cadre of dedicated comrades who share the vision and are willing to extend themselves to see it fulfilled!

Leaders! Rise up and shine, for your day has come!

Leadership Trait #2: Stay Focused on the Vision

Jesus told his disciples: *"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:62). This same truth applies to leaders. The vision beckons but we must remain focused on it. The vision is both a journey and a destination therefore the need to stay focused is paramount in its fulfillment. Let the vision choose your associates. Let the vision set your priorities. Let the vision establish boundaries. Doing so will enable your success.

Chapter 3

Leaders Seek Wise Counsel

David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?"

~ King David

He who has never learned to obey cannot be a good commander.

~ Aristotle

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

~ John F. Kennedy

From Scripture we learn that *"pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall"* (Prov. 16:18). Too often, leaders set themselves up to crash and burn because of failure to heed the advice of wise counsel. As leaders, we must guard against drinking the poison of pride and falling into the bottomless pit of arrogance.

To avoid these devastating pitfalls, we must be connected with people who are familiar with our strengths and weaknesses and be willing to listen and learn from their wisdom and sound counsel. Accountability is not a weakness, but shows strength of character and sound judgment.

Who Will You Call?

Accountability in leadership does not mean that you abdicate your position of authority and allow others to make all of your decisions. Instead, it is the act of holding yourself and your decisions up for scrutiny to ensure the best course for the effort to which you are engaged has been chosen. Neither is accountability an opportunity for others to bash you or second-guess your decisions and actions. Instead, the advice they give must serve to build up and strengthen, not tear down and weaken.

Surround yourself therefore, with people who are friends of the vision and worthy of your trust. Engage the experience, knowledge and wisdom of people who have gone before you. That way, you will avoid having to re-invent the wheel because you will learn that someone else has already built one that works well.

An old saying declares that experience is the best teacher. I'm not so sure that is always true. How often do we repeat the same mistakes hoping for a different outcome? Sounds a little insane, doesn't it? Besides, to learn by experience only you must have a multitude of experiences! Why not shorten the cycle and learn from someone who has already gone down that path and put their conclusions to work instead?

I learned as a child to surround myself with people three times my size. As a missionary kid in Haiti, most of the people I associated with from an early age were adults. Interacting with them gave me the opportunity to learn much of what they had learned and to soak up the wisdom that only comes from experience. Thankfully, I was able to bypass many of the same experiences that had shaped them because I had already learned the lesson. I learned to trust and obey as I repeatedly saw the truth of their teaching touch my everyday life.

Scripture teaches us the same thing. Consider these passages:

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.

(Prov. 11:14)

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.

(Prov. 12:1)

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

(Prov. 13:20)

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

(Prov. 15:22)

He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.

(Prov. 15:31)

Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.

(Prov. 19:20)

Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance.

(Prov. 20:18)

Abraham, the Friend of God

Abram (Abraham) was 75 years old when he heeded the voice of God telling him to leave Ur and go to a land that God would show him (Gen. 12:1-4). What makes this interesting is that Abram was the son of Terah, a Chaldean idol maker. One could easily assume that Abram was not a believer in Yahweh (God) but instead worshiped the demonic "gods" of the Chaldeans. Nevertheless, Abram trusted God and went on to become the "father" of the Semitic peoples.

Abraham showed his faith in God by taking action according to God's Word. He did so by moving his family to Canaan and further demonstrated his faith by willingly offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice according to God's command. The key to Abraham's obedience was that he remembered God's promise that he would be the father of nations and that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars in the night sky. Therefore, he trusted God to provide...and God

did. When Abraham raised the knife to slay his son, an angel stopped him and directed him to a ram caught in a thicket that could be used for the sacrifice.

Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

(James 2:21-23)

Abraham's relationship with God gave him access to the vast wisdom and understanding of the godhead. As he interacted with God, he discovered God's perfect will for his life; he listened to God, believed what God said and then acted on what he learned through faith.

Jesus Sought Wise Counsel

Scripture declares that Jesus is the one and only Son of God (John 1:14, 18; 3:16). Scripture also declares that Jesus is a divine member of the godhead and that all things were created by Him and for Him (Col. 1:15-20). Nevertheless, Jesus continually remained in communion with His Father, God, so that He could successfully fulfill His purpose on earth.

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me..."

(John 8:28)

God demonstrates the need for community and family through the creation of the first family, Adam and Eve. Their communion with God was complete until they fell into sin and became separated from Him. Though separated, their need to commune with Him still existed.

Many people try to "make it on their own" but discover that things only get worse the further they go. Not seeking counsel from God or from those who have more experience often leads to failure.

Seek Friends of the Vision

The leader's need for counsel cannot be understated, but it must be of value and congruent with the vision and task at hand. Proverbs 20:18 declares, "*Make plans by seeking advice....*" The primary definition of the word 'advice' is: "Opinion about what could or should be done about a situation or problem; counsel." Thus we see that those who offer advice or counsel must be familiar with the situation or problem (vision/task at hand).

An old country/western song lamented about “looking for love in all the wrong places.” The idea was that to find true love, the seeker would have to look in other places besides bars and nightclubs. Likewise, when leaders seek advice or counsel, they must seek for it in the right places, not among the unwise or those who have no vision for successful outcomes.

So who are friends of the vision? Friends can be identified through traits that are consistently demonstrated. Though the list below is not exhaustive, it will help you identify those whom will probably not lead you astray from the mission. Friends of the vision...

□ **Encourage you**

Stay away from naysayers and those who pull you down because of unbelief. They’re a dime-a-dozen and would be perfectly happy to see you fail.

□ **Are trustworthy**

To be trustworthy is to be worthy of trust. Only those who have proven themselves are eligible to advise you.

□ **Are allies in the cause**

Allies are people who pull for you, not push against you. Some resistance is necessary to test the direction and make you strong, however too much resistance leads to fatigue and creates doubt.

□ **Support the vision**

True friends will constantly work to help you succeed, whether directly involved in the vision or on the sidelines pulling for you.

You must choose wisely those with whom you share the vision. The wrong voice is like poison to your system and will bring you down quicker than you realize. Remember, when you allow someone close enough for them to advise you on the vision, your defenses are down so the poison of negativity has easy access to your inner being. When this toxic seed is planted, the roots and vine grow around the dream and will eventually choke the life right out of it.

Smooth words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a common clay pot. People with hate in their hearts may sound pleasant enough, but don't believe them. Though they pretend to be kind, their hearts are full of all kinds of evil.

(Prov. 26:23-25, NLT)

How do you know whom to trust? We’ve talked about finding friends of the vision, but how do you measure trust?

When evaluating whether or not to share my vision with a person, I try to get behind the outward appearances to see what is underneath. Some points to consider include:

- What is the person’s character?
- How do they handle themselves in crisis situations?

- Are their words congruent with their actions?
- Do they say what they mean and mean what they say?
- Do they have nothing to gain by knowing you?
- Are they intimidated by you?
- Do they have a kingdom mindset that is larger than they are?
- Are they willing to challenge you to greater things?
- Are they willing to serve as a paradigm shifter?

