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**Leadership Assignment 3**  
*"Learning to Lead"*

Written by  
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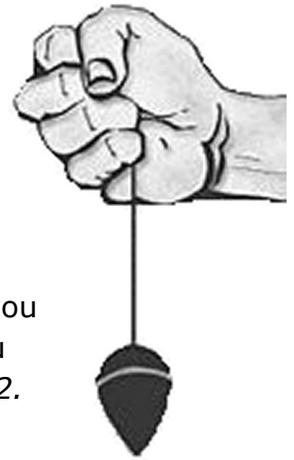
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## Looking Back & Looking Ahead

### Reminders

Wow, are you a senior already? That is hard to believe. Where has the time gone? I trust that you will do everything in your power to make this the best year of your life, for you will be walking across the stage getting your diploma in the blink of an eye.

Before you dive into your third plumb line assignment, I want to remind you what you learned in the first two assignments. In the first assignment you studied Jesus as a young man, particularly as He is described in *Luke 2:52*. Here is a summary of the four areas we discussed:



**Jesus Increased in Wisdom:** He was submissive to His parents, He learned as much as He could from His teachers, and He spent unhurried alone time with God.

**Jesus Increased in Stature:** He recognized that a strong body is of great benefit, that He was to glorify God with His body and that the "bigger" He became in others' eyes, the smaller He had to become in His own eyes.

**Jesus Grew in Favor with God:** He submitted to God's authority in His life, He obeyed God's commands and pursued His expectations, He did not love Satan's world, and He loved people.

**Jesus Grew in Favor with Men:** By loving others, serving others, meeting the needs of others, Jesus made a good name for Himself.

In the second assignment, you studied the four levels of leadership. Here are the principles:

#### **Level 1 – Following Leaders**

Before you can be a good leader, you must be a good follower.

#### **Level 2 – Leading Yourself**

Before you can lead others, you must first learn to lead yourself.

#### **Level 3 – Leading by Example**

Before others will follow you, you must be worthy of following.

#### **Level 4 – Leading Followers**

Good leaders follow Christ in advance of others

How are you doing with these four levels? Have you improved over the last two years? Have you achieved Level 4 status yet?

I'm also sure that you've forgotten the definition and purpose of a plumb line. A plumb line is an architect's tool to evaluate straightness of a wall. The Bible, God's Word, is our plumb line to determine whether or not something is true. Christ, the Living Word, is our plumb line for life; we measure all things next to His example. He is our standard for leadership.

We are so grateful that you've decided to join us for one more year in the Salt & Light Program. Your role in our school and in S&L will be invaluable. As you know, our seniors provide a great deal of leadership for our underclassmen. As Seniors, we will look to you to be the example for others to follow.

As third-year S&L seniors, **we will call upon you to lead our small groups or families.** Several times this year, you will have the opportunity to lead out in discussion, prayer time, or other activities. Most importantly, you will be given several underclassmen into which you will be asked to invest time and effort to encourage and assist throughout the year. Family Time will afford you a chance to practice some of the skills that we have taught in these assignments. I know that you will be ready to lead and that you will do a good job.

When organizing these three assignments, thinking about the order that I wanted you to do them, **I purposely saved this assignment for last.** It is my favorite one of the three, because it deals with the most important issue for any leader – building relationships. In the first two assignments, you focused on yourself, growing in your personal walk with the Lord and focusing on improving your character; but, in this assignment, your focus will be aimed outside of yourself to other people.

Personally, I find the truths in this assignment very convicting. They still push me outside of my comfort zone (as you will read in the introduction) and prompt me to do what needs to be done. I am still learning how to be a leader too, and I find these principles most helpful of all that you will learn. I trust that you will not take this assignment lightly, but that you will take these principles to heart. They truly can and will transform you into a tremendous leader.

Okay, then, what is the gist of this assignment? Here it is -- if leadership, which we will define as influencing people, is a skill, then **leadership can be learned**; and, if leadership can be learned, then *anyone can be a leader.*

How many people does a person have to influence in order to be a leader? **Just one.** When two people get together to do something, one of them is a leader. Besides, everyone is influencing someone; even if that influence is negative, it is still leadership. So then, technically everyone is a leader. Anyone who is around people, which is just about everyone, has opportunities to lead. *The question is not will we influence others, but how will we influence others?* **We must learn to lead well.**

Don't let your senior year pass without making an impact on people. We need your leadership!

Are you ready? Let's do it.

## Help! I'm a Leader!

### My Dilemma

*Leadership – it is a subject that is of great importance in my life.*

Everywhere I turn, I somehow end up in a position of leadership. One may think, then, that is the reason behind my writing this assignment, because I have some great wisdom to share with the world regarding leadership; but, that is far from the truth. It's not that I somehow model great leadership which drives my interest in this subject; rather what motivates my investigation is that I have so much to learn about how to lead people. That's the real issue here.

I have never once asked to be in a leadership position. In my experience, *leadership has always been expected of me, asked of me, pressed upon me, or come by default.* Growing up, I was always taller than everyone else, more athletic, and more self-disciplined; I had some musical ability, I made good grades, and I was respectful and well-behaved. All of these things were gifts from God and my parents, but they made me "popular" with my peers, the favorite of my teachers, and the "obvious choice" for a leader, even though I didn't necessarily desire to be one.

I was a victim of circumstance, like Eliab, who was the oldest son of Jesse and Samuel's first pick to be King of Israel (*1 Samuel 16:6*). I was given the solos in the Kids' Choir (thanks, Mom), and, I was asked to be quarterback by default, because I could throw the football (thanks, Dad). I was elected President of the youth group, asked to speak at camps and clubs, and called on to preach at church every now and then. Not one of these things did I ask to do.

Because of my sports background, the first job that I landed after college was as a coach and teacher. These are naturally positions of leadership, and I was dreadful at both. I have found that most people mirror the leadership style of the last person they followed. That is exactly what I did.

All of my football coaches had been screamers; so, that's what I did when I got my chance – screamed. When coaching a girls team, that's not exactly the best way to win their loyalty. What started out as a promising first season, I ruined with my anger, critical spirit, and harsh words. What short honeymoon that I had with the girls and their parents went up in smoke when I chewed them out on a regular basis.

I realized the failure of that leadership style when one night, after suffering an embarrassing loss on our home court, I tore into my girls and caused them all to cry. Rather than winning hearts and followers, I was breaking hearts and burning bridges. I stayed up late into the night calling each girl, apologizing for my unacceptable behavior, and promising that I would never do that again. **I needed to learn to lead.**



My teaching style was no different. I repeated what I saw my college professors do, crammed meaningless information down my students' throats until they wanted to hang themselves. I was a nice guy, but students hated me and parents wanted me fired. Later, I found myself asked to head up the Salt & Light student leadership program. Are you sure, I thought? Even at church, I was asked to be a small group leader, then, an Elder. What did I know about leading anyone? All I can say is that **God was teaching me how to lead.**

Leadership may come naturally to some people, but I've found that this is rare. For most people, including myself, **leadership is a learned skill.** People like me may come by positions of leadership naturally, but that does not mean that they know how to lead. It finally struck me that this was a pattern that could haunt me the rest of my life, so I had better buckle down and learn how to be a leader.

The problem is that I have an introverted personality; I'm quiet and reserved. Being in large groups makes me uncomfortable. I'd rather be alone. I have no desire to be out in front, on stage, or in the spotlight. I'd rather not draw attention to myself. Positions of leadership drag me well outside of my comfort zone.

However, in direct conflict with my introverted personality is the fact that I am a first-born, and anyone who knows about birth order knows that first-borns are typically driven, responsible, confident go-getters, who do not back down from challenges. That is me. While I would rather remain in the shadows, follow someone else, and serve behind the scenes, my first-born engine kicks in when my leaders are incompetent, irresponsible, or uninspiring. Though I will often defer to others who desire to take the lead, my first-born monster demands to be unleashed.

It is a constant struggle, a war within, that produces a great deal of tension and stress. My mind and skills are competent, but my personality restrains them both. I rejoice when I am no longer under the weight of responsibility of a leadership position, but I groan when I watch someone else do a poor job. I am often asked to lead, but I seldom take pleasure in leading.

As an introvert, I'm not a people person. Developing relationships is difficult for me; I score lowest in this area. Those I lead deserve so much more than I can give, and, yet, **I am willing to learn how to be a better leader.** So then, this study challenges me, but will my personality stand down and allow me to execute what I know?

Perhaps you too find yourself in a similar situation, needing to learn more about how to lead. Let's learn together.

# Authority vs. Influence

## Lesson 1

*Anyone can be a leader, but few practice true leadership.*

To kick-start this study, I need to define two terms – a leader and leadership. What’s the difference? A leader is a “who” while leadership is a “how.” Leader is a position; leadership is a practice.

Let’s consider some definitions. What is a leader? Webster defines a leader as “one who goes first.” A leader is “a guide or director,” one whom others follow, “a chief, commander, or captain.”

What, then, is leadership? Simply put, leadership is “the act of leading,” although it is much more than that. Note these definitions of leadership:

- “Leadership is **the skill of influencing people** to work towards goals identified as being for the common good.” James Hunter, The Servant
- “**Leadership is influence**, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead.” J. Oswald Chambers, Spiritual Leadership
- “**Leadership is influence**. Anyone who influences someone else to do something has led that person.” Hans Finzel, Mistakes Leaders Make
- “After five decades of observing leadership, I’ve come to this conclusion – **leadership is influence**.” John Maxwell, Developing the Leader Within You

Okay, then, that was easy. **Leadership is influence**. The position of leader points out who to follow, but leadership pertains to the reasons why to follow, and the most effective reason to follow someone else’s lead is because of influence.

Name the most effective leader in your life. How has he or she influenced you?

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This definition of leadership – influence -- flies in the face of conventional worldly wisdom, which says that leadership is power and power comes with position. However, **many people have positions of leadership but do not practice effective leadership**. Likewise, many people do not have positions of leadership and yet practice effective leadership. *Leadership does not require position or power*. Remember, leadership is influence.

*A person in a position of leadership may have authority but that does not mean that he has influence*. Authority or power that is used apart from influence must be imposed or coerced on others, while those same followers will willingly follow a person with influence. One with power but no influence makes others follow by force, when one with influence causes others to follow by choice.

It is easy to tell when one uses authority without influence, because there is discontentment, grumbling, fallout, turn-over, and rebellion. These symptoms are signs that followers are being coerced rather than influenced; they are following because they have to, not because they want to. Usually, where there are disgruntled employees, their boss has not mastered the art of influence but rather is forcing his way. Likewise, the same goes in a family; when there is a rebellious child, there is evidence of an overbearing parent, one who has exerted power but no influence.

Whom do you know that is in a position of leadership (power) but who does not practice effective leadership (influence)? How can you tell?

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Read *Proverbs 28:15, 16*. What kind of leader is described here? How can you tell?

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For what reasons are people typically promoted to leadership positions? What should be the reasons why people are promoted to leadership positions?

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What is the difference between character and achievement? Should these two elements have anything to do with promotions to leadership? Which one should take precedence? Why?

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**Great leaders are not great because they exert power over others but because they empower others to act.** Exerting influence is to get people to do willingly what they don't want to do, and that is a skill that few people have mastered. But, I will save the skill of influence for another time. First, let's define what it means to influence others.

Look up the word "influence" (verb) in a dictionary and write its definition here.

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Also, define the verbs "impact, impress, and affect."

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Impress

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Affect

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I have always been fond of the word "impact." I define "impact" simply as "to leave a mark." When I think of influencing others, I think of leaving a mark on them, visibly or invisibly, meaning that they will remember me because of something I did or said.

When Neil Armstrong landed on the moon in 1969, he took a photo that is forever etched in my mind. It is of his boot print in the moon dust. (Do an Internet search for "Neil Armstrong's boot print.") That image is incredible when you think about it. How many people have been on the moon? Yet, if we took a field trip to the moon, we would know that Neil had been there? How, because his boot print is still there in the dust. He made his mark on the moon, and he made his mark in history!

I love that thought so much that I have used an image of a shoeprint for the Salt & Light Program from the beginning. It represents my desire as a person and as a leader, and it represents my desire for you. I don't want to be known as a person who did nothing. I want to be remembered as a person who made an impact in his area of influence, who made a mark in the lives of people.

What about you? When you make an impact on someone else's life, you are influencing him. When you impress someone's mind, you are etching in his memory an aspect about you that is peculiar, different, or distinct.

What "mark" do you want to leave on others? How do you want them to remember you?

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Evaluate your leadership so far. Do you lead others because of authority or influence?

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# The Leadership Model

## Lesson 2

*The world's model of leadership was upside down.  
Jesus turned it right-side up.*

If leadership is defined as having influence, then leadership is a skill. If leadership is a skill, then leadership can be learned; and, since everyone exerts influence, then everyone can become a leader.

The question is how, how can a person effectively build influence? Before learning how to build influence, we must discover the secret behind influence; and, the best place to discover the secret of leadership is the Bible, and the best person to observe is Christ. Jesus was (and is) the greatest leader of all. Did He influence anyone? You bet He did; but, how did He do it?

Of course, we must admit that Jesus did some extraordinary things, things that we could never repeat. He walked on water, He fed the 5000, and He raised the dead. Obviously, miracles like these were essential to prove that He was, indeed, God and no ordinary man. However, take away all of that and Jesus still demonstrated tremendous leadership, and He did it in a way that you and I can duplicate. He also did it in a way that was unforeseen by all; and, this is the secret to leadership.

Take a minute to read these verses -- *Matthew 7:29; 9:6; 28:18; Mark 1:22; 3:15; and John 19:11*. How do they describe Jesus?

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Now, read these passages – *Isaiah 42:1-3; Philippians 2:4-11*. How do they describe Him?

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It was said of Jesus many times that He was one having great authority; yet, He constantly deflected attention away from Himself and assumed the role of a humble servant. He could have easily lauded his authority, asserted His greatness, and demanded "followship," and He would have had all right to do so, but, instead, He left us with the impression of one who was meek and unselfish. His disciples didn't get the hint, though, and Jesus had to present His secret to leadership more clearly.

Instead of watching their leader and following His example, the disciples succumbed to temptation and argued over which among them was the greatest, which one would sit at his right hand in heaven. Jesus quickly confronted their sinful, selfish desires with an object lesson. What did He do?

Read *John 13:5-17* or *Luke 22:24-27*. Describe what He did. What point was Jesus trying to get across to His followers?

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Jesus pointed out that *greatness is not about where you sit but whom you serve*. "A slave is not greater than his Master," He said, meaning that to be a genuine follower of Christ was (and is) to do what He did, model servanthood, not slave mastery.

Pictured here is an important leadership principle that we must highlight, and it is the secret to how to build influence in the lives of others (*Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45*). Through washing the disciples' feet, Jesus confronted the world's concept of leadership. **Those in leadership do not exist to be served but to serve.**

The world would have us believe that when we obtain a position of authority that we have arrived and that those "below" us exist to do our bidding. We even use words like "climbing the corporate ladder," rising to levels of leadership, being promoted, and getting a raise. We are duped into thinking that the person who gets the big office is somehow the most important and deserves loyalty and obedience. However, from God's perspective, that is not the case. **Those in authority exist to serve those under authority** (*Romans 13:1-4*); leaders are ministers of God for the good of others.

Thus, Jesus' example causes us to ask the question, "Who is serving whom?" Is it the one who is in authority who is to serve, or the one under authority?

In the space provided, draw a large triangle. Then, draw an arrow down the middle of the triangle, from the point at the top to the line at the bottom. The arrow should point downward. Finally, label the top point, "Leaders," and label the bottom line, "Followers."

#### WORLD'S LEADERSHIP MODEL

The humanistic concept of leadership is illustrated in a triangle (James Hunter, The Servant). Those in the middle and at the bottom are to support those at the top. Leadership, in the world's eyes, is a top-down system. Jesus even pointed out, "Who is greater," in the world's eyes, "the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table?"

However, **the top-down leadership model is not biblical or Christ-like**. In fact, Jesus would have us flip that model around and view leadership as an inverted triangle. Those at "the top" are actually those at the bottom.

Now, draw an inverted triangle. Then, draw an arrow down the middle of the triangle, from the line at the top to the point at the bottom. The arrow should point upward. Finally, label the top line, "Followers," and label the bottom point, "Leaders."

#### CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP MODEL

Look at the two leadership models that you've drawn. What does each of the models communicate in regards to leaders and followers?

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When Jesus and His followers began to impact the world, it was said that Christians were turning the world upside-down. However, I would argue that **Christ turned things right-side up**, including the leadership model. When one "ascends" to leadership, he should actually descend the model. The more authority one is given, the more people he exists to serve. *To ascend the scale of leadership is to descend the scale of servitude.*

The biblical model could be described like this: the one under authority is expected to submit to the one in authority, but the one in authority is expected to serve the one under authority, not to lord it over him. Lording over or ordering others around is not effective, but serving others is very effective.

How does serving affect those "under authority"?

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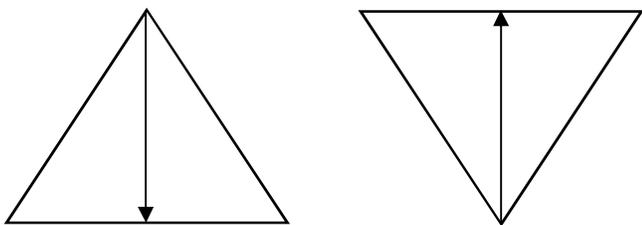
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Serving those under authority gives evidence of their value, their worth, that they are appreciated. It gives the impression that they do not exist for your success, but that you exist for their success. Service builds commitment. When you are served by someone else, you feel indebted to them for their time, their effort, and their sacrifice. We desire to serve our leaders in return for their service to us.