Engage the person in conversation to find out “where they have been” in life to determine if they have the experience to backup their words. Begin by sharing something confidential, but not devastating if disclosed, to see if they can handle your “trade secrets.”

Most of all, be aware of the enemy’s strategy to undermine the vision and the base upon which you have built your team. Jesus said, “*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy...*” (John 10:10). Therefore, you must be continually on the alert for the enemy’s attack. Because the enemy is a thief, he will be stealthy in his approach and cloaked in camouflage to avoid early detection. His hope is that he will be able to inflict enough damage before you realize what is happening that the entire enterprise will begin to crumble and fall.

Be vigilant and alert. Don’t open the door to the enemy by being lulled into complacency because all seems well. Remember, Scripture declares that the enemy “*masquerades as an angel of light*” (2 Cor. 11:14), so what seems good may not be good at all.

Jesus, Master of Human Relations

Of all the people who have ever lived or ever will live on planet Earth, Jesus Christ was the most proficient in discerning the motives of those around Him. Numerous passages in the New Testament bear witness to Jesus’ impressive ability to discern the hearts of men and women. One story in particular stands out for me. I’ve included it here so we can examine how this relates to what we have discussed in this chapter.

So he [Jesus] 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.)

Jesus answered her, "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. 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."

"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

Jesus declared, "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."

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."
(John 4:5-26)*

Notice how Jesus began to talk with this woman who obviously had needs that no person in her town could meet. We know immediately there were problems with her relationships in town because she came to the well at a time when she knew the other women would not be there.

As Jesus talked with the woman, she forthrightly answered his questions and threw in comments along the way. Throughout this conversation, Jesus was leading her to the point where she would divulge that she was living with a man after having had five husbands. When her deep need for love and acceptance was revealed, Jesus answered her objection of how and where to worship by saying that God is looking for those who will worship Him in spirit and truth.

Jesus correctly discerned the heart of the woman and how to reach her even though her exterior demeanor was hardened and cynical. He knew she yearned for intimacy and then showed her how to get it for herself.

The Gift of Discernment is Yours

Discernment is available to every follower of Christ. This gift of the Spirit is essential for understanding the playing field on which leaders find themselves. Therefore, begin to sharpen your discernment if you haven't already, and learn to listen to that still, small voice in your head that warns you about situations and even about certain people you encounter. When a "flag" goes up regarding a decision you have made, think it through before proceeding. It may just be your discernment shouting, "Wait!"

You are responsible for the vision and its implementation. The buck stops with you. Therefore, add this vital tool to your leadership toolbox to ensure that your decisions, your team, your close associates and your advisors are the best fit for the tasks at hand. With sharp discernment, fear disappears and is replaced by strong confidence and boldness to step out. Remember, God didn't put you here to fail. Instead, He gave you gifts and talents that must be honed to realize their best advantage.

Leadership Trait #3: Seek Wise Advice and Counsel from Trusted Sources

Surround yourself with people who are friends of the vision, trusted associates who are not intimidated by your authority, but who will speak encouragement into your life. Listen to the advice of experience and heed the warnings of those closest to you. Be aware of the enemy's sly tactics to derail the vision and take the necessary steps to minimize his access to you. Discern the motives of close associates and advisors and remove any who have agendas counter the vision. Be bold and strong as you move forward with courage and forthright action.

Chapter 4

Leaders Exercise Power with Authority

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go....

~ Jesus

If a rhinoceros were to enter this restaurant now, there is no denying he would have great power here. But I should be the first to rise and assure him that he had no authority whatever.

~ G.K. Chesterton to Alexander Woollcott

Authority without power is futile. Power without authority is anarchy.

~ Unknown

Effective leadership must combine authority with power in the proper balance. Too much or too little of either will result in discord and the loss of leadership esteem in the eyes of others. Left unchecked, this condition will cause the enterprise to falter and ultimately fail.

The United States automobile industry has focused a great deal of attention to Japanese leadership and management styles over the past twenty years. This came about because of the apparent success the Japanese auto makers were experiencing in manufacturing and selling their cars and trucks in the US.

Close examination of Japanese management style reveals the following characteristics:

- Both leaders and subordinates are motivated by a powerful sense of commitment to be part of a greater whole (namely the organization in which they work).
- Employees seek out responsibility and strive for opportunities to advance in an organization.
- People are self-satisfied when they contribute to organizational success through teamwork.
- In return for their organization's long-term commitment to providing job security (often for life), workers develop strong bonds of loyalty towards their employer.

Interestingly, when this management style was introduced in US factories, workers often protested because it was so foreign to the way things had evolved among US auto workers. Cultural differences were so pronounced that major paradigm shifts had to occur in order for this management style to succeed in America.

When discussing the Japanese management style, what is often left unsaid is that at the top of the company pyramid there is a leader who accepts full responsibility for what happens. Putting power in the workers hands may create happier workers that results in better products, but the buck still stops somewhere.

Courage, Confidence & Clout

Authority alone does not guarantee success. Likewise, power alone is no assurance that visionary goals will be attained. True leadership does not happen in a vacuum. Cooperation and cohesion between the leader and subordinates draws upon combined strengths to carry the enterprise to ever higher levels of success. However, when either the leader or subordinates lose track of the other, success probability is severely limited and progress is hindered.

Qualities of leadership that draw others into participation include, courage to step into ventures that others have deemed too risky, confidence that success can and will be achieved, and the clout or authority to decisively act. Leadership does not end with a title, neither does it begin there. True leadership begins and ends with...

- A direction in which to go
- Passion and vitality to embark on the journey
- Charisma to share the dream with others and enlist their help to bring it into reality
- Courage to overcome obstacles and roadblocks that would blur or kill the vision
- Authority to enlist and act
- Power to press-in to success

Leaders must distill, discern and then decide. They distill information from subordinates to remove the dross of unnecessary input. During this process, leaders must discern the motive behind the input; is it to further the enterprise or to further the career of the person? Next, leaders must make a decision. This means the leader must willingly accept the responsibility for the decision made and become an advocate for its success. Until the leader decides, no direction is forthcoming.

Decisive action builds confidence in the team. Though you may not be completely sure of your decision, move as if you are. Your team will see how you respond and will get behind you to make it happen. You will be amazed at how they will respect you and your decisions when they see you moving forward in the face of uncertainty.

Elijah, Man of Power and Authority

One of my favorite biblical personalities is the prophet, Elijah. Though a mighty man of God, Elijah still had his moments of uncertainty and outright fear. Nevertheless, he kept moving forward believing that God had set him on task with a heavenly vision.

Elijah lived during the reign of Ahab and his wife, Jezebel. Ahab was a weak man who had been snared by the wiles of Jezebel, a beautiful woman who worshipped and served the pagan god, Baal. Because of her influence, Jezebel had turned Israel away from worshipping the true God, Yahweh, and had turned them instead toward Baal.

One day, Elijah met the king and told him to assemble all of Israel on Mt. Carmel and to bring Jezebel with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah. When all were assembled, Elijah stood before them and asked, *“How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him”* (1 Kings 18:21).

When the people refused to answer, *“Elijah said to them, ‘I am the only one of the LORD’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God.’”* (1 Kings 18:22-24).

The prophets of Baal began to chant and dance around, calling down fire from their god to consume the sacrifice. Elijah taunted them telling them to shout louder because Baal may be asleep, deep in thought or traveling and therefore unable to hear them.

Throughout the day, the false prophets danced, chanted and cut themselves trying to bring Baal into the fray all to no avail. Finally, at the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah said enough was enough. He repaired the altar of the Lord and then made another one from 12 stones, one for each tribe of Israel. Then, he dug a trench around the altar large enough to hold about 13 quarts of seed. Next, he arranged wood on the altar and then cut the bull into pieces and placed it on the wood. Finally, he said to bring 4 large jars of water and pour it on the offering and the wood, refilling the jars two times for a total of 12 large jars of water being poured on the sacrifice. Then...

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.
(1 Kings 18:36-38)

Immediately afterward, the people turned their hearts toward God and repented. Then, Elijah ordered all the priests of Baal killed because they had led the people astray.

From the Mountain Top to the Valley Depths

Notice how decisively Elijah acted. He was bold and courageous, filled with abundant confidence and the clout of authority. Not only did God answer him, but the people repented and turned their hearts back toward Yahweh.

This victory for Elijah would seem like a good time for him to swagger or grab hold of another challenge and go after the priests of Asherah. But something else happened. Something we don't expect at a time like this. Jezebel had sent word that she was going to kill Elijah, so instead of celebrating and dancing a victory jig, he ran into the wilderness and hid. Elijah, like so many of us, had grown weary. So sitting under a tree he prayed that he would die: *"I have had enough, LORD... Take my life..."* (1 Kings 19:4).

Have you ever been there? One day you're on top of the world, the next day you feel like it's on top of you?

Elijah's despair reinforces the need for close advisors who can bring positive feedback in the midst of darkness. These are not simply "yes men" who only care about their own future, but genuine friends of the vision who are disconnected enough to see what you may not see... a way out of the pit of gloom and doom.

Fortunately for Elijah, God could see more than he could. God twice sent an angel to Elijah with food and water for his journey in the wilderness. After 40 days, he went into a cave to spend the night. At that time, God spoke to Elijah about his decision to leave Mt. Carmel and then sent him back the way he had come with instructions to anoint a new king (1 Kings 19:9-18).

When the Going Gets Tough...

Leaders must not be overcome with despair when adversaries strike. In fact, leaders should expect resistance and try to anticipate the source so action plans can be developed in advance and implemented quickly. Jesus said, *"...suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"* (Luke 14:31). Count the cost. Anticipate the resistance. Plan for the battle!

An old saying declares, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Leadership is not for the faint of heart. Very simply, water flows along the path of least resistance; people usually

follow the path of least resistance as well. True leadership recognizes when that path is not the best choice and determines to move another direction. This requires courage, confidence and clout as mentioned before. However, it also requires toughness. Elijah was worn down. His confidence was shattered, he felt weak and weary and his courage faltered.

Leaders must be tough enough to hang on when everyone else has let go. Ship captains are expected to remain on their sinking craft until the last person has been taken to safety. Even then, many have remained at the helm as their vessels sank under the waves. These brave men choose to go down with their ships rather than relinquish the command they had been entrusted with.

Are you brave enough to stay that close to the vision?

Jesus Christ – Man of Power and Authority

No person who has ever lived on this planet or ever will live on this planet will have the perfect balance of power and authority like Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This was demonstrated by His power over the elements, His authority over the powers of darkness, His complete grasp of doing what needed to be done at the precise moment, and His absolute fearlessness.

Jesus carried a power and authority that astonished the religious establishment and confounded government officials. His fearless confrontations with the Scribes and Pharisees galvanized His followers into a zealous group of believers willing to face even death for their adherence to His teachings. So fierce was the opposition to Jesus' leadership, He was eventually arrested on trumped up charges, tortured and then killed.

Jesus' death notwithstanding, His band of followers drew together and waited to see if what He told them was true – that He would rise from the dead after 3 days. Early on the morning of that day, a woman went to the tomb to mourn and worship and discovered that it was empty. Jesus had indeed risen from the dead!

After Jesus arose from the grave, He visited the disciples over a 40 day period. On the final day Jesus was with them, He parted with these words:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

(Matt. 28:18-20)

The disciples knew for sure that Jesus was who He claimed to be and that everything He had told them was true. Furthermore, He had conferred upon them His authority and power to do even greater things than He had done (John 14:12, Matt. 28:18). Armed with this authority and power, and filled with death-defying passion, this small band of believers went into the streets to

proclaim liberty to the oppressed and sight for the blind. Like their leader, all but one of these men was slaughtered by the opposition. Nevertheless, the Christian faith continued to spread like wildfire across a parched prairie.

Now It's Your Turn

Imagine that you have been given the title and keys to a new automobile. This gift is exactly what you wanted...the right color, the right make and model, everything is perfect down to the smallest detail. The tank is filled with gasoline, everything is ready for you to jump in and take off.

But what happens if you just walk around the car and stare at it? Maybe sit down in the luxurious leather seats and sniff the new car smell? What if you never start the engine or drive it out of your driveway?

You know the answers to these questions. The gift will not serve its purpose. You can walk around that car until there is a path around it two feet deep, but the vehicle will never live up to its potential. You have to get inside, insert the key, start the engine and drive away for all that luxury and shiny paint to do its job.

Likewise, leaders who do not utilize their power and authority may as well get off at the next stop and let someone who is not afraid use the tools to get the job done. Remember, power and authority are tools to be used – not carelessly, but with the finesse of a trained craftsman.

Courage, confidence and clout, the three “C’s” of power and authority are vital to the success of your leadership vision. Wear the mantle, exercise the authority given to you, and wield the power that comes with it, for that is why you have been entrusted with them.

Leadership Trait #4: Exercise the Power You Have Been Given with Authority

Leadership is not for the faint of heart. Like water that flows along the path of least resistance, people usually follow the path of least resistance as well. True leadership recognizes when that path is not the best choice and determines to move another direction. This requires courage, confidence and clout, but it also requires toughness. Leaders must be tough enough to hang on when everyone else has let go.

Chapter 5

Leaders Think Outside the Box

What is impossible with men is possible with God.

~ Jesus

Only those who are willing to swim against the current earn the ability to climb the rapids.

~ Don L. Collins

Thinking outside the box is an art that must be developed. Most people are conditioned to think the same way all the time and rarely look for creative, innovative methods to accomplish everyday tasks.

What does it mean to think outside the box?

One story that has captivated me involves a young boy, his best friend, a teacher and a contest. During class one day, the subject was aerodynamics...how airplanes fly. The teacher told about wing design and how the shape of the wing created lift that could carry the aircraft into the sky if the proper speed was maintained.