What does it mean to serve those whom you lead? James Hunter, in his book The Servant, defines service as "identifying and meeting needs" (i.e. washing feet). Of course, service looks different for different people, but to identify and meet needs requires seeing needs, and to see needs one must be looking for them. Thus, building relationships becomes essential, and building relationships requires spending time with those you lead. It requires listening to them, praying with and for them, and doing whatever it takes to prove that you support them. Anyone in authority who regularly serves his followers has learned the secret to effective leadership.



Let's review. As best you can, describe the difference between the two leadership models.

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## Making People a Priority

### Lesson 3

*If serving others is the secret to effective leadership, then, people must become a priority.*

The secret to effective leadership – influencing others – is to serve others; but, serving others is easier said than done. Serving others is difficult; it's not in our human nature to put other's needs ahead of our own. We are programmed to look out for number one, and number one is usually self.

However, if the essence of true leadership is influence, and the secret to influence is serving, then we must learn to overcome our natural tendencies and seek to identify and meet the needs of others. To accomplish this task will take the work of God in our lives; we must allow Him to enable our minds, inspire our hearts, and move us to action (*Phil. 2:3-11*).

If the secret to effective leadership is to serve and influence people, then **people must become a priority in our lives**. In other words, *we must become adept at building relationships*. Perhaps the greatest mistake leaders make is neglecting to build relationships with the people in their care (Hans Finzel, [Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make](#)).

Overlooking people is to undermine leadership potential. We can never move people from one point to another if they are not with us, and they will never move with us if we are not with them. We may get a few seasons out of raw power, but, in the long run, others will not follow if we have not developed relationships.

Not only is putting people first difficult from a selfish standpoint, it is also contrary to the typical personality of a leader. While it is true that anyone can be a leader, the natural leader is most often a first-born high-energy obsessive compulsive go-getter. He is task-oriented and thrives on crossing off items on his to-do list. He is focused on the urgent, the necessary, the deadline, or the objectives. To this type of leader, people exist to help him succeed, to get the job done; thus, to be people-oriented is counter-productive, unnecessary, and even awkward. Since the paperwork is piling up, every moment must be spent "productively," and needy people are viewed as hindrances, annoyances, distractions, or, perhaps, a waste of time.

However, a person who gets things done is not necessarily a great leader; he is just that, a person who gets things done. In order to be an effective leader, **people cannot be viewed as a problem**; *they must become the top priority*. People should not be viewed as interruptions but as opportunities, for how can one exert influence, true leadership, if he is not spending time with people? God loves people; they are His most treasured creation. He sent His Son to redeem fallen people, and it will be people whom He will come back to receive. *If people are God's primary focus on this earth, should they not also be the primary focus of a leader?*



Why do you think building relationships with people is so vital to a leader's success?

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Read *John 10:1-15*. Although this passage is about salvation, can you spot any leadership principles? How can you tell that Jesus influenced people and they followed Him?

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Once again, Jesus was the perfect example of people-centered leadership. Were people not His top priority? Did He not spend time with the masses? Did He not meet their needs?

Solomon also used the analogy of a shepherd. Read *Proverbs 27:23-27*. What leadership principles are included here?

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In his excellent book entitled, The Way of the Shepherd, Kevin Leman offers seven secrets to leading people. His first suggestion is to know the condition of the flock, and **the most logical way to know the sheep is to spend time with them**. While spending time with people seems counter-intuitive to productivity, at least in the minds of most leaders, it is healthy, happy productive people who make for a productive department, thriving business, healthy family, or united team. Get to know the sheep!

The maxim is true -- people must know that a leader cares about them before they care what the leader knows. In your opinion, what is the best way for a leader to communicate genuine care to his "sheep"?

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Of course, there are numerous ways to communicate care to the sheep; here are a few to consider:

- Spend time with people; be where they are and do what they do
- Talk with people; ask good questions and listen intently
- Identify personal or task-related needs and do what you can to help
- Affirm strengths, character, one's value to the team, or a job well done
- Treat people respectfully; be transparent, kind, and appreciative
- Develop trust, keep your word, be a good role model, pray with people

**Shepherding people cannot be done from a distance**; it requires close interaction. But, sheep are messy, and when the shepherd hangs out with the flock, he will certainly smell like them. However, developing people is altogether necessary to practice effective leadership. They cannot be overlooked!

**Someone is going to pay for your leadership; it is either you or your sheep.**

“Know well the condition of your flock.” That is perhaps the best leadership advice from the wise King Solomon. The best way to get to know the condition of your “sheep” is to spend time with them. Time is a high price for leadership, a price that many leaders are not willing to pay. Once again, that’s why people must become a priority, or a leader will not influence others effectively.

Kevin Leman paints a picture of the shepherd who does not know the condition of his flock, one who does not make his sheep a priority. He describes a flock of poor, scattered, emaciated sheep, with matted, gnarled wool, all having flies swarming around their heads and sores infested with bugs. He tells of a field of brown grass, eaten down to the nub, with run down, shabby shelters, broken fences, and no water in sight.

What has happened? The shepherd has been irresponsible and uncaring, neglecting those in his fold, and, instead, tending to his own needs. A flock like this gives evidence of a shepherd who does not have a heart for his sheep.

Compare this flock to the one shown in *Psalm 23*. What is positive about this flock? How can you tell that it has a good shepherd?

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Finally, you are familiar with the parable of the shepherd who leaves his 99 sheep to look for one. What message does that send to the wayward sheep? What about to the others?

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**Someone is going to pay for your leadership; it is either you or your sheep.**

Leadership requires sacrifice, and the one to pay that sacrifice will either be the shepherd or the sheep. Who is paying for your leadership?

# Love: The Indispensable Element

## Lesson 4

*To have all of the qualities but not love spells failure for a Christian leader.*

So far we've discovered that the secret to leadership is to view a position of authority as a place of service, not as a place of power. Service, remember, is to identify and meet the needs of those in your care, but genuine service is only made possible if a leader makes people a priority. Thus, building relationships is essential to becoming an effective leader.

However, while this line of thinking may be true, it is not an automatic formula for leadership success. A leader may jump through all of these hoops and still not exert the kind of influence necessary to lead a group of people effectively. That's because people are quick to detect phony face time. They know when they are truly appreciated or just being fed a line. They can sense when conversation is genuine and heartfelt and when it is shallow and meaningless. They know when acts of service are sincere and when they are used as a means of manipulation.

So then, a leader must ask what it is that drives his leadership. What is the motivating factor behind building relationships and meeting people's needs? Is the purpose of a leader's service just to get others to do what he wants? Of course not, that would be self-serving manipulation. **The driving force** for building relationships, meeting needs, and exerting influence **must be love** for the individual (*Galatians 5:13*).

Love is the indispensable element to anyone aspiring to leadership. What are synonyms for the word "indispensable"?

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Look at the number below. What is its value? \_\_\_\_\_

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Now, place a one at the beginning of the number. What happened?

Author Jerry Bridges uses this illustration to demonstrate the value of one element. When the number one is present, the zeros immediately have value. A leader may possess a thousand talents or useful skills, but **they amount to nothing without the presence of love**. *It is the presence of love that makes all other leadership qualities valuable.*



Now, read *1 Corinthians 13:1-3*. List the five strengths to which Paul refers, qualities a leader can possess but which are worthless without love.

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D.A. Carson describes Paul's comments here as "divine mathematics." When you think about it, here is God's leadership equation:  $5 - 1 = 0$ . What do you suppose He means?

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From God's viewpoint, "five minus one equals zero." In other words, five gifts – oratory, knowledge, faith, generosity, and self-sacrifice – without the one indispensable element – love -- are worth nothing. Wow! What is it about love that is so valuable? Read verses 4-13.

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Paul makes it very clear – love is the indispensable element (13:13). Peter echoes Paul’s teaching and encourages us with these words, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8). When writing to Timothy, a young leader and pastor in Ephesus, Paul challenged him, in regards to love, to “be an example to those who believe” (1 Timothy 4:12).

Once again, loving others is easier said than done. It is easier to love ourselves than to love other people. So then, if love is what drives our service, then what is it that drives our love? Jesus drilled the answer into Peter’s mind in *John 21:15-17*. What was it?

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To love others effectively, we must first love the Lord with all of heart, mind, soul, and strength (*John 12:30, 31; John 13:34, 35*). It is our love for the Lord that drives our love for others.

Do you know someone who attempts to lead others without love? What have been the results? What can you learn from them?

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However, while you may genuinely love people, your love must express itself. It cannot remain silent. Those whom you lead must know that you care about them, and you do that by expressing gratitude, showing signs of affection, demonstrating hospitality, praying with them, and caring for their practical needs. It does no good to say that you love people if you do not back it up with deeds (1 John 3:18). The proof of your love is in the little things you do each day to show how much you value the people in your care. It is true that no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care. Are you leading with or without the indispensable element? Without it, you cannot genuinely influence or lead anyone.

## Passing Under the Rod

### Lesson 6

*Accountability – no one wants it, but everyone needs it.*

Before I move on in the study of leadership, I want to pause a little longer and consider one more quality of all good shepherds. It is an aspect of leadership that is largely overlooked and, oftentimes, dreaded by everyone involved, both the leader and the followers. I'm speaking of accountability.

David wrote in his song of the Good Shepherd that though he walked through the valley of the shadow of death, he feared no evil, because **the rod and the staff brought him comfort**. While everyone is familiar with this verse, and some may even have it memorized, few understand its meaning. If you are like me, I thought the rod and the staff were descriptions of the same item. They are not.

Shepherds carried these two items at all times, the staff in hand and the rod under the belt. Everyone knows what a shepherd's staff looks like. It's long and skinny with perhaps a "hook" at the end. It was used for prodding, tapping, guiding, directing, and redirecting the sheep. The crook at the end would come in handy for wrangling wanderers back into the fold or perhaps for rescuing one caught in a thicket.

While the staff was long and skinny, a rod was just the opposite, short and stout. Today, we would call it a club, a cudgel, a bat, or a nightstick. It was weightier on one end, perhaps because of a knot or a root bulb, which made for a dangerous weapon in the hands of a skilled shepherd. He could throw it with accuracy for some distance, perhaps at a predator. Or, he could wield it in defense against a thief.

Knowing the distinctions between these two tools helps us to understand better why a sheep would find comfort when the shepherd is around. Even in the valley of the shadow of death, where all sorts of dangers lurk, the sheep are not afraid, because the shepherd is armed. He has a watchful eye, skillful hands, and lethal weapons.

However, there is another use of the rod that is not mentioned in David's psalm, one that sheds light on another important aspect of leadership. The first mention of it is in *Leviticus 27:32*, "Concerning the tithe of the herd and flock, whatever *passes under the rod*, the tenth shall be holy to the Lord."

Here, the Lord is explaining to His people how to honor Him with their tithes, but it is the phrase, "whatever passes under the rod" that I want to consider more closely.



Since all good shepherds know well the condition of their flock, they certainly know how many sheep are in their fold. The best way to count them was to stand at the gate or door of the fold, which was narrow so that only one lamb could enter at a time. He would hold his rod low to the ground and make each one pass under it, counting them as they came through.

We see this same process pictured in other places in the Bible (*Ezekiel 20:33-38; Jeremiah 33:13*). Here “passing under the rod” is used as an illustration for each person standing for judgment or close inspection. It is interesting that Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd (*John 10*), who stands at the door or the gate, and that His followers, who are like sheep, must enter by “the narrow way” (*Matthew 7:14*). The Bible also tells us that Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats (*Matthew 25:31-46*).

While it is left to Christ to stand at the gate of heaven and judge the sheep and the goats, let’s consider this aspect of shepherding in light of our study on leadership. What does “passing under the rod” mean for us? **A good leader makes his sheep pass under the rod often**; in this way he inspects his sheep, making sure that none of them are injured, sickly, or missing. He may call them to his office or visit them where they are, all for the purpose of checking on their well-being and progress. By doing this, each follower has to give an account, and, thus, he is being held accountable.

Accountability – it might be one of our least favorite words in the English language, right up there with cancer, suffering, fat, or taxes. *We all need accountability, but no one wants it.*

Why do we all need accountability?

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If we need accountability, then why doesn’t anyone like it?

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All of us need accountability, including you, because we are prone to wander, we want to do our own thing, go at our own pace, neglect responsibility, and procrastinate. No one likes accountability because holding people accountable can seem demanding, nosey, confrontational, judgmental, and bossy, and no one wants to appear that way. However, as leaders, accountability is essential. *Good intentions are just dreams without accountability;* only with deadlines and checks on progress can good intentions become fulfilled goals.

It is also important to point out that **leaders cannot expect what they do not inspect.**

What do you suppose that means? Leaders cannot expect what they do not inspect.

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As a teacher, I have learned this well. Students will not learn what I think is important without tests, assignments, quizzes, or classroom questioning. It is my way of keeping students accountable to the information they need to know. Likewise, our sheep will never understand the importance of certain commitments, duties, responsibilities, or obligations, if we never make them pass under the rod.

Performing this function of leadership must be done carefully and caringly, with grace and positive reinforcement, or it can come back to bite you. Why must one proceed with caution?

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Perhaps the most used (and overused) verse pertaining to the topic of accountability is found in *Proverbs 27:17*, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." While there are several other passages that deal with the same subject (*Romans 15:1; Galatians 6:1-3; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24, 25; James 5:16*), it is this verse to which we default. Therefore, I decided to pray over this verse for a while and consider the leadership truths hidden therein. What I found was quite convicting.

**First, true sharpening requires being around other people.** It cannot be done alone. The Lone Ranger concept of the Christian life is not found in the Bible.

Not only is the Christian life a supplied life, in which we need the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the Christian life is also a community effort. In other words, believers must live in community with other believers, to encourage them, keep them accountable, and "sharpen their iron."

I can read the Bible daily, memorize portions of it, pray for hours, journal my thoughts and write book after book, but until my life intersects with another person, I am missing the point. It is when my knowledge and experience meets with someone else's knowledge and experience that we are both refined and challenged. What God is teaching me is not for me alone, and what God is teaching others is not for others alone. We are to teach each other for our mutual benefit, to the glory of God, and the advancement of His kingdom.

**For one person to sharpen another, they must be together regularly.**

I have had "accountability partners" over the years that never had time to meet. I have had close Christian friends, who were on fire for the Lord, but we never made time to get together. I have had friends who have struggled spiritually, financially, or relationally, and we never arranged to talk things over. Saying that you desire to influence others and following through are two different things. *Having good intentions are great, but doing good intentions is better.* Meeting with people requires discipline, not finding time but making time to meet, and, then, meeting so often that it becomes habit. You can't sharpen a knife one stroke every few months.

**Iron cannot sharpen putty, and putty cannot sharpen iron.**

Oftentimes, people will choose friends to meet with, but friends are not always the best choice for sharpening you. *For someone to sharpen you, he must be sharp himself.* What I mean to say is that if one person is sharp and the other person is dull, then the relationship will end up being one of mentoring rather than accountability. Seek to meet with someone who will challenge you. If both of you have something to offer the other, then the relationship will be beneficial to both.

**To sharpen iron, there must be some grinding.**

Have you ever met with a group to pray but it spends more time sharing requests than praying? Have you ever met with accountability partners who spend more time talking about life and less time asking the tough questions? Sharpening one another is not easy and it's certainly not always pleasant. Accountability hurts at times, but honesty and forthrightness, though difficult at times, produces great rewards. *Be willing to enter a relationship in which both sides agree to grind each other, not for the sake of conflict or controversy but for strength and improvement.*

**To become sharp, you must be willing to file away the rough edges.**

It must be said that anyone can be in a sharpening relationship and still remain dull. Both parties may be doing the right things and asking the right questions, but unless each party agrees to be vulnerable and transparent, neither one will see changes. *Transparency is an absolute necessity.* Without it, time is not being spent in the most efficient manner possible. As painful as it might be to allow someone else to see your secret skeletons, it is the only way to allow true growth in the Christian life.

The Lone Ranger concept of the Christian life is not found in the Bible. To be sharpened, we must live in community with other believers. Are you?

To whom have you exposed yourself for sharpening? How is it going?

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Who are you sharpening? How are you doing?

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You will never reach your leadership potential without being asked to pass under the rod; neither will your sheep progress unless you regularly inspect what you expect.

## Batter Up

### Intermission

*To score as a leader, one must tag four bases.*

I am going to use a baseball analogy to explain what I call the four bases of leadership. In a single game, each batter has several opportunities to get a hit, and the best part is that even though he may strike out, he has other chances to try again. So it is with leadership. In a single day, a person has several opportunities to practice leadership; and, though he may “strike out” once or twice, in time, other chances to lead will soon come along.

Thus far in our study on leadership, we have focused on developing relationships. In our analogy, relationships are represented by the bat itself.

**Just as a batter cannot get a hit without a bat, so a leader cannot be effective without making people a priority.** You have heard it said that people don’t care what you know until they know that you care. That’s why love-driven service must be the heart of any effective leader. Without influence (the bat), you will never get on base.

Here is a brief review of what we’ve learned so far:

- Anyone can be a leader, but not everyone practices true leadership. A leader is a position, while leadership is a practice.
- Leadership is influence; and, to influence others means that people must become a priority.
- Those in leadership do not exist to be served but to serve. The one under authority should submit to the one in authority, but the one in authority should serve the one under authority.
- Shepherding people cannot be done from a distance; it requires close interaction. We must become adept at building relationships.
- To have all other qualities but not love spells failure for a Christian leader.
- Someone is going to pay for your leadership; it is either you or your sheep. As a leader, you must know well the condition of your flock.
- Leaders cannot expect what they do not inspect. Accountability is a necessity, something everyone needs but no one wants.