As part of the class, the teacher announced that there would be a contest to see which team of two could create paper airplanes that would fly the farthest. Both team members would build an airplane out of paper and then fly it. Their combined total flight length would be their score. The highest score would win. Lastly, the teacher admonished the teams to be creative with their designs.

The young boy and his best friend were teammates for the contest. Frantically, the friend began folding his paper to create a masterpiece of aircraft flight worthiness. Eager to win, he admired his paper airplane.

While his teammate worked on his airplane, the young boy simply sat and stared at his piece of paper. One team after another finished their project and lined up to see if theirs would be the winning score. The young boy's friend became increasingly agitated because the paper was still in its original condition...no airplane!

Finally, only their team was left. The young boy still had not made his airplane, so the friend stood at the line and threw his into the air. Though not the longest flight, it still flew well enough to put them into contention for the lead. Everything depended upon the young boy, whose paper was still unchanged!

The teacher called to the young boy to step to the line and throw his airplane. When she saw that his paper was still not folded, she wondered what he would do.

Putting his hands behind his back the young boy looked at the ground and walked to the line. Slowly lifting his head, he saw how far his friend had thrown his airplane. He also saw where the longest flight had ended. Crumpling his paper in his hands, it appeared that he would simply drop out with no hope of winning.

Looking intently down the flight path, the young boy wadded the paper tightly into a ball. Then, he drew back his arm and threw his ball of paper further than any airplane had gone. With the combined length of his throw and that of his friend, their team won the contest and illustrated what it means to be creative.

Who in that class would have thought that his crumpled up sheet of paper would fly?

Creative Thinking Brings Creative Solutions

God is a creative thinker. He is not bound by limited vision or shackled by small thinking. All you have to do is look at God's creation to see that His vision is unlimited and His thinking large beyond measure.

Consider the universe in which we live. No human being is able to measure it. Scientists try, only to be outdone as new equipment that "sees" farther is pressed into service.

God is creative in what He asks us to do as well. During the time of Judges in Israel's history, the nation was overwhelmed by a strong enemy and put into slavery. For twenty years they cried out to the Lord for help (Judges 4:3).

Deborah was a prophetess and leader of Israel during this time. She received a prophecy from the Lord that He would deliver the commander of the Canaanite army, Sisera, to a man named Barak. She told him to gather an army of 10,000 men and Sisera would be defeated.

Barak said he would not go unless she accompanied him, so she answered, *"Very well...I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman..."* (Judges 4:9).

The Israelite army was gathered and they went to fight the Canaanites. God delivered them into the hands of Israel according to the prophecy of Deborah. All the soldiers were slain, but Sisera escaped to the tent of an ally, Heber. While he lay hidden, Jael, the wife of Heber, quietly picked up a hammer and a tent peg. Silently, she crept over to where Sisera was sleeping and drove the tent peg through his temple, killing him. Thus, the entire prophecy was fulfilled as the Lord handed over Sisera to a woman (Judges 4:10-21).

God will use whom He has equipped. We just saw how He used women to accomplish His plan at a time when women warriors were unheard of. Deborah became the commander of the army of God instead of Barak, whom God had originally called. Furthermore, God used a woman to end the war as it was Jael, the wife of Heber, who struck the fatal blow.

Barak understood something that most leaders don't get: Someone else was better suited for the job than he was. A good leader will ask if there is someone better suited for the job and will then enlist that person. Good leaders understand that strength builds strength.

Outside the Box

Thinking outside the box requires us to free our minds and intellect from the constraints of the past. Too often, we use experience alone as the litmus test for new endeavors instead of the information currently at hand. Just because something didn't work in the past doesn't mean it will never work.

Having said that, please understand that I am not diminishing the value of experience neither do I advise anyone to ignore the lessons learned through experience. However, experience alone is not always the best teacher. Rarely are the circumstances exactly the same. Different ingredients make a different cake!

This notwithstanding, doing the same thing in the same way with the same set of circumstances but expecting a different outcome is akin to insanity! Therefore, look at the lessons learned from your experiences, adapt them to the new set of circumstances and find a creative solution to move forward!

The key is to remove the blinders that will keep you from discovering creative solutions. Not every idea is a good idea, but if it has merit take what you can and move forward. You must focus on your strengths and operate from that platform. Add to your strengths the ability to see the gifts and talents in others that strengthen your areas of weakness. Then add the humility to allow them to use their gifts and talents and you will move far beyond where you could go alone.

Remember, when God taps you on the shoulder, humility must become a prime ingredient of your service. The prophet, Isaiah, discovered this in his spectacular vision of God in His majesty:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

He said, “Go and tell this people...”
(Isaiah 6:1-9)

Isaiah witnessed the worship in Heaven. He saw Almighty God “high and lifted up” in all His splendor and majesty. He saw the seraphs and heard their praise and adulation directed to the Mighty One. He was convicted of his own sin and the sin of his people. Finally, he felt the fire of purification on his unclean lips. But the last thing was most amazing...the God of all creation, the Maker of heaven and earth asked whom He could send to the people with a message from the throne.

God chose Isaiah, a mere mortal human being to deliver His message. God could have done it Himself, but He chose to empower a subordinate to carry out this very important task.

Enlist and Empower

As a leader, you must be willing to empower your subordinates as well. If you think you have to do it all, nothing will be done as well as it could have been with help from your team.

Jesus was a master at thinking outside the box. Furthermore, He was a master at enlisting followers and then empowering them to do great exploits. For example, Jesus said:

If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

(Matt. 19:21)

With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

(Matt. 19:26)

Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.

(John 4:13-14)

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.

(John 14:12)

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...

(Matt. 28:18-19)

Jesus operated in full confidence that He had what it takes to complete the work the Father had prescribed for Him. How do you think Jesus confidence was built? Through constant communion with the One who sent Him.

Likewise, when you enlist followers your communication with them must be held in high priority. When you promote subordinates to higher levels of responsibility, even more responsibility is yours to communicate the vision and goals of the enterprise with them.

Jesus said: *“What good is it for one blind person to lead another? The first one will fall into a ditch and pull the other down also”* (Luke 6:39 NLT). Too often, leaders expect blind followers to lead other blind followers and then they complain because the followers failed!

The Ultimate Example

When God sent Jesus to earth as a baby, He was thinking outside the box. Why not send a powerful military leader instead of a baby?

When God gave His only Son, Jesus, to be sacrificed for the sins of the world, He was thinking outside the box. Why kill the Savior?

When Jesus turned over His leadership authority to the disciples, He was thinking outside the box. How could that band of uneducated Galilean fishermen, despised tax collectors and fanatical zealots accomplish anything worthwhile?

We have much to be thankful for in that God doesn't think the way we do: *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways"* (Isaiah 55:8). This is why Moses pleaded with the Lord... *"If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you"* (Exodus 33:13). Moses understood that in order for him to lead the people according to God's will, he must grow in likeness with his leader.

Jesus gathered the twelve and then spent the next 3 years pouring Himself into them. Day and night, Jesus taught, led, ministered, rebuked, encouraged and pushed them toward their destiny in God. He pointed out their strengths and exposed their weaknesses in order to prepare them for what lay ahead. Jesus never gave up on them, even Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him, empowering him instead to do what had to be done.

We can learn much about leadership from Jesus. He was an inspirational leader, both a cheerleader and a coach, always seeing potential instead of failure.

Now it is your turn. You must take up the role of cheerleader and coach. You must begin thinking outside the box to move to the next level in your endeavor. You must stop thinking small and begin thinking big. You must see your subordinates as they can be instead of how they are. You must see yourself as God sees you, not as men do.

The price Jesus paid for saving the world was His own life (John 3:16). The price a husband pays in his relationship with his wife is his own life (Eph. 5:25). The price a leader pays to have the privilege of leading is his own life. To truly lead, you must truly serve. To truly serve, you must give yourself. Remember, *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command"* (John 15:13-14).

Leadership Trait #5: Think Outside the Box

The key is to remove the blinders that will keep you from discovering creative solutions. Not every idea is a good idea, but if it has merit take what you can and move forward. You must focus on your strengths and operate from that platform. Add to your strengths the ability to see the gifts and talents in others that strengthen your areas of weakness. Then add the humility to allow them to use their gifts and talents and you will move far beyond where you could go alone. Remember, when God taps you on the shoulder, humility must become a prime ingredient of your service.

Chapter 6

Leaders Operate with Integrity

He who has seen Me has seen the Father...The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority...he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do...

~ Jesus

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

~ John Quincy Adams

Where does one look today for heroes to emulate? Or better yet, where do you want your son or daughter to look for a hero to admire? Would you direct them to a sports figure, politician, successful businessman, or popular musician? How about a local policeman or a teacher? What about a gangbanger? Who do you want your children to look up to?

Sadly, today many heroes are people who lack character and turn away from integrity to get what they want when they want it. No segment of society is immune. For example:

- Performance-enhancing steroid scandals of both amateur and professional sports
- Dishonest gain of business professionals who strip the profits from their companies to enrich themselves
- The highest seats of government where greed and the lust for power corrupt elected officials entrusted by the public vote
- Religious leaders immersed in immoral behavior

Today, even gangsters are placed on pedestals through the glamorization of illegal and immoral activity via music, movies and television.

Why have people begun to idolize the wicked instead of holding the righteous in esteem? Where have the values gone that were once used to measure heroes? Apostle Paul wrote about this in his letter to the Roman church:

...since they [the wicked] did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing

evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

(Romans 1:28-32, emphasis mine)

It seems that honesty is a bygone virtue that has been replaced by a “get what you can however you can” value system. But does it have to be that way?

Value-Based Leadership

Every leader operates with a set of values, moral or immoral. Today, we see the immoral exalted while the moral is denigrated. Nevertheless, God does not approve of immoral values even if the world does!

Leaders are held to a higher level of accountability than those they lead. Thus the importance of adhering to a value system grounded in high morals. People are affected by the decisions leaders make and by their actions. Therefore, to maintain and enhance credibility, values rooted in truthfulness, honesty, integrity and morality must be an integral part of the leaders every move, both public and private.

God sees it all, including the attitude of the heart. As the old saying goes, “you may be able to fool some of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time.” Leaders take heed!

Are you trustworthy? Break the word down; trust and worthy; worthy of trust. So another way to ask the question is, are you worthy of trust?

Are you the type of leader that others want to emulate?

Are you the type of leader that others can depend on to tell the truth no matter how much it hurts?

Are you the type of leader that inspires others?

If you answer no to these questions, you had better examine your values and motives. If you don't engender trust, loyalty and integrity in your followers and peers, your values or motives may be in need of re-alignment.

Peer Pressure

Everyone knows what it is like to be pressured to conform to a group of peers. Leaders are not immune from the same kind of demands. Leadership peers that operate in the same organization, whether secular or religious, often exert pressure on each other to conform to an unwritten code of ethics or behavior that exists within that particular environment. Often that pressure is positive and leads to a heightened sense of responsibility and pride in the organization's goals and mission.

Sometimes, however, organizational peer pressure can be negative and aimed at neutralizing another leader or lowering the bar insofar as performance across the board is concerned. The truth is, that no matter how innocuous the pressure may seem, when a leader succumbs values are compromised.

How do leaders resist ungodly peer pressure to conform? Through integrity, purpose, sense of mission, clear direction and backbone. Apostle Paul was confronted at every turn by people who wanted him to change his positions regarding the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, no matter how difficult it became for Paul, he held his ground. Even when faced with death, Paul maintained his integrity and faced the inevitable with courage that comes only through conviction and vision:

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day...

(2 Timothy 4:6-8)

What would you be able to say if you faced the same situation? Have you fought the good fight? Have you kept faith with the vision? Have you finished the race set before you?

The Virtue of a Pure Heart

Only when your agenda has been put to bed can the greater agenda of the vision be pursued. As long as your agenda is top priority, integrity to the greater vision is not possible. You must decrease so it can increase. Only by doing so will you be able to serve those *for* whom you are responsible and those *to* whom you are responsible.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a young woman with a pure heart. Her primary motive in life was to please God, not herself. We know this for one very significant reason...God chose Mary to bear His son.

When the angel, Gabriel, came to Mary with the news that God had chosen her, the message he brought was exciting, frightening, and encouraging at the same time. "*The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you'*" (Luke 1:28). To be "highly favored" is to be "endued with special honor." God examined Mary's heart and found it pure

therefore he treated her with special honor. In this case, to bear His one and only Son and to serve as His mother; to nurture Him, teach and train Him, and to be by His side at the very end.

Mary's devotion to God and the vision brought to her by Gabriel is captured in these words:

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God...For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."
(Luke 1:29-38 emphasis added)

The leadership of Mary is realized by her example. Not only was she the mother of Jesus, but also of other sons and daughters. God had given her the assignment of the ages, to be the mother of the Messiah, yet she was able to bring other children into the world to nurture and raise as well.

Mary also helped Jesus begin His earthly ministry. At a wedding feast in Cana, Mary called for Jesus because the host had run out of wine. Though Jesus said it wasn't yet His time He listened to His mother and turned water into wine (John 2:1-11).

Finally, Mary helped Jesus end His earthly ministry. While Jesus was on the cross, dying, He looked at His mother standing at His feet. Calling to His disciple, John, Jesus gave him charge of Mary after His death (John 19:26).

Ultimate Integrity

Mary helped to shape Jesus into the man He became. Her integrity, values, principles and belief system were integral to her overall view of life, which she imparted to Jesus. Mary's leadership was so important that some segments of Christianity revere her and openly venerate her memory. Let it be said that Jesus loved her and honored her during His life on earth.

Jesus' leadership was unlike anything ever witnessed on earth. He was so closely united with His Heavenly Father, that the two were one. In fact, Jesus even said that when asked by Philip to show them the Father:

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves."

(John 14:9-11)

Jesus' integrity was such that in order to make a statement like this it had to be absolutely true.