While this is great stuff, there is more to leadership than good people skills. That’s why there is a second part of this assignment.



Just because you might have good people skills or you are adept at developing relationships does not mean that you are good leader. That is just the beginning. Once people know that you care, they want to know what you know. They desire and need leadership, and they are counting on you to provide it.

So then, what is the next step? How does a batter get on base? Here is a preview.

Though a baseball player may get a hit, if he forgets to touch one of the bases, the others that he did touch won't matter. In other words, all four of these bases are required in a person to practice balanced, effective leadership. Okay, then, what are the four bases?

- **Initiative – I Will Do It!**  
Leaders go first. They look for gaps and volunteer themselves to stand in them. They see a need and meet the need.
- **Inclusion – Let's Do It Together!**  
Leaders know how to inspire others, by transferring their passion and zeal, effectively pulling them in to help.
- **Intrepidity – Let's Do This, No Matter the Opposition!**  
Leaders will face opposition, but good leaders can overcome with courage and perseverance.
- **Integrity – Follow My Lead!**  
Leaders set the example for others to follow. They are worthy of emulation.

One of the characters in the Bible where these four facets (or bases) are evident is in the life of Nehemiah. Though Nehemiah was a lowly cup-bearer for a king, God used him to become the Governor of Judea, to lead the way in rebuilding the walls of the great city of Jerusalem. In doing so, Nehemiah will demonstrate tremendous leadership skills, touching all four bases of leadership. As a result, Nehemiah will hit a homerun and he demonstrates a great example for us to follow.

So then, we are off to round the bases of leadership.

# Stepping Up to the Plate

## Lesson 7

### First Base = Initiative = I'll do it!

*Leaders recognize and do what needs to be done before being asked.*

Have you ever heard a person say of someone else, "He or she is standing in the gap"? What does that mean exactly? What are people doing if they are standing in the gap?

In *Ezekiel 22:29-31*, God destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel because no one was willing to stand in the gap for it. In *Psalms 106:19-23*, God did not destroy the Israelites because Moses stood in the gap for them. In *2 Chronicles 16:9*, we read that God is constantly looking for people who stand in the gap for Him! We must learn what it means to stand in the gap.

Imagine an ancient city's walls are under attack by an invading army. When part of the wall is breached or broken down and soldiers bravely fill the hole to protect the city; that would be a form of standing in the gap. It is what linebackers do on the defensive side of a football game. Their responsibility is to plug the holes on the defensive line, the lanes where ball carriers may come through. When a hole opens up for a runner, there should be a linebacker waiting for him, standing in the gap!

At the Battle of Monmouth (1778), during the American War for Independence, when her husband (an artillery officer) was wounded, Molly Pitcher took his place and began loading and firing the cannons at the British. After the victory, George Washington nicknamed her "Sergeant Molly" for her actions. That's standing the gap!

Southern General Thomas Jackson, during the Civil War, whose brigade stood like a stone wall as the Union troops attacked at the Battle of Bull Run (1861). Jackson knew that if he retreated, the entire Southern army would be jeopardized. "Stonewall" Jackson and his men stood in the gap and defeated a much bigger, much stronger force!

At the Battle of the Bulge, the last great battle in World War II, in which Hitler and his Nazis made a final push to split the Allied army, re-take France, and end the war, much to Hitler's dismay, he ran into a scrappy bunch of U.S. soldiers called the 101st Airborne — the "Band of Brothers." They held their ground until reinforcements came and pushed back the Germans. They were standing in the gap!

*When a person stands in the gap, he throws himself into a hole that needs to be filled. That hole of need comes in all shapes and sizes. We open our study of Nehemiah with his opportunity to stand in the gap (1:1-2:5).*



Read *Nehemiah 1:1-2:5*. What was the “gap” in Nehemiah’s day? How did he stand in it?

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In order to stand in the gap effectively, a leader must do two things — **recognize “the gap”** and, then, **stand in it**. To recognize the gap is to recognize the holes of need that exist around you, to see and know that there is a problem that needs to be solved.

The first step seems, on the surface, to be a simple one, but in all actuality it is more difficult than you think, not because needs are hard to find but because we have character flaws. Also, in today's world, we are so busy that we have blind spots that hinder us from recognizing problems that need to be solved, the holes that need to be plugged.

Here are a few character qualities that you will need to be effective in recognizing gaps around you. Take a minute to define each one.

Alertness

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Availability

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Discernment

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Sensitivity

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Although the first step of standing in the gap — which is to recognize that gaps or needs exist — may be somewhat difficult, the second step is even harder. The second step is that you need to **stand in the gaps that you identify**. You can constantly identify needs all around you and still not choose to do anything about them. It is at this point that you go from being lazy to becoming a leader, from being passive to becoming aggressive, from being a problem-spotter to becoming a problem-solver.

**Leaders recognize and do what needs to be done before being asked.** Leaders recognize “gaps,” needs, and they are moved, motivated, or burdened to stand in them. *Many people talk about problems and yet don't do anything about them.* Others want to do something about the problems but don't take the necessary actions.

What is it that keeps people from stepping out and standing in the gap?

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While many people are afraid to “step up the plate,” perhaps lacking boldness, courage, determination, or faith, I think the one quality that many people are missing is **initiative**. *Initiative is recognizing and doing what needs to be done before being asked to do it.*

Too often in life, we hold out when a problem presents itself. We wait to see if someone else is going to volunteer before we throw ourselves into the fray. Why is that? Oftentimes, we view problems as hassles, a waste of time and energy; but, **true leaders view problems as opportunities**, opportunities to influence others.

*The likelihood of making an impact is greater during times of crises than when things are going well.* When times are bad and nothing is going the way that it should, that’s when true leaders step up to the plate and influence others for good.

Every leader must be a problem-solver; not only must he know how to solve problems, but he must be willing to try. I believe that initiative is the key; it is also the key to unlocking other character qualities. It is initiative that pushes one from knowing that something should be done to doing it. No doubt, many people knew about the ruined walls of Jerusalem, but only Nehemiah decided to do something about it. **Initiative separates leaders from followers!**

Another Biblical example of a person taking initiative is found in *Isaiah 6:1-9*. Explain.

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When the prophet heard the angel ask, "Who will go for us? Whom shall we send," he responded with, "Here I am, send me!" **True leaders are bothered by unmet needs.** They will not stand by and wait for someone to be chosen. They volunteer themselves, just like Isaiah. *That's what leaders do; they go first!*

I can remember when I was a student, either at church or at school. It frustrated me when one of my teachers would ask a question and no one would answer her. Other students would look down or look away, hoping that someone else would respond. Not me. My hand was always up, not because I was a know-it-all, but because I could not bear the silence in the room. At times, my teachers would ask me to put my hand down and stop answering all of the questions, challenging the others to speak up.

Which one of these students depicts you? Are you the one who avoids opportunities to demonstrate leadership, or are you the one who has his hand up, waiting expectantly to lead? How well do you demonstrate initiative? When there is an identified need to be met or problems that need to be solved, do you wait to be called on or do you volunteer yourself?

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Please hear this: I am not suggesting that you need to meet every need or fill every vacancy yourself. You can't do that, because you don't have the time or energy, and you will quickly get burned out or lose your sanity. *Sometimes there are gaps that you are to fill because you are called by God to do so. Other times there are gaps you are to fill because you need to do so, until someone else can.* That's why the second base of leadership is that of inclusion. Good leaders will inspire others to get involved.

Read again *Nehemiah 1:4* and *2:4*. What did Nehemiah do before he volunteered himself?

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As you already know, God created you with certain gifts, talents, abilities, desires, interests, etc., for a reason, and your life's purpose is to find those roles that match how God has wired you. However, there are times when a need does not require your particular abilities but rather just a warm body. For example, someone might ask you to take out the trash. You shouldn't respond by saying, "Sorry, God has not called me to do that with my life." No, you should do it because it needs to be done. As I said before, sometimes there are gaps that you are to fill because you are called by God to do so. Other times there are gaps you are to fill because it is a need.

One of my pet peeves is people who complain, not simply because they complain (some complaints are legitimate) but when they complain and yet are unwilling to do anything about the problem. My philosophy is not to complain unless I am willing to take the responsibility to change the situation or unless I have suggestions to alleviate the problem. Otherwise, I keep my mouth shut.

**Complaining only assaults someone else's leadership**, someone else who is trying to stand in the gap. Before complaining, consider if you are willing to stand in the gap and try to do a better job. Nehemiah didn't complain. Nehemiah took action.

However, for us to stand in the gaps that we've identified, we must be moved, motivated, or burdened by the needs. Re-read *Nehemiah 1:4*. What was Nehemiah's response to the gap he became aware of? How is it obvious that he was moved, motivated, or burdened by this need?

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Again, you can recognize need, but if you are not burdened by the need, then you will never move to meet that need.