What constitutes integrity? The dictionary defines it as...

Steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code; honesty. The state of being unimpaired; soundness. The quality or condition of being whole or undivided; completeness.

(American Heritage Dictionary, Third Edition, © 1994 SoftKey International, Inc.)

Notice the last definition, "The quality or condition of being whole or undivided." Jesus said that He and the Father were one (John 10:30). Therefore, Jesus' integrity, being whole and undivided, also signified His relationship with the Heavenly Father.

Jesus also declared that He only did what He saw His Father doing (John 5:19). This unity of relationship enabled Jesus to accomplish great things on earth and to fearlessly confront the evil systems in place at the time.

We can and do learn from His example. Jesus also said: "*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*" (John 14:12). This means that His leadership is available to us, as are His leadership methods. Our duty, then, is to serve and lead with integrity.

Where Are The Role Models?

Though we must search them out, role models who operate with integrity and openness are here, now. What about becoming a role model yourself? Why not place yourself in a position to be a leader worth following? Be a leader that exemplifies integrity, principles, core values and a belief system that upholds high moral values.

I asked this before, but will do so again: Are you trustworthy? Just as people can be guilty by association, people can be successful by association. You hold the key to help others succeed. As you do, you will also succeed.

Affiliation brings a sense of identity. When a person affiliates with a leader or organization, they are making a statement with their life that says: "I believe in what this leader or organization is doing." The charge to you is to lead so that people want to identify with you. Lead so that people make a statement with their lives that you are worthy of affiliating with.

Remember, you are the role model. It's time to stop wondering where they are and to start being one. Begin with your family and friends. Lead the way. Lead with integrity.

Leadership Trait #6: Operate With Integrity

Only when your agenda has been put to bed can the greater agenda of the vision be pursued. As long as your agenda is top priority, integrity to the greater vision is not possible. You must decrease so it can increase. Only by doing so will you be able to serve those *for* whom you are responsible and those *to* whom you are responsible.

Chapter 7

Leaders Look for Leaders

Come, follow me The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I...am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing.

~ Jesus

...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...

~ Apostle Paul

The ultimate leader is one who is willing to develop people to the point that they eventually surpass him or her in knowledge and ability.

~ Fred A. Manske, Jr.

Have you ever felt stymied in your position because your leadership skills and talents were not being used? Most people have latent leadership abilities just under the surface waiting to be recognized, affirmed and utilized. Sadly, many leaders fail to see the talent surrounding them so it remains untapped to the detriment of the person and the cause at hand.

You may understand how it feels to be overlooked and underutilized. You may know what it is like to yearn for the opportunity to step up to the helm of leadership only to be left on the bench. If so, you are not alone. Countless others have come and gone before you...some to greatness in leadership, others to obscurity. Like them, you have a choice. You are free to use the situation to become...

1. A leader who values the contribution of others and seeks to raise up other leaders.
2. Bitter because your gifts and abilities were not being used.

If you choose the first response, you will understand the value of seeking those under your command with leadership skills that you can mentor and develop into great leaders. However, if you choose the second response, you will not only stunt your growth but will also deny the giftedness inside of you. Others will not benefit from your abilities neither will they learn from you how to effectively seek out the latent potential in their followers.

Leadership Multipliers

True leaders always look for those whom they can groom and train to lead in their absence. Their focus is not simply on the task at hand today, but the perpetuation of the vision long after they are gone. This can only be done with people who have been developed into champions of the vision by a servant leader.

This is accomplished by utilizing leadership multipliers—subordinates whose potential has been identified, magnified and released. Leadership multipliers are followers who are given opportunities to lead under the guidance of the primary leader. They become team captains, lead men and women, supervisors, or may hold other responsibilities. As these leaders grow, they are mentored and taught how to interact with their subordinates so that they learn from them the cooperation and respect necessary to fulfill their area of responsibility.

Another key aspect of mentoring is how to spot leadership potential in subordinates. In other words, the primary leader replicates himself/herself in subordinate leaders by teaching them how to identify leadership potential in their subordinates, how to magnify that potential and then how to release them into expanded responsibilities.

You may wonder how to identify those subordinates with leadership potential. I have used the “buoy” principle with great success (see who swims to a buoy in the middle of a deep pool). In practice, place a leadership opportunity in the midst of your team by giving them a project but no leader. Watch their reaction and see who gravitates toward bringing order out of the chaos. This process will quickly uncover leaders in your midst whom you can groom and mentor.

It doesn't end with finding subordinates with leadership capabilities. You must also look within to discover more of the leader inside of you. Leadership is scalable in that with greater responsibility you must expend more effort to grow into what is required of you.

Some leaders are content to serve in roles with less responsibility while others seek to expand their influence by taking on more. While leaders on every point of the scale are necessary, make sure that if you are stopped in place it isn't because of being comfortable. Growth is not easy and it can be very uncomfortable. However, pushing past artificial limits enables you to handle far more than you may have thought possible. Consider John the Baptist!

Against All Odds

The biblical story of John the Baptist is an amazing account of an unlikely leader and the transfer of his leadership responsibilities to another person. John was born to aging parents who had all but given up on having any children. His father, Zacharias, was a priest who served in the Temple. His mother was Elizabeth, of the daughters of Aaron (Luke 1:5).

This devout husband and wife faithfully served God throughout their lives and looked forward to having children, but Elizabeth was barren (Luke 1:6-7). Advanced in age, their sadness buried under years of dashed hopes, Zacharias' and Elizabeth's resolve to serve God never wavered. Finally, when to the natural eye Elizabeth was too old to conceive and bear a child, God promised them a son. The angel told Zacharias their son would be named John and that he would be great in the sight of the Lord. He was further told that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth and he would turn many of the Israelites to the Lord (Luke 1:11-17).

True to the angel's word, Elizabeth conceived and bore a son. They named him John and raised him in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

John was dedicated to the Lord and lived to serve His purposes. During his twenties, John separated himself from society in the desert and began to preach about the coming day of the Lord. His message was bold and filled with authority, drawing multitudes into the remote area to listen to him.

John's followers increased in number and looked to him for leadership. Not one to seek power for himself, John continually told his followers about another who would come after him:

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie..."

(Luke 3:15-16)

One day while John was baptizing in the Jordan River, Jesus of Nazareth came to him. Immediately, John pointed Him out and said: "*Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel*" (John 1:29-31). Jesus then went down into the water and was baptized by John.

The next day, John was with two of his disciples when Jesus went by. When John saw Him, he pointed Jesus out to his disciples and said: "*Look, the Lamb of God!*" (John 1:36). Immediately, John's disciples left to follow Jesus. One of the men was Andrew, brother of Simon Peter. Both men became followers of Jesus and were among the twelve closest to Him.

The Power Shift

John's transfer of leadership to Jesus was nearly seamless. John understood that his leadership was transitional and that he would eventually have to step aside for Jesus. In fact, John understood this so well that he publicly stated that he was not the Christ (Anointed One, Messiah).

One day several of John's disciples came to him with this complaint:

"Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less."

(John 3:26-30)

Notice that John stated he was not the bridegroom but a friend. Notice also that he declared that he must become less while Jesus became greater. John's humility and servant heart enabled the most dramatic power shift in human history.

John's preaching created enemies in very high places. One day he denounced the king because of an adulterous relationship, which enflamed hatred for him from the king's wife. That encounter landed John in prison where he was eventually executed. Nevertheless, because of John's eager willingness to submit to the leadership of Jesus, the movement that began with him continued and flourished after his death.

Recognize – Recruit – Raise – Release

Jesus used many of the same techniques as John in preparing His disciples for their future leadership roles. First, He chose twelve men to be His close associates. Then, Jesus spent time with them over the course of three years to fully impart to them His message of the Kingdom of God. Of the twelve, Jesus drew three into very close association so that they would fully know and understand the vision and mission of God's plan.

Over three years, Jesus spent considerable time with the twelve. They travelled together, stayed together at night, ministered as a team with Jesus and served both Him and the multitudes. During this time, Jesus had ample opportunity to see which of the disciples would rise to the forefront in leadership.

Among the twelve, Peter showed himself to be the most outspoken and the one showing the most leadership potential. Each of the twelve, except Judas Iscariot who committed suicide after betraying Jesus, became a leader in their own right and went on to demonstrate their devotion to Jesus by carrying the message of the Kingdom of God into the world. His method of recognizing, recruiting, raising and releasing proved to be fruitful as the church continues to this day, stronger than ever.

How did Jesus multiply Himself using the twelve? Let's look at some passages and consider four aspects of leadership development that Jesus employed to build His team.

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.
(Matt. 4:18-22)

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.
(Matt. 9:9)

The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
(John 1:43-46)

- 1. Recognize:** Jesus was able to spot people with leadership potential. He recognized the outward signs of leadership potential and thus drew those men to His side to be trained and mentored in the business of the Kingdom. Notice in the Scriptures above that Jesus found independent business men and told them to follow Him. He recognized the initiative in these men to work at their own business and saw their leadership potential.
- 2. Recruit:** Jesus didn't use many words to recruit His followers. No big sell job was necessary because of the message Jesus preached...the coming Kingdom of God. Jesus sparked hope in the hearts of these men and showed them a vision much larger than anything they had ever been involved in and then revealed their place in the vision. His message was compelling as was the mission each man embarked upon.
- 3. Raise:** Not only did Jesus call these men to follow Him, but He also committed to them His time and His attention. He taught them how to live the life they were called to rather than serve up platitudes and theory about what to do. Jesus lived His mission and He expected the twelve to live it as well. Jesus' mentorship unlocked secrets in the hearts of these men that compelled them to grow beyond anything they could imagine.

In addition to mentoring, Jesus sent the twelve on a mission so they could put into practice themselves what they had been taught (Luke 9:1-6). He sent seventy out in pairs to the surrounding countryside as well (Luke 10:1-24). If we consider the twelve as supervisors, then each disciple would have 3 teams of two under their supervision. These twelve men became Jesus' leadership multipliers among the seventy, enabling them to fulfill the mission to which Jesus had called them.

- 4. Release:** Finally, Jesus released the men into their calling. He had completed the work He was sent here to do and now it was time for the apostles to carry on the mission. Matthew recorded Jesus final words of commission...

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
(Matt. 28:18-20)

As leaders, we must follow the same pattern as Jesus. His methods produced leaders of unparalleled integrity, stamina, vision and sense of calling. All were persecuted for their faith and all except John were martyred in their calling. Are we willing to serve unto death? Do we foster such dedication to the calling among our subordinate leaders?

Take up the cause. Lift the standard high. If what you are doing is not worth dying for, then it probably isn't worth living for either.

Leadership Trait #7: Leaders Look for Leaders

True leaders always look for those whom they can groom and train to lead in their absence. Their focus is not simply on the task at hand today, but the perpetuation of the vision long after they are gone. This can only be done with people who have been developed into champions of the vision by a servant leader.

Epilogue

Where Do Leaders Come From?

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...

~ Jesus

Ego-centered, ego-prominent leadership betrays the Master. The best leadership...is inconspicuous, not calling attention to itself but not sacrificing anything in the way of conviction and firmness either.

~ Eugene Peterson

The mark of a good leader is loyal followers; leadership is nothing without a following.

Good leaders abhor wrongdoing of all kinds; sound leadership has a moral foundation.

Love and truth form a good leader; sound leadership is founded on loving integrity.

Good leadership is a channel of water controlled by God; he directs it to whatever ends he chooses.

Leadership gains authority and respect when the voiceless poor are treated fairly.

Proverbs 14:28; 16:12; 20:28; 21:1; 29:14 (MSG)

Throughout this book the prevailing message has characterized leadership as a privilege and not a right. It is an awesome responsibility that must not be taken lightly or handled with frivolous ambition.

When the mantle of leadership is placed on your shoulders, your life changes and new accountability suddenly falls in place. No longer are you subject only to yourself or a few close associates. Instead, you must consider the subordinates under your care and those followers who have appropriated the vision and, by extension, you. In this environment honesty, integrity and accountability take on new meaning, while the overall vision beckons you onward toward fulfillment.

Decisions that others used to make are now your responsibility. Strategies that aim toward vision fulfillment must be crafted while taking into consideration the gifts, talents and latent leadership

potential of your team members. Answers to difficult questions must be provided for those to whom you are responsible. Excuses, always in great supply, no longer suffice when goals aren't achieved and targets missed. In short, the buck stops with you.

You may wonder how anyone, especially you, can be adequately prepared to lead in light of all the responsibilities and demands of leadership. However, knowing deep inside that you are a leader in process and that others have blazed a trail before you builds confidence that you can grow into the leadership role placed before you. Remember, *leaders are forged in the furnace of experience and formed by the heat of adversity.*

So what should you take with you after reading *We All Lead*? First and foremost is the knowledge that you are responsible and accountable to God above all others. God loves His children and yearns for them to have godly leaders to follow. Other things to take with you include:

Leaders Serve Others

Leaders that serve others have not abandoned their position of authority. Rather, they have come to understand that by serving others they are able to impart vision, build a team and encourage people to higher levels of participation. When leaders help build confidence in their subordinates, they discover latent talents and undisclosed gifts that are available to accomplish the larger vision. Every person under a leader's care is a valuable resource of experience, gifting and talent just waiting for the opportunity to excel. True leaders know how to mine this rich vein to bring balance to the team and accomplish great exploits.

Furthermore, when leaders serve others, they in turn are served. The axiom, *you reap what you sow* is regularly demonstrated as subordinates give their all to support their trusted leader. This environment then becomes a hotbed for success as the team grows invincible in their quest for success.

Servant leaders are not on a peer level with their subordinates. Though these leaders serve those under their authority, the full weight of leadership responsibility still rests squarely on their shoulders. Their peers are other leaders that carry the responsibility of the vision and of the welfare of their subordinates.