Let's look at a couple of other biblical examples of being moved, motivated, or burdened to stand in the gap. The first example is that of Jesus feeding the 5000 in *Matthew 15:32-37*. How can you tell that Jesus was burdened by the need that He saw?

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Another example is that of the Good Samaritan in *Luke 10:30-37*. Again, write out the words or phrases that give evidence that the Samaritan was burdened to fill a need.

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Notice that both Jesus and the Samaritan saw a need, but their attentiveness went further than that. Both of them were moved, motivated, or burdened for those in need. They went a step further and did something to help. Are you identifying the gaps around you, and, are you willing to stand in the gaps you find? All good leaders exhibit this quality.

We will find out that Nehemiah demonstrated great leadership by identifying a need, being burdened by that need, and even taking the initiative to meet the need, but he did not do it all by himself. He will involve a host of people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He will not do it alone. That's called delegation and teamwork, important lessons we will discuss next.

In summary, your family, your friends, your small group, your team, your class, your student body, your work place, your church, your community, and your nation need people to stand in the gap. Will that person be you? Have you identified the needs or problems? Do you have the courage and the initiative to do something about them? Don't wait for someone else to do it. Be a leader. Step up the place and volunteer yourself! Leaders go first. Will you?

# The Call to the Wall

## Lesson 8

### Second Base = Inclusion = Let's Do It Together!

*Good leaders include others in their vision and work.*

We've already learned that great leaders possess the character quality of initiative. They are always identifying gaps and volunteering themselves to stand in those gaps. They are not afraid to say, "Here I am. I'll do it."

However, though Nehemiah will step up to the plate and volunteer to lead out in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, he will soon realize that this problem was much too big for him to handle alone. He will need the help of others to complete this task, and, therefore, he will have to reach our second base – inclusion. **Poor leaders do everything themselves, while good leaders learn to include others in their vision and work.** To achieve that goal, leaders must be able to inspire others to get involved.

Read *Nehemiah 2:11-19*. What did Nehemiah do after he saw the condition of the city?

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Before we get to the heart of inclusion, notice first that Nehemiah spent several days in Jerusalem evaluating the situation before he acted (2:11-16). He rode around town surveying the scene, assessing the damage, to figure out what needed to be done. It is never wise to act before discerning the situation, the needs, and the solutions.

Also notice that Nehemiah inspired others to get involved. To inspire literally means "to breathe into." Okay, so what does someone who is inspiring breathe into another person?

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An inspiring leader infuses his passion into others, he exerts an enlivening influence, and he affects change in people that was not there before. Simply put, to inspire means to transfer your heart, vision, and zeal to someone else.



How can you tell if you are inspiring those around you? You will have followers. If you consider yourself to be a leader, and yet, when you look around, there is no one following you, you've probably deceived yourself. *If you are truly a leader, others are following you.*

What are some ways you can increase your ability to inspire others?

### **Step 1: Communicate the Problem**

People are always more willing to join a cause when they are made aware of a need to be met or a problem to solve. Good leaders can convey that need or problem in a way that gets others' attention and draws them into wanting to do something about it. By carefully crafting their words and delivery, great leaders can instill a sense of urgency in the hearts and minds of those around them.

How did Nehemiah achieve this first step? How did he communicate the problem at hand?

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### **Step 2: Bring It Close to Home**

People will most often respond to urgent needs or problems and to a leader's genuine emotion, but *everyone will respond when they know that the need or problem will affect them personally*, if nothing is done about it. Take for example a fire that spreads across a forest. Home owners may not take an interest in what is happening until they knew that their home could be engulfed in flames at any moment, then, they would get involved in a hurry. To get people involved, you must bring the need or problem "close to their home." They must not become detached to your challenge, but rather they must feel the heat and, thus, buy into the responsibility, the urgency, that they must get involved as part of the solution.

How did Nehemiah achieve this second step? How did he make the problem personal?

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### Step 3: Pass On Your Passion

Nothing inspires people more than when a leader speaks with emotion. Those who are listening to you want to know that you are genuine. However, more often than not, they will get excited about whatever you get excited about. They will become more loyal to whatever it is that you are loyal to, if you've convinced them and if they believe in you.

How can you tell that both Nehemiah's excitement for the project and sincerity in asking for help came through when he addressed the people?

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### Step 4: It's a Team Effort

Oftentimes, a project, like rebuilding Jerusalem, can seem overwhelming to a group of people; but, a good leader will overcome that feeling of inadequacy with the idea of teamwork. *People are very inspired when they know that they are a part of something much bigger than themselves.* They want to hear and know that their role, although it may be small and insignificant, will make a big difference in the scheme of things. Thus, to be a good leader, you must understand the team concept (that life is about we not me), and you must know how to rally the troops.

On a scale from 0-10 (10 being perfect), how good are you at including others in the things you do? Do you tend to do things yourself or are you able to rally the troops?

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Because we are selfish, we tend to do things ourselves. It is much easier to get things done alone. Why mess with people, right? But, *great leaders do not strive to be the hot shot on the team; they strive to be the coach and include as many people as possible in the victory.*

Read this passage from *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*. Write out some of the advantages of teamwork.

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### Step 5: Have an Attitude of Gratitude

In my opinion, this step is the most important one – *thanking those who've helped you*. Nothing will undermine a leader's potential faster than skipping this step. People do not like to be forgotten, overlooked, or neglected, when they have committed themselves to assist someone else in their cause. Without being thanked, they feel manipulated or used, and, more than likely, they will think twice about helping again. **Good leaders are inspirational, but, when projects are done, they are also grateful.**

Look at *Nehemiah 3*. Most people skip over this chapter. Can you figure out why?

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Just as this step is the most important step, this chapter may be the most important as well. In that chapter, Nehemiah lists all of the people who worked on the wall of the city. It is obvious that Nehemiah understood the importance of expressing gratitude. Townspeople came out of hiding to be a part of such a great undertaking. They were thrilled to work together and restore Jerusalem to its former glory. Baruch even "did his part with passion" (v.20) and "the Tekoites took on more than one part of the wall" (5, 27).

Think about it. How did Nehemiah get all of the names of those who participated and the specific section that each of them rebuilt? He had to walk from place to place to see who was there, stop and ask for their names and where they were from, and to see for himself the task that they were performing. In doing that, he compiled this wonderful record of bricklayers and gate-setters. In other words, **he took the time to express his thankfulness.**

How do you feel when you get recognition for something you've done? What about when someone goes out of his/her way to encourage you?

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*Nehemiah 3* is a tribute to the wall builders of Jerusalem's restoration project. I can imagine at each stop, Nehemiah took the time to thank the people who were working. No doubt, he shook their hands and patted them on the back. **Encouragement and expression of gratitude go a long way in the minds of people.** Everyone likes to get a "that-a boy" or a "good job" every now and then; and, frankly, too many leaders neglect to do it.

**People are not pawns in a game; they are your most precious commodity.** Your relationship with them will directly affect how successful your leadership will be. If they know you care, they will do anything for you. If they know that you couldn't care less, your leadership will never amount to anything. They won't follow you.

Be a leader with an attitude — an attitude for gratitude. If there are people who have helped you and you have not expressed your gratitude or said something to encourage them, take the time today to make sure they know that you appreciate them. Expressing gratefulness goes a long way to help inspire people to join you, which, in turn, is an essential element in the principle of inclusion.

# Targeting the Point Man

## Lesson 9

### Third Base = Intrepidity = Let's Do This, No Matter the Opposition!

*In order to take out a group, Satan attacks the leader.*

During the Vietnam War, our ground troops were constantly sending out patrols, small groups of 5-20 soldiers, to scout the territory ahead of the main force and secure the area. The leader of that patrol was called a "point man." It was his job to keep the patrol out of harm's way. Those who followed the point man depended on him for their very lives. He did his best to avoid landmines, pitfalls, trip wires, snipers, enemy crossfire, and other deadly war traps. Thus, it was the goal of the Vietnamese to disable the point man. If he fell, they knew that the patrol would dissolve into chaos and confusion, and, therefore, it would be a less effective fighting force. Consequently, that patrol would be easily defeated.



Typically, concerning war between two nations, the strategy is to conquer the opponent's capital city. If the capital city (or largest city) falls, then the rest of the cities usually surrender. **Go after the head and the body will fall.** That's the way it is with boxing as well. It is a long-standing creed among pugilists: "No matter how big the opponent, take out the head and the body will follow." Of course, that was little David's strategy in the Bible; as a young shepherd, he did not have the size, skill, or strength to go toe-to-toe with Goliath. But, if he could take out the head, well, the rest is history.

This same strategy is Satan's plan of action against a group that he despises or resents. Take out the point men; take out the leaders! **If he can disable, discourage, or destroy a point man, then the group most likely will be lost.**

What are some groups (no matter how big or small) that Satan would like to disable by eliminating their point men?

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Understand this, **Satan loves to attack leaders!** Therefore, if you desire to be a leader, guess what? He's coming after you. When you decide to stand in the gap and take on a leadership role, you are, in essence, painting a bull's eye on your chest and setting yourself up for target practice. Opposition is coming and danger is on the horizon; and, what you do in those moments will define much of who you are as a leader. **Leaders can either blossom or wilt when under attack.**

Read *Nehemiah 2:19, 20* and *Nehemiah 4:1-8*. What happened once the people got excited to work on the walls of Jerusalem?

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You must understand a very simple principle: *when God's people, especially leaders, get excited about doing something for Him, our spiritual Enemy gets excited to stop them.* Satan despises anyone who tries to take ground from him, and he will use many different weapons to stop his progress.

**One of Satan's favorite weapons is criticism.** All leaders, good and bad, are criticized for their decisions. It's the nature of the beast; leaders simply have to learn to deal with it. However, not all criticism is bad.

In all, there are three types of criticism:

- Criticism that is valid and helpful. We are not perfect people, so we need constructive criticism to help us see our blind spots and improve or mature our leadership.
- Criticism that is invalid but still helpful. This type of criticism helps us to understand how we are being perceived by those around us.
- Criticism that is invalid and unhelpful. This sort of criticism is designed to hurt people. It is more like ridicule, aimed at discouraging and demoralizing. Satan typically uses this type of criticism.

Nehemiah had his critics, several in fact: Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, and the Ashdodites. All of these people ruled a little “empire” and exerted power in their sphere of influence, that was, until Nehemiah appeared on the scene. Now, they felt threatened by Nehemiah's leadership and tried anything to dismantle his influence in their part of the world.

What's interesting about Nehemiah's critics was the physical location of each. Sanballat was the Governor of Samaria (which was to the north of Jerusalem), Tobiah was from Ammon (which was to the east of Jerusalem), Geshem was an Arab (who came from Arabia, which is south of Jerusalem), and the Ashdodites were from ancient Philistia (which was west of Jerusalem). In a way, Nehemiah was completely surrounded by critics, and so will you, if you choose to step out and stand in the gap!

Have you ever received criticism for your leadership decisions? If so, share an example.

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Explain how criticism makes you feel. What does it make you want to do?

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Three things you should know about critics. First, **nothing brings out critics faster than change or inconvenience**. People do not like it when someone introduces new ideas and tries to replace their comfortable routine or tradition. As soon as Nehemiah started to change the status quo in Jerusalem, people began to complain and criticize.

Second, **critics love company**. It's no fun to criticize alone; criticism only works if it can be spread to another person. Thus, critics run in packs. Just expect it; where there is one critic, be sure that he or she has already infected someone else.

Third, wherever there is criticism, **gossip and slander follow close behind**. Those same people who are criticizing you are very likely talking about you to other people, and their comments are most likely negative. Remember, Satan will do anything to stop your progress, especially if he knows you are following God's will for your life. Thus, he will not stop at criticism of your leadership, but he will even attack you personally, by spreading rumors about you, maybe even attack your character and motives.

If you are convinced that what you are doing is right in the eyes of God, then expect criticism, but don't back down when it comes. *Criticism is not a sign that you are doing something wrong. Criticism may be a sign that you are doing something right, something that the enemy doesn't like.* You shouldn't expect that the enemies of God will just sit by and do nothing, when someone like you is trying to stand in the gap! Learn to live with opposition and be ready to deal with it appropriately.

What is the appropriate way to deal with opposition? Let's look at what Nehemiah did. Take a minute to read *Nehemiah 4:9-23* and *Nehemiah 6:1-16*. What were some of the things that the enemy tried to do to stop Nehemiah and the restoration project?

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What were some things that Nehemiah did in response to these tactics?

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Notice first of all that Satan did not resort only to criticism, but his attacks increased in extent and intensity, in order to scare the people of Jerusalem and get them to quit the project. **Fear is also one of Satan's favorite weapons**, and he wields it in many different ways. Here are a few more of his tricks: demoralization, danger, divisiveness, distraction, discouragement, discrediting, and destruction.

Satan has been wielding his weapon of fear since the beginning of time. Remember, one of Adam and Eve's first emotions after their sin in the Garden was fear. When God called out to them, they ran and hid because they were afraid. Fear has been paralyzing people ever since, which leads us to the next character quality that good leaders must possess — **intrepidity**.

What does it mean to be intrepid. Why this quality is essential for all great leaders? Some synonyms for intrepidity are courage and bravery, to act despite the fear you feel. Other synonyms for intrepidity might be determination and persistence, to keep on keeping on despite the opposition that you may face. A person who is intrepid has a stick-to-it attitude, no matter what comes his way.

Leaders are going to face opposition; in fact, good leaders become great leaders when they overcome great opposition. The problem is that you can't overcome fear and opposition alone, in your own strength. Nehemiah couldn't do it and neither can you. Satan and his evil cohort are too much for you, so you are going to need some help. Help from whom? From Someone of whom Satan is afraid.

In *2 Timothy 1:7*, we find that "God has not given you a spirit of fear but of power"; and, in His power, with His help, you can overcome fear. God promises you that power (through the Holy Spirit within you) and He promises to help you endure opposition. Remember, in *1 Corinthians 12*, when Paul faced terrible opposition and he asked that God would remove it from him? The Lord replied that His grace was sufficient for Paul, that His power would be perfected through Paul's weakness.

Nehemiah did not rely upon his own strength, wisdom, or ingenuity to overcome his enemies. The first thing he did was to pray and surrender the situation to God. He understood what we often forget, that *our tangible problems have intangible causes, our visible difficulties have invisible instigators, and our physical trials have spiritual deviants behind them*. Thus, to combat those who are intangible, invisible, and spiritual, you must enlist an unusual type of help from Someone outside of and greater than yourself.

"We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down strongholds that others set up against God" (*2 Corinthians 10:3*). "Be anxious for nothing, but through prayer, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which is beyond all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (*Phil 2:6,7*).

Describe a time in your own life when you felt fear or faced opposition, came to the realization that you could not overcome these things in your own power, and relied upon the Lord to get you through.

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What about standing in the gap, being a leader, causes you to fear, or at least, to be anxious?

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How could you demonstrate the quality of intrepidity? What steps should you take?

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Good leaders are not afraid of opposition, but rather learn to overcome it!

## Without Wax

### Lesson 10

#### Home Base = Integrity = Follow My Lead

*Without integrity, your attempts at leadership will be in vain.*

Though we've already seen Nehemiah's leadership skills at work, with the rebuilding of the city walls, I believe that it is in Chapter 5 that the most important aspects of his leadership come to light. Nehemiah has demonstrated his **initiative** (Chapters 1 and 2), his **inclusivity** (Chapters 2 and 3), and even his **intrepidity** (Chapters 4 and 6), but here we get to see his **integrity**. As a leader, you will quickly undermine every other quality that you may possess or practice, if you do not first demonstrate integrity. Without integrity, your attempts at leadership will be in vain.

The root word of integrity is integer, meaning "whole or complete." Thus, when a person has integrity, his whole life is consistently pure or wholesome. Another way of saying that one has integrity is that he lives above reproach. To live above reproach is to say that no word or act can be held against you. It means that nothing that you have said or done could bring reproach or shame on your name. It is to live life at a high level of purity, morality, honesty, and virtue. It is to do nothing in private that would ruin your reputation if it were made public.

We are often deceived by privacy and tempted to do things that are not good or right. Don't fall for this trap. Remember, God sees everything that you do, He hears everything that you say, and He knows everything that you think. "He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out" (*Proverbs 10:9*).

Sincerity is a synonym of integrity. The literal meaning of the word sincere is to be "without wax," to have nothing hidden, or to be consistently pure throughout. Ancient potters would make vessels like cups, pots, or pitchers, and then they would set them near or above a fire, so that the clay would harden. However, hardening a vessel is easier said than done, and oftentimes, potters would leave something in the fire too long and create cracks in the vessel. Cracked pots or pitchers are worthless, so at that point, the potter had a decision to make. He could throw out the vessel or he could cover the cracks with wax, disguising his mistakes, and try to sell it to customers anyway. In essence, selling a cracked pot would be lying to a customer and cheating him of his money.

What would it mean, then, to be a person who lives "without wax"?



A sincere person, or one with integrity, does not wear masks around people, but rather strives to be genuine, true to their nature. They don't speak or act in disguise, pretending to be someone they're not.

Virtue is another synonym of integrity. To be a virtuous person, one has a moral goodness (not self-righteousness but the righteousness that comes from Christ), desiring to know and do what is pleasing in the eyes of God. A virtuous person consistently does what is right, even in the little things.

But, there is a rather large assumption here, that those who do what is right know what right is. How do we know what right is anyway? Read *Psalm 119:9, 11*, to find out.

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"Whoever is wise, let him understand these things..., that the ways of the Lord are right, and the righteous will walk in them..." (*Hosea 14:9*). "To one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin" (*James 4:17*). **More than ever, we need leaders who know what is right and who do the right they know.** That is virtue; that is integrity.