Leaders Stay Focused

Vision determines the course of leaders' lives and the tasks to which they set their hand. Vision also determines the priority of relationships and which of those relationships are key to the success of the vision.

The greatest lesson I learned from my father about vision and leadership was not on the mission field and not in a church setting...it was on a sailboat. He taught me that sailing is unpredictable because of the wind and currents of the sea.

Added to that are mechanical and navigational challenges that often present themselves at the most inopportune times.

I learned from my father that a successful sailing trip requires complete focus on the destination. To arrive safely, I had to make adjustments due to storms, mechanical failure and changing currents. He showed me that the task at hand may change, but my focus must remain on the destination. If the focus shifts, then the danger of missing the mark becomes very real. Due course – stay focused on the destination.

Likewise, leaders must understand that the vision journey is filled with unpredictable circumstances. When working with people, competing agendas will always be a reality to contend with. These agendas can well change the course and cause the leader to lose focus and take his eyes off the vision destination. Countless companies have started strong only to falter and fail because the original vision was lost due to competing agendas.

Navigation in sailing and in leadership requires clear focus in order to weave through the chaos of storms, rogue waves, unfavorable winds, currents of criticism and agendas that would change the destination and alter the vision's purpose.

Leaders Seek Wise Counsel

Accountability in leadership does not mean that you abdicate your position of authority and allow others to make all of your decisions. Instead, it is the act of holding yourself and your decisions up for scrutiny to ensure the best course for the effort to which you are engaged has been chosen. Neither is accountability an opportunity for others to bash you or second-guess your decisions and actions. Instead, the advice they give must serve to build up and strengthen, not tear down and weaken.

Surround yourself therefore, with people who are friends of the vision and worthy of your trust. Engage the experience, knowledge and wisdom of people who have gone before you. That way, you will avoid having to re-invent the wheel because you will learn that someone else has already built one that works well.

I learned as a child to surround myself with people three times my size. As a missionary kid in Haiti, most of the people I associated with from an early age were adults. Interacting with them gave me the opportunity to learn much of what they had learned and to soak up the wisdom that only comes from experience. Thankfully, I was able to bypass many of the same experiences that had shaped them because I had already learned the lesson. I learned to trust and obey as I repeatedly saw the truth of their teaching touch my everyday life.

Leaders Exercise Power with Authority

Authority alone does not guarantee success. Likewise, power alone is no assurance that visionary goals will be attained. True leadership does not happen in a vacuum. Cooperation and cohesion between the leader and subordinates draws upon combined strengths to carry the enterprise to ever higher levels of success. However, when either the leader or subordinates lose track of the other, success probability is severely limited and progress is hindered.

Qualities of leadership that draw others into participation include, courage to step into ventures that others have deemed too risky, confidence that success can and will be achieved, and the clout or authority to decisively act. Leadership does not end with a title, neither does it begin there. True leadership begins and ends with...

- A direction in which to go
- Passion and vitality to embark on the journey
- Charisma to share the dream with others and enlist their help to bring it into reality
- Courage to overcome obstacles and roadblocks that would blur or kill the vision
- Authority to enlist and act
- Power to press-in to success

Decisive action builds confidence in the team. Though you may not be completely sure of your decision, move as if you are. Your team will see how you respond and will get behind you to make it happen. You will be amazed at how they will respect you and your decisions when they see you moving forward in the face of uncertainty.

Leaders Think Outside the Box

Thinking outside the box requires us to free our minds and intellect from the constraints of the past. Too often, we use experience alone as the litmus test for new endeavors instead of the information currently at hand. Just because something didn't work in the past doesn't mean it will never work.

Having said that, please understand that I am not diminishing the value of experience neither do I advise anyone to ignore the lessons learned through experience. However, experience alone is not always the best teacher. Rarely are the circumstances exactly the same. Different ingredients make a different cake!

This notwithstanding, doing the same thing in the same way with the same set of circumstances but expecting a different outcome is akin to insanity! Therefore,

look at the lessons learned from your experiences, adapt them to the new set of circumstances and find a creative solution to move forward!

The key is to remove the blinders that will keep you from discovering creative solutions. Not every idea is a good idea, but if it has merit take what you can and move forward. You must focus on your strengths and operate from that platform. Add to your strengths the ability to see the gifts and talents in others that strengthen your areas of weakness. Then add the humility to allow them to use their gifts and talents and you will move far beyond where you could go alone.

Leaders Operate with Integrity

Everyone knows what it is like to be pressured to conform to a group of peers. Leaders are not immune from the same kind of demands. Leadership peers that operate in the same organization, whether secular or religious, often exert pressure on each other to conform to an unwritten code of ethics or behavior that exists within that particular environment. Often that pressure is positive and leads to a heightened sense of responsibility and pride in the organization's goals and mission.

Sometimes, however, organizational peer pressure can be negative and aimed at neutralizing another leader or lowering the bar insofar as performance across the board is concerned. The truth is, that no matter how innocuous the pressure may seem, when a leader succumbs values are compromised.

How do leaders resist ungodly peer pressure to conform? Through integrity, purpose, sense of mission, clear direction and backbone. Apostle Paul was confronted at every turn by people who wanted him to change his positions regarding the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, no matter how difficult it became for Paul, he held his ground. Even when faced with death, Paul maintained his integrity and faced the inevitable with courage that comes only through conviction and vision:

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day...

(2 Timothy 4:6-8)

What would you be able to say if you faced the same situation? Have you fought the good fight? Have you kept faith with the vision? Have you finished the race set before you?

Only when your agenda has been put to bed can the greater agenda of the vision be pursued. As long as your agenda is top priority, integrity to the greater vision is not possible. You must decrease so it can increase. Only by doing so will you be able to serve those *for* whom you are responsible and those *to* whom you are responsible.

Leaders Look for Leaders

True leaders always look for those whom they can groom and train to lead in their absence. Their focus is not simply on the task at hand today, but the perpetuation of the vision long after they are gone. This can only be done with people who have been developed into champions of the vision by a servant leader.

This is accomplished by utilizing leadership multipliers—subordinates whose potential has been identified, magnified and released. Leadership multipliers are followers who are given opportunities to lead under the guidance of the primary leader. They become team captains, lead men and women, supervisors, or may hold other responsibilities. As these leaders grow, they are mentored and taught how to interact with their subordinates so that they learn from them the cooperation and respect necessary to fulfill their area of responsibility.

Another key aspect of mentoring is how to spot leadership potential in subordinates. In other words, the primary leader replicates himself/herself in subordinate leaders by teaching them how to identify leadership potential in their subordinates, how to magnify that potential and then how to release them into expanded responsibilities.

Finally, as a leader, you must follow the same pattern as Jesus. His methods produced leaders of unparalleled integrity, stamina, vision and sense of calling. All were persecuted for their faith and all except John were martyred in their calling. Are you willing to serve unto death? Do you foster such dedication to the calling among your subordinate leaders?

Take up the cause. Lift the standard high. If what you are doing is not worth dying for, then it probably isn't worth living for either.