In the summer of 1994, a junior girl at Christian Heritage Academy named Krista Speas was killed in a car accident. I had just been hired as a teacher and coach, so I did not know her personally, but I was present when her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Speas, came and spoke at chapel shortly after. I will never forget that day. Their words and the message of their daughter's life affected me greatly.

Mr. Speas shared that just a few days after Krista's death they had to go through the painful process of cleaning out her room. I can't imagine how heart-wrenching that must have been. The one concern that he said he had when they were going through Krista's things (her drawers, her music, her Bible, her letters, her diary) was that they were going to find something that would taint the image they had of her in their minds. Something that she was involved in, something that she listened to, something that she had done or written was going to mar her reputation, so they thought. Thus, they proceeded with caution and prayed that their little girl was as godly and virtuous as they had hoped.

I'll never forget, as Mr. Speas' voice cracked and tears flowed down his face, when he reported with joy that nothing in Krista's life shamed her name. Everything about her brought glory to God and honor to her parents. As I sat in that pew, I thought to myself: now that is a true example of integrity. I remember leaving chapel that day so convicted and so challenged that I just had to share what I was thinking and feeling with my wife. We sat for what seemed like hours talking about whether or not our lives were that exemplary.

What about you? If you died tonight and your loved ones had the terrible task of sorting through and packing up your belongings, would they find something that would shame your name? Would they discover anything that would embarrass your family, ruin your reputation, or dishonor your claim to be Christian? Or would you leave behind, as Krista did, a spotless life of integrity? To be a leader, you are suggesting that you are worthy of following. Are you?

We would be wise to follow Nehemiah's example. Let's look again at some of the ways he demonstrated integrity, sincerity, virtue, and living above reproach. [Read Nehemiah 5](#).

### **Example 1: He Put People Above Projects**

Nehemiah was in the middle of the wall reconstruction project when he was approached with the problem of usury (charging high interest on loans to fellow Jews). Some leaders would have said, "Don't bother me with anything else right now. I am too busy at the moment to mess with it." However, Nehemiah understood the importance of tending to his sheep. To ignore them at this point would have been detrimental to the well-being of the citizens of Judah. Thus, he took the time to listen to the people and even took immediate action to help them. *You must never become so preoccupied with your schedule that you cannot help someone in need.* People are more important than projects.

### **Example 2: He Defended the Defenseless**

The norm is to take advantage of or even eliminate the defenseless. It takes a special person to look beyond his own well-being, to step out of his comfort zone, and to stand up for someone else, especially those who are different, less fortunate, or defenseless. Nehemiah stood up to the nobles and officials of his day, those with authority, and fought for the little people. God takes special notice of those who are neglected, and He pays even more attention to those who befriend them and defend their rights. Remember, when you help even "the least among you," it is as if you are doing it for Christ. Simply put, *strive to be someone who looks out for the overlooked!*

### **Example 3: He Righted Wrong**

Accomplishing this task may be the hardest thing for leaders to do. It's easy to right wrong when the flow is with you; the hang up comes when the flow is wrong. It's at this point where the quality of intrepidity comes into play, having the courage to press on, even in the face of opposition and adversity. The flow was against Nehemiah in this case of usury. Every person with money was loaning it out at interest to his friends, family, and fellow citizens. For Nehemiah to squelch this sin would be very unpopular. Any time you are fighting the greedy, the battle is uphill; but, Nehemiah did it anyway, despite the fact that his public approval rating would go down. As a leader, you must do the same. When it comes to righting wrong, even in the face of criticism or unpopularity, what do your records show? Have you been a champion of right, or have you avoided controversy at all costs?

#### **Example 4: He Kept His Word (and Held Others to Theirs)**

One of the many pitfalls that accompany leadership is not doing what you say you will do. People don't follow phonies. Furthermore, if you can't keep your own word, you have no business making others keep theirs. However, if you are a person who does what he says he will do, then an extension of your own integrity is expecting others to do the same. That's called holding people accountable. We all need accountability, because, even though we are saved and have Christ in our hearts, our sin nature is tough and sometimes it prevails. We fail to do what we are supposed to do and we fail to fulfill what we said we would do. That's why Nehemiah demonstrates great leadership, in that he keeps others accountable by making them swear an oath to keep their word and stop the crime of usury.

#### **Example 5: He Did Not Require of Others What He Did Not Require of Himself**

To ascend the leadership levels, you must know that others are looking at you. That's okay as long as you've looked at yourself first. You are not setting yourself up to be something that you're not. You want to be real, the genuine leader, one who knows he has flaws, but also one who is trying to do all he can to improve himself. Most of all, people want to know that if you ask them to do something or go somewhere, that you will be there to go before them. You must be the change you wish to see.

Nehemiah didn't just dictate or oversee the restoration project; he actually worked on the walls himself. He also made his assistants work on the walls, giving them a good example of what it means to be a leader. I have had some great leaders in my life, but none that so affected me as those men and women who cast the vision and then roll up their sleeves to help get it done. People want leaders that they can work alongside, not simply leaders whose authority they work under.

#### **Example 6: Do Nothing That Would Cause Others to Stumble**

Living a life of integrity is certainly more about leading a private life that honors God, but it is also leading a public life that is exemplary for others to mirror. I truly never understood this principle as a young person. It was not until I started having children myself that I realized that people, namely my kids, are not only watching but often emulating what I say and do. It's like the little boy who was asked to pray at the dinner table. Surrounded by his parents' guests, he was embarrassed and responded by saying, "I don't know what to say." When his mom encouraged him to use the words that she does, he said, "Lord, what were we thinking when we invited all of these people to our house tonight?"

When I first heard one of my kids repeat an unkind word that I had used, it opened my eyes to the importance of modeling integrity in front of others. I always hated to hear or see something that my kids got in trouble for and their alibi was, "Daddy does it." Ouch!! I determined then and there to clean up my act, so to speak, so as not to cause any of them to stumble.

Truthfully, that should be our approach with everyone. We should constantly monitor our words, our attitudes, and our behavior, to make sure that it is appropriate and acceptable to God. I am sure, before Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, that the Jews' idea of a Governor was a free-loading, self-indulgent, gluttonous jerk. But, Nehemiah changed all of that with his example; he brought class back to the office.

Read the following verses and underline ways to grow in integrity.

“Who may worship in your sanctuary, Lord? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts, those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends, those who despise flagrant sinners, and honor the faithful followers of the Lord, and keep their promises even when it hurts, those who lend money without charging interest, and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent...” *Psalms 15*

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord...” *Psalms 19:14*

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You...” *Psalms 139:23, 24*

“I [Paul] always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people.” *Acts 24:16*

“Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. Hold firmly to the word of life...” *Philippians 2:14-16*

“For if others see you, with your superior knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, won't they be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been offered to an idol? So because of your superior knowledge, a weak believer for whom Christ died will be destroyed. And when you sin against other believers by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ. So if what I eat causes another believer to sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live — for I don't want to cause another believer to stumble.” *1 Corinthians 8:10-13*

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.” *Hebrews 12:1*

“You yourself must be an example by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us.” *Titus 2:7, 8*

Of all the things you underlined or highlighted, list here the five most convicting things you could do to build your integrity in the eyes of others.

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This officially ends the second half of this assignment. Nehemiah has certainly taught us some valuable leadership lessons. Let me summarize them briefly:

- Great leaders possess the quality of **initiative**. Learn to recognize gaps or needs around you and then volunteer yourself to stand in those gaps. Be the type of leader who will say, "Here I am. I will do it!"
- Great leaders **include** others in their work. Infuse your passion into others, exert an enlivening influence, and affect change in people around you. Simply put, transfer your vision and zeal to someone else. Don't try to do everything yourself!
- Great leaders are **intrepid** leaders. Leaders are going to face opposition; in fact, good leaders become great leaders when they overcome great opposition. Don't be afraid of criticism, difficulties, or setbacks; embrace them as opportunities to grow in confidence, boldness, and faith.
- Great leaders live a life of **integrity**. When a person has integrity, his whole life is consistently pure or wholesome; he lives life above reproach or shame. Perhaps more than any other quality, a lack of integrity damages a leader's potential.

Out to the left-hand side of that list, rank the challenges from Nehemiah (from 1-4), in the order in which you need to improve most. In which of these categories do you think you do the best job? Why that one?

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Which of these is the one in which you most need to improve? Why that one?

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In conclusion, let me say this again. If you have truly read through and completed every task in this assignment, you have already demonstrated great leadership potential. I want to thank you for your diligence.

However, now that you're done, you might be tempted to say, "I'm a nobody; what can I do to make a difference?" Don't be deceived by the lies of our Enemy. Leadership can surface in anyone, even a lowly cup-bearer like Nehemiah, a slave to the King of Persia. Despite age (David), gender (Esther), position (Nehemiah), or qualifications (Moses), if a person is sold out to God, He can do mighty things in and with that person. We must not wait for positions. **We must start leading where we are at.**

God can do extraordinary things with ordinary people, if you will let Him. Now, put into practice these things which you have learned and start demonstrating great leadership!